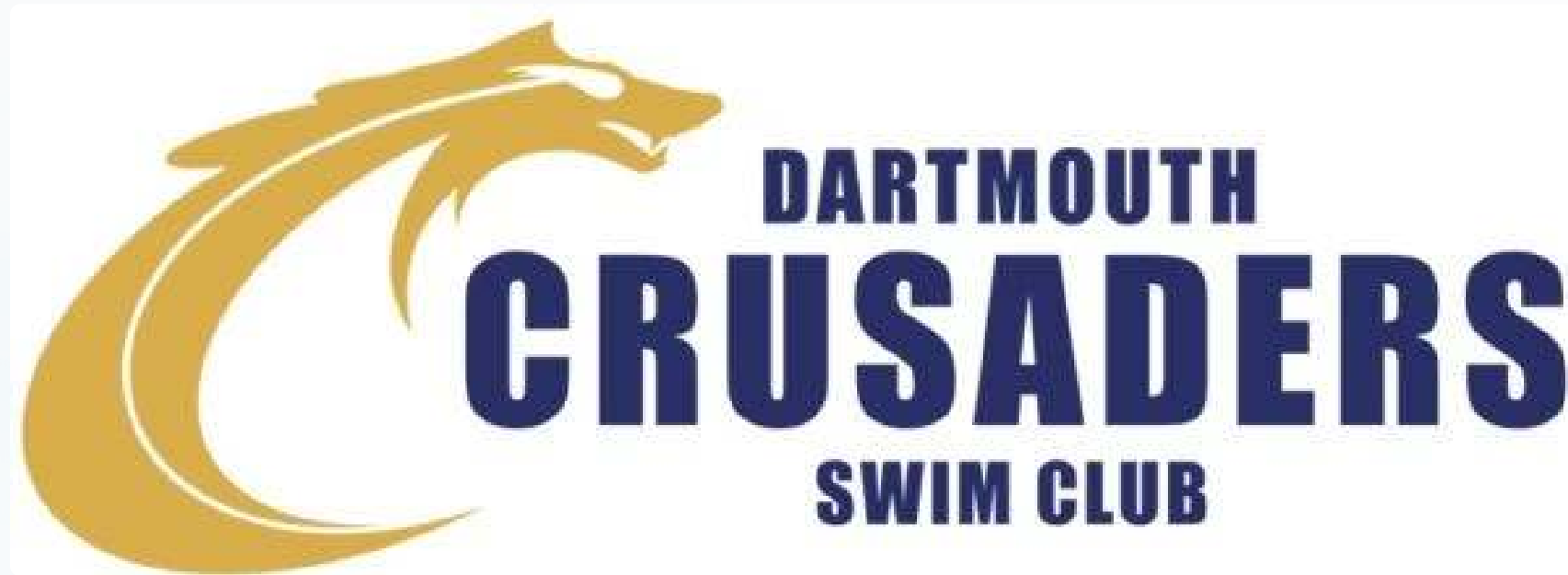


Parent Handbook





Welcome to the Crusaders

On behalf of the Dartmouth Crusaders Swim Club, we warmly welcome you and your swimmer(s) to our community. For over 50 years, our club has been a cornerstone of competitive swimming in Dartmouth and surrounding areas. Our team parents and swimmers, proudly wearing Crusaders blue and gold, are easily recognizable on the pool deck and throughout the community.

We are a competitive club with members aged 8 to 18, welcoming swimmers of all skill levels—from those just learning competitive strokes to those pursuing provincial and national championships. There truly is a place for everyone here, and we're committed to helping each swimmer reach their full potential while building lifelong friendships and memories.

We wish you and your swimmer the best for this swim season. Please reach out to us with any questions or needs throughout the year.

