



Competitive Swimming with Northcote Swim Club (NTC)

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Introduction

Northcote Swim Club (NTC) is a community based competitive swimming club providing coaching and training programs for swimmers of all levels and a range of abilities. The club supports a coaching program built around a competition pathway from junior to senior. Swimmers participate in inter-club long-course (50 metre pool) and short-course (25 metre pool) swimming competitions.

Northcote Swim Club Squads

Junior Bronze

Junior Bronze provides a transition from learn-to-swim to a structured training environment. These sessions focus on developing swimmers' foundational technique across all four strokes, building fitness, stamina and making swimming as a sport, fun for young swimmers. Training expectation is one to two 60-minute sessions per week.

Junior Silver

Junior Silver builds on the development of competitive technique and race skills in an environment that encourages consistency, learning and enjoyment of racing. Building fitness, stamina, discipline and strength are key to the program focus for those hoping to progress competitively. Training expectation is two to three 90-minute sessions per week.

Junior Gold

Junior Gold aims to prepare athletes for achieving state qualifying times and focuses on consolidating both technical ability and endurance across all strokes, as well as the swimmer's racing skills. At Junior Gold, coaching aims to develop the physiological base – strength, stamina, motivation, discipline and fitness - required to enjoy success as competitive athletes. Training expectation is three to five 90-minute sessions per week. Coach-supported Strength and Conditioning training is also introduced at this level.

Senior Squad

Senior Squad provides targeted training and competition opportunities for those who have state qualifying times and goals related to continuing their development as competitive athletes – potentially aiming for national qualifying. At Senior Squad, coaching builds further on mindset, physical strength, speed and stamina, discipline and resilience. Training expectation is generally five plus 90 minutes sessions per week including at least one gym/dryland strength and conditioning session.

As swimmers progress through squad levels, they are exposed to more challenging levels of competition, increasing focus on developing race performances through critical thinking and responding to constructive feedback from their squad coach.

Youth Squad

Youth Squad provides a structure training environment for those swimmers whose objective is to maintain swimming fitness and ability, without competing. Youth Squad **does not** cater to the needs of competitive swimmers.

Swimming Seasons

Competitive swimming in Australia is organised into two swimming seasons – Long Course and Short Course. These names refer to the length of the pool, rather than the length of the race.

- Long Course season is the summer period (October to April, Terms 1 and 4), and is raced in a 50M pool.
- Short Course season is the winter period (May to September, Terms 2 and 3) and is raced in a 25M pool.

Qualifying times for Long Course and Short Course differ due to the difference in turns and push off/s for each (that is, 25M racing requires an extra push off for every 50M raced).

More information on the difference between short and long course swimming can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Swimming Victoria

Northcote Swim Club is affiliated with [Swimming Victoria](#), the governing body for swimming in Victoria. All members of Northcote Swim Club, including swimmers, coaches, and at least one parent/guardian for each swimmer under 18 years, must be registered – financial - members of Swimming Victoria. Annual memberships run from 1st July to 30th June each financial year. A portion of the Swimming Victoria registration fee goes to the club.

A full list of all affiliated swim meets held in Victoria is published on the [Swimming Victoria website](#).

[Swimming Australia](#) is the peak governing body for swimming with nearly 1,000 clubs and 90,000 registered members nationally. Swimming is Australia's largest participation sport. Ausplay data reveals there are 5.34 million organised swimmers, with over 50% growth in the last 10 years.

Swim Central

[Swim Central](#) is the purpose-built online support portal for swimming membership, events and results across Australia. It is owned and operated by Swimming Australia. Swimming Victoria members are eligible to establish a Swim Central account. Swim Central is accessible via the browser and mobile app.

Swim Central contains the history of all official results from all races swum in Australia. Results from individual swimmers can be ranked via club, age, state or national.

Entering swim competitions/meets

To register for a swim meet, you need to log into your **Swim Central** account, find the swim meet you are after and register and pay online.

A meet may not always show up on the meet list or the calendar, so you may need to do a search to find the meet you are looking for.

A full list of events (races) in any given competition can be found on the flyer for that meet.

Typically, registrations for a swim meet close a week prior to the meet. In some instances, all available places in an event will fill prior to the closing date, and registrations may close early. It is recommended to register early for a meet to avoid missing out.

I'm trying to enter a meet but it says my child does not qualify

There could be several reasons why a swimmer doesn't qualify:

1. The event has a qualifying time
2. The event has age restrictions
3. The event has restricted entries to a particular Club or District/Region
4. The swimmer does not have a current 'swimmer' membership.
5. The event allows converted non-conforming time. *This only occurs under special circumstances and is considered uncommon.*

Conversion is where the swimmer's Short Course time has been converted to a Long Course time by adding 2%

OR the swimmer's Long Course time has been converted to a Short Course time by deducting 2%.

