



2014 - 2015 Competitions Guidebook

This guidebook contains helpful information to prepare athletes and parents for synchro competitions.

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Aquatica Synchro Club Competitions Guidebook

Swim Meet Basic Structure

Synchronized swimming competitions follow the rules established by Synchro Swim Manitoba and as set out in the Canadian Amateur Synchronized Swimming Association Inc. (CASSA) Rulebook and the FINA Rulebook. FINA is the world governing body for the sport of Aquatics. The CASSA and FINA rulebooks and the list of current figures and required elements for 2013-2017 are available on the Synchro Canada website: http://www.synchro.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&id=55&Itemid=40

There are usually two parts to a synchronized swim meet:

- Figure competition
- Routine competition

Sometimes meets are only routine or only figures. Meets may run from one or two days, or up to a week depending on the type and level of the meet and the number of entries.

Figure competition

Each athlete performs four figures. Each figure is done without music and is executed in front of a panel of three to seven judges who look for two aspects of technical merit:

1. Design or body position
2. Control of movement

Each figure is judged on a scale of 0-10, evaluating the athlete's ability to perform the figure exactly as described in the rulebook.

Process

Upon arrival at the pool, athletes check the posted list of entrants and get their assigned figure 'number'. When competition begins, athletes are assigned a location and a figure to perform. Athletes perform their figure in numerical order. Once one figure is complete, they move on to the next figure, following the same process until all 4 figures have been performed.

Scoring

Figure scores are used in two ways at a meet:

1. Athletes are awarded ribbons (usually the top 6) at the awards ceremony.
2. Figure scores are combined with routine scores to compute the team's championship score.

Routine Competition

A routine is a combination of swimming techniques and original hybrids choreographed to music. Athletes attempt to blend in perfect harmony during a pre-determined routine length of 2 to 5 minutes, depending on age and competition level. Teams compete in categories according to their age. A minimum of five judges rank routines based on criteria such as technical merit and artistic impression on a scale of 0-10.

A 'draw' is posted at the meet specifying the order in which the routines are performed. This is a random draw done by the meet organizers prior to the meet. Check the posted list of entrants to determine your draw order.

Watch for these routines at a meet:

- **Team:** Four to eight athletes simultaneously "moving as one"
- **Free Combination:** A routine consisting of parts of solos, duets, trios, and teams
- **Trio:** Three athletes performing images of synchronization, moving as one unit in the water
- **Duet:** Two athletes performing mirror-like images in the water, synchronized with each other and the music
- **Solo:** One athlete displaying synchronization with music, with difficulty of moves, creativity, originality and interpretation of music

Behavior Guidelines for Competitions

As representatives of Aquatica Synchro Club, athletes must maintain high standards of behavior at all times:

1. Always behave respectfully towards everyone, including coaches, other athletes, chaperones, judges, meet officials, parents, the general public, as well as in your handling of equipment and facilities.
2. Direct all questions to a coach or chaperone.
3. Follow schedule instructions from coaches and chaperones, promptly observing times for lights-out, meals, practice, etc.
4. Know and follow the venue rules.
5. Be with at least one other athlete at all times.
6. Make sure teammates are included in group activities and no one is left behind.
7. Wear Aquatica attire with respect. Track suits should be zipped to the neckline and the sleeves rolled down to the wrist.
8. Be responsible for getting your team suit and headpiece back to the designated suit person for rinsing and drying, or rinse and dry your suit and headpiece yourself and then carefully pack them away.
9. Be tidy. Keep locker rooms and working areas clean. Discard Knox wrappers, bobby pins, wrappers, and hairnets in trash receptacles.