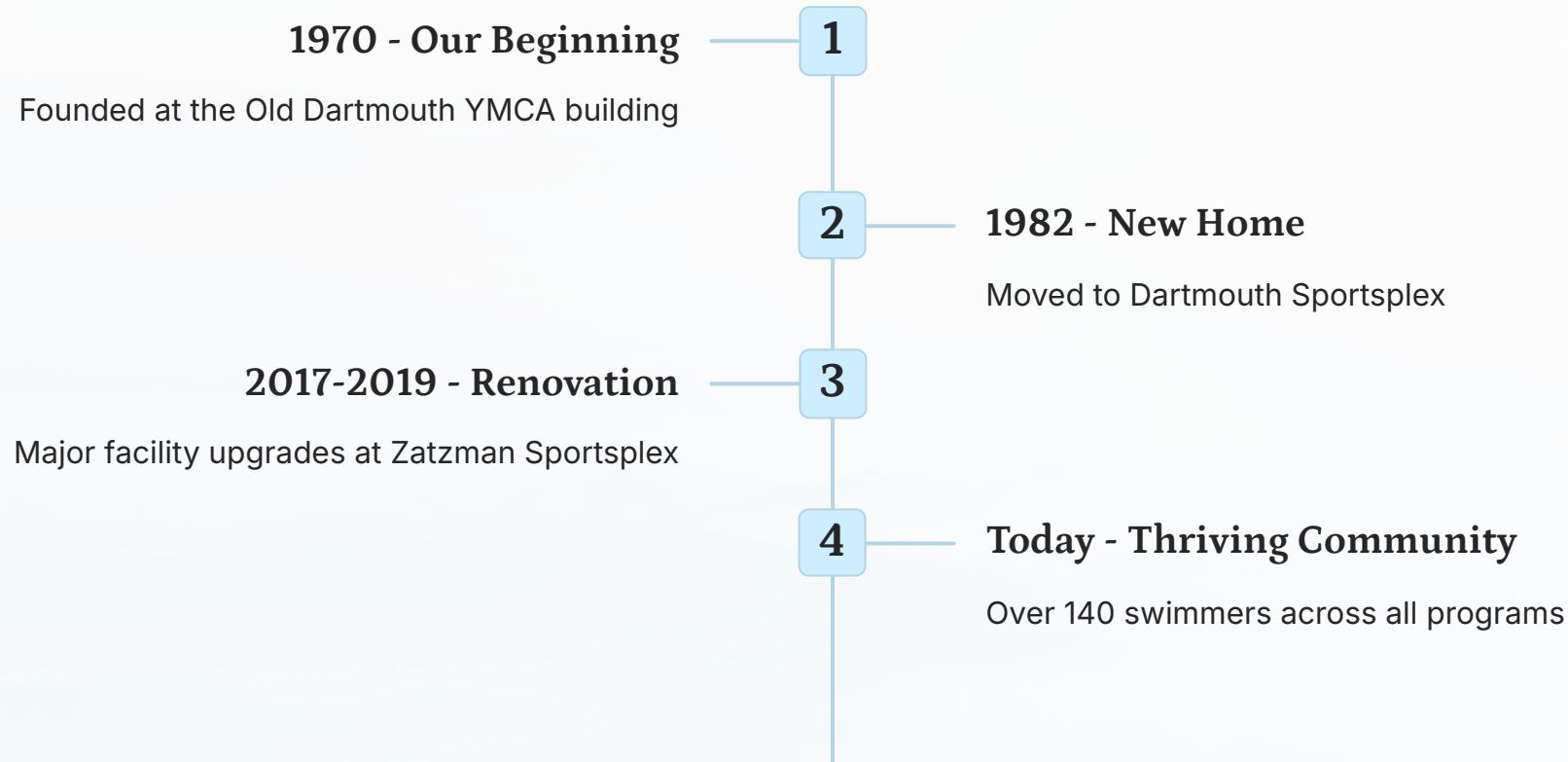
Jody Crowther

President, DCSC

Victoria Chandler

Head Coach, DCSC

About the Dartmouth Crusaders



The Dartmouth Crusaders has a rich history spanning five decades. Many of our graduates have gone on to attend university in Canada on academic scholarships and in the U.S. on both academic and athletic scholarships. Our proud legacy includes hundreds of families, with some seeing children and grandchildren graduate from our ranks.