<https://support.swimming.org.au/hc/en-us>

Northcote Swim Club supported swim meets (target meets)

Northcote coaches will encourage swimmers to attend meets (usually targeting two to three meets per term, and generally maximum of three). Younger swimmers are encouraged to get as much race practice as possible, and may choose to enter more events.

Coaches post a list of target meets via **TeamApp (usually at the start of the term)** and swimmers are encouraged to register for events (races) in these meets. Coaches attend these targeted meets to support swimmers.

Swimmers are encouraged to talk to their coaches to determine which events to register in. It is also vital that racing experience is built across all four strokes, to build strength, stamina, fitness and technique.

Swimmers can independently register in any swim meet they wish, to practice their competition swimming. In this instance, it should be noted that club coaches may not attend every competition, so athletes will race without coach support on the day.

Different types of swim meets/competitions

Every swim meet is different.

Every meet will have a flyer or a booklet with the specific competition information for that meet. This flyer is available on the meet information page on Swim Central.

Most swim meets are organised and hosted by swim clubs and districts. At Club and District hosted meets, volunteer time keepers are required. Where the club has a significant number of members entered in a particular meet, parents/guardians of those racing are asked to volunteer for a stint time keeping. This requirement is communicated prior to event day (generally up to 5 days prior).

Training for time keeping is provided on the day.

Official / unofficial meets

A meet will be set as either a Qualifying or Encouragement (non-qualifying) meet. Times from an Encouragement meet cannot be used as entry times for state meets. These times can be used as entry times for other qualifying meets.

Some meets will require swimmers to have a qualifying time to enter events. Some meets are all inclusive regardless of previous times achieved.

Encouragement meets

Encouragement meets are designed for new swimmers to learn how to race and record a time. These meets also present good racing practice opportunities for swimmers and are open to both registered (ie registered with Swimming Victoria or a club) and unregistered swimmers. They often have a 25-metre event for the youngest age group. Times from these un-official meets are unable to be used as entry times for state meets.

Qualifying meets

Qualifying or 'official' meets enable swimmers to obtain a 'qualifying' or official time that will allow them to enter into Championship meets.

For official events, volunteer timekeepers are called from competing clubs by Swimming Victoria, to attend and officiate the meet. Official time keeping equipment is used and all timekeepers are provided with training and official briefing prior to the event starting.

Sometimes a meet flyer will say 'this is a proposed qualifying meet'. This is often because the club will need time keepers on the day to help out to ensure it can operate as a qualifying meet.

'Age' meets

If a meet includes the word 'Age' in the title, it means swimmers can only swim in their age group.

Championship meets

Championship Competitions include District, State and National level competitions. Qualifying times are required to enter championship competitions. All qualifying times must be achieved within the current season.

Club Championships

A club may hold its own 'club championship' as an internal club-based event.

Northcote Swim Club will hold an annual Club Championships when operating from Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre. Age group champions at every age are determined on the basis of best official times across all four strokes. Annual winners are awarded Age Champion trophies and have their name engraved on the relevant age group perpetual trophy.

Junior and Senior Club Champions are also awarded on the basis of the fastest 200M Individual Medley (Junior) and 400M Individual Medley (Senior) official time.

All club members are encouraged to work for race times across all four strokes to build confidence and ability, as well as ensuring eligibility for annual club awards.

District meets

In addition to swim meets described above, there is also a program of competitions and activities facilitated by the districts across Victoria. District meets offer a range of events in all four strokes. These are generally qualifying meets, so times are recorded in Swim Central and can be used to qualify for state championships.

There are four districts in metropolitan Melbourne - North, South, East, West. Northcote is in the Metro North District. There are also country districts across regional Victoria.

The District program consists of selection trials and finals competition.

Every district has its own selection trials. This race is for swimmers from ages 8 through to 16. Swimmers can only enter the selection trial of the district that their club is part of.

Metro Districts - The top ten swimmers in each age group, in each stroke, in each of the four metro districts, progress to the *Victorian Metro All Junior Competition*.

Country Districts - Country regions have their own competitions.

To compete in the district competition, swimmers need to enter the selection trial meet. If a swimmer is eligible to progress, they do not need to independently enter the *Victorian Metro All Junior Competition*, as the District enters the swimmers into the meet and pays the entry fee.

The *Victorian Metro All Junior Competition* won't show up on the events list in Swim Central but it will be on the Swimming Victoria [events calendar](#).

School swimming carnivals and competitions

While school meets are not connected to the Swimming Victoria program and the Northcote Swim Club, many of our swimmers compete in their school swim competition, so the following is provided for information.

School Sport Victoria is the Victorian government department that supports sports in Victorian state government schools, including swimming.

The inter-school swimming competition season primarily runs in Term 1 of each year. Some schools may hold their internal swimming competitions in Term 4.