Behavior Guidelines – Additional Requirements when Travelling

1. Assist with luggage and supplies at airports, lodging and competition locations cheerfully and willingly.
2. Always, and without exception, keep the chaperone apprised of your whereabouts.
3. No smoking, drinking, drugs or boys in rooms.
4. Do not leave rooms unless properly dressed. Keep doors locked at all times
5. Do not use hotel phones for any calls other than to rooms within the same facility. Do not use lodging services such as room service, mini-refrigerators, pay-for-view movies, etc., except as authorized by coach and chaperone.
6. Having your cell phone at the meet is a privilege as well as a personal convenience. Aquatica expects that all athletes use their phones in an appropriate manner. Phones and other personal media devices will be allowed during assigned times as decided by the team coach. They will not be allowed in the rooms overnight.
7. Any inappropriate behavior may result in parents being contacted and/or athletes being returned to their families at the first opportunity. Any additional travel charges resulting from being sent home early would be at the family's expense.

Synchronized Swimming Competitions

Outfitting: How to Care for Suits

To put a sequined suit on:

1. *Gently* squish up the suit and wiggle into the bottom of it, like putting on panty hose.
2. *Gently* pull up one side at a time, keep wiggling and gently pulling.
3. Be patient. Be gentle. If the sequins pop off or repairs are needed, make the repairs or find someone who can. Don't leave it for the next meet. Ask an experienced person about proper sewing technique and type of thread or glue to use.

Don't:

1. Wear a routine suit as a warm up suit. Wear it as little as possible.
2. Shower (unless it's a cold shower) in a routine suit. The warm water and the chlorine from the pool water fades and breaks down the fibers in the suit.
3. Ever put suits in clothes dryers. Hang or lay flat to dry.

Do:

1. Rinse your suit in cold water immediately after you take it off.
2. Rinse your suit in a bathtub of cold water and ¼ cup of white vinegar. Gently squeeze some of the water out. Pat dry with a towel and hang on a plastic hanger to dry. Make sure the suits are dry before putting them in a plastic bag. If they are packed-away wet, they will mildew.

Local Synchro Swim Manitoba Sponsored Meets

1. The team coach will send a detailed schedule of arrival times, warm-up and competition schedule, a description of what to expect and other reminders up to one week prior to the competition.
2. Parents and athletes are responsible for athlete preparation for competition. Ensure the athlete is rested, well nourished, and knows the routine(s). This may include following a coach's land-drill plan at home prior to competition.
3. **Athletes should pack supplies the night before a meet: unflavored gelatin, kettle for boiling water, container and fork to mix gelatin, hairpins, hairnets, brush/comb, routine make-up, towels, nose clips, white cap, Aquatica cap, black suit, club warm-up suit, routine suit(s) and headpiece(s). If possible, knocking is to be completed at home prior to coming to the pool.**
4. Athletes are to arrive at the competition ready to compete with hair knocked, unless other arrangements have been made with the coach.
5. Club sponsored healthy food and drink concessions may be available. If not available or for special dietary needs, it is recommended to take a cooler with healthy snacks and non-carbonated drinks that the athlete likes. Athletes should never try 'new foods' at a competition. See page 8 for healthy snack ideas.
6. Athletes must arrive at competitions at the time set by their coach and be prepared for warm-up laps.
7. Athletes of all ages compete better with a warm, receptive audience and a positive atmosphere. Everyone benefits when parents and athletes alike practice good sportsmanship.

Inter-Provincial and National Meets (CPI, Qualifiers and Nationals)

The Meet Schedule

While the girls are at the meet, they are very busy and their time is scheduled. They are up early, they swim, land drill, eat, nap, and they compete. Time is also scheduled for relaxation/regeneration. This is all done together as a team. If required, alone time is scheduled for athletes who have homework to complete during the meet.

Once the order of draw is established for the various events, the coaches plan the day around the competition. The order of draw is usually posted at the competition pool and online.

Important Information for Parents

As a competitive team, it is very important that the athletes be **united in their common goal** of having a good swim at the meet. It can be a stressful time and emotional experience, and coping skills can be challenged. Our athletes have the opportunity to learn and grow from this experience as they meet this challenge together as a team. It is important for parents to **be supportive of the team as a whole**, the coach and the chaperone.