Today, the Crusaders have over 100 competitive swimmers on our team along with more than 40 pre-competitive swimmers. **We are a non-profit organization and as such we rely on fundraising and volunteering in addition to our fees to provide exceptional programs for young athletes.** Our swimmers are supported by a committed and experienced coaching staff and a dedicated group of parent volunteers who make everything possible.

Understanding Club Requirements

The Crusaders' financial model and requirements as a member of Swim Nova Scotia rely on three key pillars that ensure we can provide excellent coaching, quality pool time, and comprehensive programming for all our swimmers.

Club Registration Fees

Paid by all members to cover pool rental and coaching salaries. Includes a once-per-season Swim Nova Scotia registration fee paid at the beginning of the season.

Mandatory Fundraising Commitment

Required from competitive swimmers, paid upfront to help cover remaining club costs. Can be refunded when swimmers complete fundraising activities throughout the season.

Family Participation


Parents volunteer to officiate at swim meets, assist with hospitality, and help with club events. Tracked as Participation Points with dollar values applied to accounts.

Non-Competitive Members (Playground)

- Pay Club Registration Fees
- Pay Swim NS Fees

Competitive Members (Fundamentals and Higher)

- Pay Club Registration and Swim NS Fees
- Pay Mandatory Fundraising Credit
- Assist the club through fundraising
- Volunteer to earn Participation Points

 **Important:** Complete descriptions of fees, MFC, and Participation Points can be found on our website and in the appendix of this handbook. It's your responsibility to pay fees in a timely fashion through automated monthly payment plans or annual upfront payment.

Registration Fees and Financial Support

Understanding Registration Fees

Registration fees for the Crusaders vary by squad level, covering a range of programs from pre-competitive (Playground and Launch) to competitive squads (FUNdamentals 1 & 2, Blue, Gold, Junior, Senior, and National Performance). These fees include essential costs such as coaching, pool time, and club operations. Additionally, there is a one-time Swim Nova Scotia registration fee required for all competitive swimmers. For convenience, monthly payment plans are available through a Monthly Fee Commitment (MFC) option. It's important to note that participation point requirements increase with each progressive squad level. For the most current fee schedules and detailed information, please check the website or contact the club directly.

Throughout the season, you may see additional fees for items such as meet fees, extra caps (as needed), hospitality donations, and fundraising. **When sending an e-transfer, it MUST include: Swimmer's Name, Squad, and Reason for transfer in the transfer note.** For example: "Jane Doe Blue squad Grocery Gift Card." [All transfers go to:](mailto:dcscstreasurer2022@gmail.com) dcscstreasurer2022@gmail.com.

Financial Support Options



KidSport Nova Scotia

Provides grants up to \$500 per eligible athlete per year (January 1 - December 31) towards sport registration and equipment fees for families facing financial barriers. Learn more at KidSport Canada's website.



Canadian Tire Jumpstart

Offers grants up to \$600 annually (maximum \$300 per application) to help remove financial barriers to kids participating in sports. Eligibility requirements and application details available on their website.

☐ **Tip:** Apply for financial assistance programs early in the season. These grants can significantly offset registration costs and make competitive swimming more accessible for your family.

Fundraising: Supporting Our Club Together

Our club relies on annual fundraising to meet our financial obligations and provide the quality programming our swimmers deserve. Each year brings different fundraising activities, with some recurring annually. A portion of specific fundraisers goes toward your annual Mandatory Fundraising Commitment (MFC), while others support general club operations. If you have any ideas for fundraising events, we encourage you to reach out to our Fundraising Chair at fundraising@dartmouthcrusaders.ca.

How the MFC Works

The Mandatory Fundraising Commitment is in addition to Registration Fees for all competitive swimmers. All applicable fundraising dollars earned throughout the swim season are applied to your family's MFC (except designated Team Fundraisers). Your contributions are tracked through Pool Q, where you can monitor your progress. A final statement will be issued after the last fundraiser has concluded.

At the end of the swim season, refunds will be issued for the amount of fundraising you've earned (no greater than your MFC total) minus any unearned volunteer commitment points and outstanding invoices.