Primary Schools compete in: District, Division, Regional, State level competitions.

High Schools complete in: Division, Regional, State level competitions.

The School Sport Victoria website will have the event list, which includes names of swimmers who progress to each level.

Private schools run their own swimming programs, including:

APS - Associated Public Schools of Victoria

GSV - Girls Sport Victoria

SCSA – Secondary Catholic Schools Association

AGS – Associated Grammar Schools

Qualifying times

Swimmers often require a qualifying time to be able to enter particular events.

If the required qualifying time has not yet been achieved, the event will not appear on the individual's Swim Central profile and they will not be able to enter that event.

Usually, qualifying times have to be obtained within the current season.

Establishing a time

Swimmers without established times should target Encouragement meets to build confidence where there is no requirement for an entry qualifying time, and qualifying meets for the opportunity to establish one.

Converting short course and long course times

A swimmer may be able to use a Long Course qualifying time for a Short Course meet and vice versa. This opportunity depends on the conditions of the meet, which can be found on the meet flyer. For example, a flyer might state:

Converted short course qualifying times will only be used where an existing long course qualifying time has not been achieved.

Time conversion is granted by exception only, and must be requested by the athlete's accredited coach. Where a request is accepted a simple conversion from short course to long course calls for *adding 2%* to account for fewer turns and *subtracting 2%* when converting from long course to short course.

Occasionally, a meet may list both short course and long course qualifying times. Again, this is quite uncommon.

My child is aiming for a state time – what does that mean?

All swimmers wishing to progress are encouraged to aim to improve their Personal Best (PB) times in different events. Every PB means a faster time has been achieved and is a signal of continuing improvement.

For some, continuing to progress in competitive swimming, a focus on achieving State qualifying times becomes the next step towards competing at National Championships. It is only a few who make it to competing at National Championships where the best in Australia race.

Qualifying times for the Victorian Long and Short Course Championships can be found on the Swimming Victoria website.

State Championship meets

State championships are organised and hosted by Swimming Victoria, as the auspicing body for swimming in this state. These meets are usually televised live on Kayo or another streaming channel.

Long Course State Championships

There are several state championship meets held in the long course season.

Victorian Sprint Championships

- Only has 50M events
- Typically held in January
- Can only swim in your age group

Victorian Age Long Course Championship

- Includes a full range of race lengths. Only 50M event in freestyle
- Typically held in December
- Can only swim in your age group

Victorian Open Long Course Championships

- Includes a full range of race distances as well as 50M events in all strokes
- Typically held in February
- 12 year olds and older can swim in any event

The Australian Age Championships (the national swim competition) are typically held in March/April and offer events in 50M, 100M, 200M, 400M, 800M and 1500M.

Short Course State Championships

There are several state championships meets held in the short course season.

Victorian Open Short Course Championships

- Includes a full ranges of race lengths. 50M events in all strokes
- Held around August
- 12 year olds and older age can swim in any event

Victorian Age Short Course Championship

- Includes a full range of race lengths. 50M events in all strokes
- Held around August
- Can only swim in your age group

Multi-class athletes and competition

Classified athletes of all ages are entitled to enter – with the same entry principles applying as for able-bodied athletes.

Classification is offered by Swimming Victoria a couple of times each year and information can be found on the SV website and newsletters.

Open water competitive swimming

Open water competitive swimming involves organised and auspiced swim meets in ocean (or bay) environments. Swimming Victoria supports and program of open water events and come coaches offer specialised coaching.

Tracking results

Meet Mobile: Swim is a mobile app that records swim competition results in real time. This mobile app holds the results of all swimmers in all official competitions and usually posts formal results within minutes of the race finishing.

It lists the events that each swimmer is entered in, shows information like qualifying times, and how a result compares with a swimmer's existing PB (their entry time).

You can follow your favourite swimmers and events.

The full version of the app costs about \$15 per annum.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/meet-mobile-swim/id422154977>

Questions

Club coaches are always looking for opportunities to support our club athletes to continue to develop as swimmers and be their best.

They have a good understanding of the ability and fitness levels, development areas and ambitions of their squad members and are best placed to answer any questions about target events, additional meets and focus for training.

Coaches stay back for 15 minutes after training sessions to be available for swimmers and parents to discuss any questions and ideas. Casual coaches are not expected to be available outside of their paid hours, including training and competitions, but are always happy to assist when they are available.

Ultimately, we want our athletes to have fun while they work towards they achieve their goals in the pool. Working hard, staying focused and supporting squad mates are all keep to success both in and out of the water. Our club culture is one we are proud of and has a long history in Northcote. The club has been big, small and medium-sized and has always held on to core values of fairness, friendship, healthy competition and team spirit.

We love what we do and hope you will too.