

The Handbook of the Okanagan Masters Swim Club



Intro

A very big welcome from the Okanagan Masters Swim Club!

This handbook is a collection of information that you, the prospective member / new member / renewing member can use to get an idea of what Okanagan Masters Swim Club is all about.

The OMSC family would like to ensure that joining or renewing with OMSC will prove to be one the best decisions you've ever taken!

As a member of the club there are a number of things you should know, that can help you become one of the team, an active participant in Masters swimming, and to reach your full potential. Every swim club has its own style and circumstances, so even if you're a seasoned Masters swimmer, there are still things to learn about our set-up, how we try to keep it interesting and entertaining, and the things we like to do.

We also want to make it easier for you to understand how we fit into the Okanagan aquatic scene, and for you to get the highest level of satisfaction and benefit from your association with OMSC.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact any member of the board. We live by the Masters swimming mantra "*Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Participation*" and promise to help make your transition from new member to swimming colleague and friend, as enjoyable as possible.

You can reach any member of the board at any time. Our contact information is posted our website at www.okmasters.com under 'Contact Us'.

Thanks for choosing OMSC as your new swimming home!

Yours in swimming

OMSC Board

president@okmasters.com

www.okmasters.com

Contents

Intro	2
Contents	3
Membership	4
OMSC the society	5
The OMSC family	5
Swim Program	5
Facilities	6
Swimming in the Okanagan	6
Open Water Swimming and Triathlon	7
Set-up and Equipment	9
Swim Club Clothing	9
Workout Hieroglyphs	10
Lane Etiquette	11
Competitive Swim Meets	14
Social	15
Communications	15
Annual General Meeting	15

Membership

Membership varies from season to season and year to year. Some swimmers train all year round, others take time off during Summer, and some head for a warmer climate during our winter. We plan our swim program and lane requests to match member requirements as closely as possible.

OMSC is the largest year-round tenant club at our home pool, the H2O Adventure & Fitness Centre, and has been since it first opened in April 2009. Membership includes all ages from 18 and above.

We offer one of the most attractive Masters programs available. Membership and usage patterns at the H2O have stabilized over time. We have developed a good feel for what our members appreciate most about our club, and have developed our seasonal program accordingly.

It wouldn't make sense to put exact membership headcounts into a handbook (we'd have to adjust it every month), but the following will give you a feel for the typical club profile in early 2022:

OMSC members registered with MSABC for the 2021- 2022 season	~ 130
Number of directors on board	6-9
Total number of active swimmers	~ 120
Number of coaches	6-8
Age range of membership	18-90
Average member age	~ 49-50
Gender profile of membership	70% female, 30% male

OMSC takes a commitment for pool usage months ahead of the start of the season, based on historical and expected future usage patterns and lane availability, and lane allocations must be assigned by the operator equitably taking into account all users of the pool.

Starting in September 2014, OMSC entered into a partnership with the YMCA of Okanagan, the operator of the H2O Adventure & Fitness Centre. Under this new arrangement, OMSC membership includes regular membership of the YMCA (at the H2O Adventure + Fitness Centre "H2O" facility only). OMSC members therefore have access to all of the Y's facilities and programs in addition to OMSC's swim program. Visit our website to view our membership categories and current fee structure.

OMSC the society

Okanagan Masters Swim Club was registered as a Society with the BC Registrar of Companies on December 30, 2004 – reg. number S48521. The club's home pool from 2004 to 2009 was the Athans facility in Rutland (now known as the "Kelowna Family Y"). In April 2009 the H2O Adventure & Fitness Centre opened its doors and OMSC moved across to become its first adult swim club tenant.

OMSC is managed as a going concern and funded by membership fees. We occasionally raise funds through competitive swim meets, open water swims and other related activities, and manage the affairs of the club with a board of up to 9 members plus other volunteers.

OMSC holds its Annual General Meeting in late October or November. Members in good standing are eligible to stand for election to the board, vote on matters arising at the AGM, and to elect members to represent them on the board. Directors are elected for two-year terms, with certain portfolios staggered across alternate years. The board comprises up to nine directors, which at full complement would include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Registrar, Director – Coach Liaison, Communications Director and two Directors at Large.

The OMSC family

Okanagan Masters Swim Club is a collection of swimmers who have joined a club for many different reasons. Our Constitution gives the purposes of the society as:

- To promote fun, fitness, health, fellowship, and participation among adult swimmers.
- To give guidance and leadership in the direction, development and execution of programs for non-competitive and competitive adult swimmers in the Okanagan.
- To encourage the development and use of facilities for swimming, in general, and for Masters swimming in particular.

Swim Program

We have a continuous swim program year around with a training program that is geared to three main cycles – Winter-Fall (build up and competitive), Spring (Open Water/Tri) and Summer, during which we train with a slightly lighter program.

Sharing

The H2O Adventure & Fitness Centre has understandably become popular with many aquatic clubs in Kelowna. Lane space is valuable and there will be days when OMSC will not have access to a scheduled session, such as on certain statutory holidays, and when another

aquatic club or group has reserved space well in advance for a special event. The H2O schedule is planned in advance. We will communicate with our members by email if a scheduled OMSC session is not available in the next week or two.

Communication

Our primary form of communication with members is by email, so please make sure you keep your address current and your eyes open for emails from the club. These are distinctive and OMSC branded, so they won't be easy to miss.