Grocery Gift Cards

Ongoing program throughout the season



Swimathon

Annual fundraising event



Citrus Fruit Fundraiser

Seasonal fundraising opportunity



Rafflebox

Online raffle fundraiser



Squad Travel Fundraisers

As needed for competitions



Corporate Sponsorships

Option for parents interested in obtaining direct financial support from corporations

The club offers various fundraising opportunities throughout the year, which will be highlighted in our regular Splash newsletters. Detailed information about Individual Fundraising, Squad Fundraising, and Team Fundraising can be found on our website.

Sponsorships

This year, based on feedback from the parent survey this past summer, the Board has refreshed our approach to corporate sponsorships. For this year:

1 Direct Financial Sponsorships

Parents are being encouraged to seek financial sponsorships directly. To ease in this process, please find attached a letter that can be used to connect local business with the club to arrange sponsorships.

2 MFC Attribution

For any parent organized financial sponsorships, 50% of the value of the sponsorship will be attributed directly to the parent/family's mandatory fundraising commitment, up to the total value of the MFC. For clarity, sponsorship will not be used to offset registration costs.

3 Marketing & Services

Businesses are offered marketing and promotional opportunities as outlined in the attached letter in return for their sponsorship. Businesses can sponsor the club financially or partner with the club by offering products and services. For clarity, club partnerships (where business provide products or services) cannot be credited against swimmers' MFC's.

4 Contact for Customization

If any potential sponsor has any questions or is looking for a customized option, please have them reach out to Chair of Sponsorship at sponsorship@dartmouthcrusaders.ca.

Sponsorships are applied in the current year only and cannot be carried forward year-over-year. Any funding surplus will be used to offset in year club costs and will be considered in the budgeting process for the next year. The overall goal of this sponsorship campaign is to keep the costs of membership as reasonable as possible.

As a reminder, parents and members of the club should not directly approach municipal, provincial or federal government officials seeking donations and sponsorships. We coordinate requests to all government officials through the club.

Participation Points and Volunteering

The Crusaders require the participation of all swim families—it's what makes our club thrive. Volunteering not only earns participation points for your account but also enhances your experience and your swimmer's journey by fostering new friendships within our community and giving you an insider's view of the sport. Every role, big or small, contributes directly to the success of our club and the vibrant community we share.

We understand that volunteering might seem daunting if you're new, but rest assured, no prior experience is necessary for any of our roles! You'll always be guided by an experienced coordinator or leader, and clear, step-by-step instructions will be provided for everything you do. Our community is incredibly welcoming and supportive, especially to first-time volunteers, so you'll feel right at home as you contribute to our shared success.

Understanding Participation Points

Each family is assigned a number of volunteer points to earn throughout the year. For families with more than one swimmer, the required points are cumulative. These requirements don't change even if a swimmer changes squads during the season.

2	6	8	10
FUNDamentals 1	FUNDamentals 2	Blue & Gold	Junior & Senior
Required points	Required points	Required points	Required points

Unearned points are converted to \$50 per point. We divide points into two equal halves: September-January and February-July. If you haven't earned half your points by February 1, 2025, you'll receive an invoice for the balance. Another invoice will be sent at season's end for any remaining unearned points.

How to Earn Points

There are many ways to contribute and earn your valuable participation points. Here are some of the key opportunities:

Swim Meet Volunteer Opportunities

Swim meets are the heart of our club, and they rely heavily on parent volunteers to run smoothly. These roles are crucial for a great experience for all swimmers:

- **Canteen Workers:** Manage food and beverage sales.
- **Runners:** Deliver snacks and water to officials, assist with small tasks, and ensure everything stays organized.
- **Fundraising Coordinators:** Organize 50/50 draws and other activities to raise vital funds.
- **Equipment Transport Team:** Help move equipment between meet sites and the Zatzman pool office.
- **Setup and Cleanup Crews:** Prepare the venue before the meet and restore it afterwards.
- **Hospitality Volunteers:** Provide food and drinks for officials, ensuring they are well-supported.
- **Marshalls:** Guide our younger swimmers on the pool deck, helping them get to their events on time.
- **Timekeeping Officials:** Crucial for accurate race results and a smooth flow of events.