Process for Travel Arrangements

1. The travel coordinator and chaperone(s) are volunteer positions appointed by the Board of Directors. They work closely with the Head Coach in planning travel arrangements.
2. As soon as a competition schedule is available, the Head Coach lets the travel coordinator know the travel needs of the team.
3. As far in advance as possible, the travel coordinator makes travel arrangements using the following guidelines:
 - The well-being and safety of the athletes (arriving rested, avoiding motels with outside entrances to rooms, etc.) is a top priority.
 - Costs for transportation and facilities should be kept as low as possible.
4. All Aquatica athletes should travel and lodge together. If a family has a special request for other arrangements for their child, prior approval from the chaperone and the Head Coach is required.

Transportation & Lodging

The travel coordinator makes arrangements for all transportation and lodging for athletes, chaperones, and coaches as a group. The travel coordinator is the primary Aquatica contact person with the travel agency, transportation companies and/or lodging facilities. Arrangements are coordinated with the coaches in charge of the meet and reviewed with the chaperone(s).

Athletes typically travel by bus to CPI, if held out of province, and by plane to national meets. Chaperones may be required where overnight hotel accommodations or long distance travel is required. In the case of a team of older athletes, a second coach may be assigned as the chaperone.

When traveling, athletes wear Aquatica Synchro club apparel so they are easily identified as a group and chaperones can easily identify our athletes. Wearing team attire also promotes the sport and our Club. Good behavior is imperative at all times.

Athletes take their **swim bag on the bus/plane as carry-on luggage**. The swim bag should include knocking supplies, hair nets, bobby pins, ponytail bands, extra routine suits and headpieces, make-up, make-up remover, team warm-up suit, black figures suit, white swim cap, nose clips, goggles, and towels. **If travelling by air, ensure airline restrictions related to liquids in carry-on luggage are respected. Do not to bring valuables to a meet. They might not return with the athlete.**

For air travel, once the entire team is together at the airport **they are checked in as a group** by the chaperone/coach and their luggage is checked through to their final destination. It is important to **know where and when team members are supposed to meet at the airport. Do not be late.** Athletes board the airplane as a group and all reasonable attempts are made for the team to sit as close together as possible.

Athlete's Personal Travel Money

Travel money for the athletes is usually spent on concession snacks, pictures (these can be expensive), souvenirs (event t-shirts & caps), and the occasional meal at a restaurant. The girls may carry their own money or put some in an envelope with their name and give it to the chaperone for safekeeping.

Family Travel

Family members who wish to attend a meet must make their own travel arrangements unless options to travel with the team are made available through the travel coordinator. It is suggested that family members wanting to travel to a meet travel on different flights (particularly the flight to the meet) and stay at a different location than the team, as having family close-by can be distracting for the athletes. This can be difficult for first-time parents, but is important to ensure the athlete is focused on the meet. If you are travelling to a meet, provide your contact/accommodation information to your daughter and the coach so you can be contacted if needed.

Hotel Accommodations

Once the contracts have been signed, changing reservations at the last minute is costly and difficult. Hotel reservations are made with safety as the primary focus. The athletes will typically share hotel rooms, four girls to a room, in a 'suite-style' hotel, with the chaperone staying adjacent or as close to the athlete rooms as possible. The Head Coach and team coaches make the room assignments. At the hotel they check in as a group and must stay in their assigned rooms.

There may be circumstances where younger athletes (under 12) stay two girls to a room with a chaperone. The Board, parents and coaching staff will review the maturity of the athletes and make appropriate recommendations to the travel coordinator.

It is a learning experience for athletes to gain independence and team travel skills. It is important that parents allow the chaperone and coaches to take charge of the athletes for the duration of the meet. The chaperone and coach must always know the whereabouts of every athlete.

Meals

Chaperones are responsible for supplying food. Athletes may bring a favorite healthy snack food with them but should expect to share this snack with teammates. Prior to each trip, the chaperone will try to ask about food preferences or dietary restrictions. A variety of healthy foods is always available at the hotel "food room" and at the pool during competition.