Special Event Volunteers

Beyond the regular meets, special events create lasting memories and foster team spirit. Your help makes these events possible:

- **Banquet Coordinators and Volunteers:** Help plan and execute our annual celebration, including venue setup, catering coordination, awards presentation, and guest registration, ensuring a memorable evening for all families.
- **Swim-a-thon Helpers:** Support our key fundraising event by assisting with swimmer registration, lap counting, collecting donations, and providing encouragement to participants throughout the event.
- **Other Special Event Assistance:** Lend a hand with various club activities such as organizing team photo days, coordinating social gatherings, planning end-of-season celebrations, or assisting with workshops and educational sessions, all designed to build community and enhance the swimmer experience.

Squad Parent Opportunities

- Each swim squad has a "Squad Parent" who serves as a vital communication link between coaches, the Board, and swimmers & families
- Squad Parents help keep information flowing smoothly and ensure everyone stays connected
- They also organize team-building activities and other squad-specific events
- At the beginning of each season, families will be informed who their Squad Parents are and how to contact them
- This is a rewarding leadership role that earns participation points while building strong community connections

 **Important:** It's your responsibility to track and report your volunteer points to the volunteer coordinator at participation@dartmouthcrusaders.ca. Keep records of all your volunteer activities throughout the season.

Becoming an Official: Your Best Volunteer Option

One of the best ways to meet your volunteer requirements is to become certified as an official. Beyond earning participation points, being an official puts you right in the action at busy swim meets where you're on deck interacting with swimmers throughout the event. Becoming certified and actively participating at meets is strongly encouraged for all parent members—and you'll find that furthering your training as your swimmer advances makes the experience even more rewarding.

Why We Need Officials

Swim Nova Scotia requires clubs to contribute officials for all meets we compete in, and you don't need to be a swimmer to be a great official. Consider the numbers: each of the 8-10 lanes requires 3 timers. At each end of the pool, there are 3-4 Inspectors of Turns. Along the sides, 2-4 Judges of Stroke walk with the swimmers. Add the Meet Manager, Referee, Starter, Safety Marshalls, and Chief Timer—it takes over 50 volunteers at every meet to run a successful competition. These volunteers are all parents just like you, and our swimmers need them to compete.

01

Contact Our Chair of Officials

Email officials@dartmouthcrusaders.ca to begin your journey at any time during the year

02

Complete Registration

They'll coordinate your registration and account access with Swimming Canada

03

Take Online Courses


Complete introductory courses for officiating and timing online—most take less than an hour

04

Get Certified

Become certified to act as an on-deck timer and attend development clinics throughout the season







Officiating will add immeasurably to your experience as a member of our club. You'll meet parents from both Crusaders families and other clubs throughout Nova Scotia, gain a deeper understanding of competitive swimming, and have the best seat in the house to watch your swimmer compete.


 **Tip:** You must register with Swimming Canada every season to officiate. While acting as an official, remember you're there to assist all athletes—not to cheer on your own swimmer.

Training, Squads, and Swimmer Development

The Dartmouth Crusaders offer one pre-competitive program and five competitive training squads, designed to introduce swimmers to competitive swimming and foster their natural development. Our approach follows the Long Term Athlete Development model developed by Swimming Canada. Our swim season typically runs from September through June, and possibly into July or August, depending on your swimmer's competitive level.

Our Squad Structure


	Playground (Age 6-8*) Once per week, 30 minutes—introduction to swimming
	FUNdamentals (Age 8-12*) 2-3 times per week, 3-4 years at this level—building fundamentals
	Blue Squad (Age 10-13*) 4 times per week, 1-2 years—competitive development
	Gold Squad (Age 10-13*) 4-5 times per week, 2-4 years—advancing skills
	Junior Squad (Age 12-14*) 5-6 times per week—serious competitive training
	Senior Squad (Age 14+*) 8-9 times per week—high-level training for elite competitors

 **Age ranges are very approximate and should not be used as a hard and fast rule. There are exceptions in every category that relate to variations in skill, maturity, and readiness.*

Squad Progression

Advancement from one squad to the next is determined through coaching assessments that consider improvements in skills, coordination, physical development, and day-to-day progress observed during practice sessions. Typically, squad promotions occur around midyear, in December or January.

Parents should be aware that swimmers may progress to higher competition levels (such as AA to AAA) while remaining in the same training squad. This ensures swimmers continue receiving appropriate coaching and development tailored to their current skill level and competitive goals.

 **Tip:** FUNdamentals swimmers participate in either a two-day or three-day per week training program (FUNdamentals 1 or FUNdamentals 2).

Swim Competition Progressions

The Nova Tech Aqua Kids Program (NT) is Swim NS's introductory competitive swimming program, designed to teach technique, rules, and progressively introduce various events.

Nova Tech (Regional Competitions)

NT swim meets are typically regional, held on Saturday afternoons within HRM, culminating in a Championship Meet in Truro in May. Swimmers earn Graduation Medals based on their program progression.

The program has three progressive levels, with increasing expectations for technique and adherence to rules:

01	02	03
Participation	Level 1	Level 2
New swimmers compete in 100 IM & 25m races. To graduate, complete 100 IM under 2:15. No disqualifications, focusing on learning.	Swimmers compete in 100 IM & 50m races. To graduate, complete 100IM under 2:00. Officials provide warnings for illegal strokes/turns, but no DQs.	Swimmers compete in 200 Free & 50m races. To graduate, complete 100 IM under 1:50 AND 200 Free under 3:30. Disqualifications are now enforced for illegal strokes/skills.

Swimmers typically spend 1-2 seasons in the NT program. Upon achieving Level 2 Graduation Standards, they advance to the "Age Group" stream of competitions.

Age Group Competitions

The Swim NS Age Group (AG) Program is the main competitive stream for swimmers graduating from the Nova Tech program. It features two provincial competition levels (AA, AAA) within Nova Scotia and a regional level for Eastern Canada, each with specific qualification standards.

1

AA

For Nova Tech graduates, AA competitions are the initial Age Group level. Swimmers compete in development meets, with events determined by their coach. Qualification requires graduating from Nova Tech Level 2.

2

AAA

The highest provincial level in Nova Scotia, requiring specific age and performance qualifications. AAA swimmers participate in development meets, culminating in Short Course Provincial Championships in March and Long Course Provincial Championships in July. Time standards for AAA: [Swim NS AAA Standards](#)

Swim Season Checklist

Here's a checklist to help you start the season. We know it can feel overwhelming at first, but it will become familiar in no time.

1

Register Online
Complete your swimmer's registration through our website and set up your payment plan

2

Know Your Squad
Identify which squad your swimmer is in and check their training schedule—note which facilities they'll use throughout the week

3

Swimming Canada Registration
Watch for and complete the Swimming Canada registration email you'll receive

4

Gather Equipment
Get swimsuit, goggles, cap, and squad-specific training equipment (see appendix for complete lists)

5

Become an Official
Contact our Chair of Officials at officials@dartmouthcrusaders.ca to register and take an officials course

6

Plan Your Volunteering
Review the meet schedule and mark your calendar for volunteer opportunities throughout the season

7

Start Fundraising
Order your Sobeys' Gift Cards and watch for other fundraising opportunities in Splash newsletters

8

Stay Connected
Our club's website is hosted on Pool Q, your go-to platform for all club information.

Keep an eye on your inbox! Every Monday, families receive an email with the weekly Splash update from the club. Additionally, interim updates may be sent at other times during the week.

Read emails regularly, join your squad's Facebook group, and network with other parents—they're your best resource!

Questions? We're Here to Help

Our club thrives because of parent involvement and communication. Don't hesitate to reach out to your squad leader, coaches, or board members with any questions. Welcome to the Crusaders family—we're excited to see your swimmer grow and succeed this season!

Website
<https://dcsc.poolq.net>

Treasurer
Treasurer@dartmouthcrusaders.ca

Participation
Participation@dartmouthcrusaders.ca

Admin
admin@dartmouthcrusaders.ca

Communications
communications@dartmouthcrusaders.ca

Officials
officials@dartmouthcrusaders.ca

Fundraising
fundraising@dartmouthcrusaders.ca