Allergy information is taken from the individual athlete's Medical Release forms. ***A new medical release form may be required prior to each away meet.*** Be sure to update this information if necessary and let the chaperone know of any medical concerns.

Candy, pop and junk food are not food choices of champions. Club policy is that consumption of these items will be limited to special events following the competition.

Breakfast is often at the hotel and usually consists of cereal with milk, muffins or bagels, juice, and fruit.

Lunch is usually served from the cooler at the pool and often consists of sandwiches, pasta salads, fruit, crackers, water, milk or juices.

Dinner options depend on the meet. Sometimes there is an 'Athlete Banquet' where dinner is served. The club may also dine out, at the pool, or at the hotel.

Packing List

Basic Equipment

- plain black suit for figures
- goggles
- white swim cap for the figure competition
- extra nose clips
- team warm-up suit
- team swim cap
- routine suit(s) & headpieces
- make-up in a container and make-up remover
- club shirt and track jacket, black yoga pants

Hair Supplies:

- 2-5 hair elastics
- hair net
- hair pins and/or bobbi pins
- comb/brush
- unflavored gelatin*, container, brush/comb/bowl for application

Unflavored Gelatin Recipe:

- ¼ cup hot water
- 3 heaping tablespoons of unflavored gelatin. Unflavored gelatin may be purchased at any grocery store under the brand name Knox, or it can be purchased at bulk food stores.
- Stir until dissolved, taking care not to stir too vigorously so as to avoid forming bubbles

Putting up hair:

- Put on an old button-up shirt and/or cover your shoulders with a towel
- Pull hair tightly into a pony tail. Check with coach for how high on head the pony tail should be
- Wrap hair into a bun, secure with bobbi pins
- Place hair net over the bun
- Apply gelatin mixture to entire head. Comb through
- Put on headpiece before Knox hardens criss-cross bobbi pins so the headpiece is well anchored

Remember to:

- Keep warm. Bring towels, fleece, deck coat or track pants to wear between figures
- Eat sensibly and drink plenty of water or sports drinks
- Support the concession if available, but no candy or soda during the competition
- Wear your team uniform to the awards ceremony
- Support your team members in positive helpful ways

Recommended Snack Foods for Training and Competition

The snacks below are perfect for a chilled, insulated lunch bag.
All these snacks contain least 2-food groups.

- A hard boiled egg (or 2) and bunch of seedless grapes
- Smashed avocado, salsa and baked tortilla chips or pita chips
- Yogurt and a piece of fresh fruit
- Cottage cheese and wheat thins
- String cheese and an apple, pear or banana
- Baby carrots, celery, red pepper strips, snap peas and hummus for dipping
- Cottage cheese and sliced pineapple or berries
- Almonds*, walnuts* or pecans sprinkled in yogurt
- A banana with smeared peanut butter* on top
- Dried mangos or apricots and a slices of turkey or beef jerky
- Tuna pouch lunch-to-go with whole grain crackers
- Sliced peaches or packaged apple sauce with cottage cheese
- Energy bar and a piece of fruit
- Yogurt cup with crunchy granola or sprinkled nuts* on top
- Lean lunch meat and cucumber slices rolled up (roll meat around cucumber slices)
- Soy nuts and an apple, peach, or plum
- Air popped popcorn and raw vegetables
- Low sugar cereal and yogurt
- Rice cakes topped with cream cheese and raisins or dried cranberries
- Trail mix containing dried fruit and nuts*
- Granola bar and fruit

**Only bring nuts/peanut butter if they are allowed at competitions*

SANDWICH IDEAS

- Whole wheat bread with peanut butter
- Whole wheat bread with lean turkey, chicken or ham
- ½ pita stuffed with tuna, egg salad, or hummus.
- Add cucumber, tomato, or lettuce to your sandwich