Facilities

The "H2O" is an asset of the City of Kelowna, residents and taxpayers. It is operated by YMCA Okanagan under contract to the City. Usage guidelines are established by the Aquatic Advisory Committee. OMSC is represented on the AAC as spokesperson for Masters swimming.



The pool is 50m long and eight lanes wide with two moveable bulkheads. During certain periods it is set up as a long course pool (50m), mostly as two short course (25m) tanks, and occasionally as three tanks (12.5m, 25m and 12.5m). The Aquatic facility also has a river run, water slides, wave rider, wave pool, hot tub and gym.

Okanagan Masters Swim Club is allocated lane space at the H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre pursuant to agreement reached with the City in association with the Aquatic Advisory Committee.

Swimming in the Okanagan



Photo courtesy "Across The Lake Swim" website:
<http://acrossthelakeswim.com>

The Okanagan enjoys one of the most pleasant summers in Canada. Daytime temperatures often reach the high 30's and early 40's during July and August.

OMSC is very supportive of all the wonderful opportunities to swim in the lake – either competitively or recreationally. We work with other organizations to support open water clinics.

Open Water Swimming and Triathlon

Our members have varied interests including competitive swimming, triathlon and open water swimming. Since many of our members compete across all three sports, our coaching program caters for skills levels from developmental through to advanced competitive, including a focus on the type of training needed as we approach various provincial and national events.

Whether your goal is to participate in the annual Across the Lake Swim (2100m), Kelowna Apple Triathlon (1500m Olympic or 750m Sprint), or to swim across the English Channel, our Club provides its members with expert open water coaching during the spring/summer swim season (in the pool).

Although we are not currently offering on-going lake training sessions, we work with other organizations including the Across The Lake Society to support open water clinics where coaches review the following:

- how to stay relaxed in open water
- how to swim in a pack (i.e. take advantage of the "draft")
- triathlon starts and finishes
- swimming in a straight line and in the right direction--a real time saver!
- open water freestyle technique
- swimming through waves
- rounding buoys
- race strategy
- long-distance marathon swimming
- cold water acclimatization for those inclined to swim without wetsuits

OMSC has a strong open water history. We have coached and supported several athletes to conquer the English Channel. This is a challenging 40km crossing without the aid of a wetsuit. Swimmers include our own Brent Hobbs (2008) and Emily Epp (2018), colleague Rod Craig (2010) from North Vancouver Masters and Allison Donelon (2010) from Canmore, Alberta. All four performed qualifying swims in Okanagan Lake with the support of OMSC.

In summer 2011 OMSC members Rhonda Talbot and Jennifer Leach-Trask (the "Georgia Girls") successfully battled through a small craft warning to complete a four-person relay swim of Georgia Strait (30km crossing between Sechelt and Nanaimo).

In March 2013, OMSC member Paul Duffield achieved status as Canada's Ice Swimming Ambassador to the IISA. Paul: "The board of the International Ice Swimming Association appointed ten ice swimming ambassadors. I am thrilled and honoured to have been named as one of them."

Ice Swimming continues to grow globally at an escalating pace as more and more successful and certified Ice Swimmers now start encouraging and guiding others to take up the daunting challenge of attempting an ice mile. IISA ambassadors have been nominated by the IISA committee in every country with has active certified Ice Swimmers. The IISA country ambassador should be a recognized Ice Swimmer and active in the sport of open water swimming, cold water and Ice Swimming.

In summer 2013 our own 'OMSC Lake Monsters' Channel Crossing Relay team completed the 40km crossing in a comfortable time of 11 hours 41 minutes. The team comprised five swimmers with a varied swimming history: Denise Cesselli, Leora Dahl, Phred Martin, Mike Stamhuis and Tracey Sutton.

Set-up and Equipment

We advise our members to purchase certain equipment for personal use:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Swim suit | 4. Paddles | 7. Swim cap* |
| 2. Goggles | 5. Water bottle | 8. Pull Buoys** |
| 3. Fins | 6. Mesh bag for swim kit | 9. Kickboard** |

* We will hand you a fashionable and sought-after, complimentary OMSC branded swim cap when you join our club.

** The last 2 items may be available at the pool as the H2O provides certain swimming equipment for public and general use, which many clubs make use of. There is no guarantee however, that you will find the right size or fit, or that this equipment will be available when you might need it. Most of our swimmers prefer to invest in their own equipment for reasons of proper fit and hygiene.

Most serious Masters swimmers have their own fins, pull buoys, paddles and mesh bag. All of the equipment listed above can be purchased at leading swimming goods outlets. OMSC has a club account with [Team Aquatic Supplies](#), a Canadian-owned supplier, for the benefit of its members.

Equipment can be purchased directly online from [Team Aquatic Supplies](#) at an OMSC team, family and friends club discount of 10%, by entering **discount code “oka092”** at checkout:



Paddles



Fins



Pull Buoys



Kickboard

Swim Club Clothing

OMSC has also designed some great-looking OMSC branded clothing (jackets, hoodies, extra swim caps) that members can order through the club. Ask one of the Exec members when we're going to place the next bulk order.

Workout Hieroglyphs

The following list may help you make sense of some swimming lingo and the swim workout. The coach is there to help you understand it, but please familiarize yourself with the following terms:

The Workout

Fr = freestyle
Fr = front crawl
Bk = backstroke
Br = breaststroke
Fl = fly

a x b (a = number of times, b = distance, e.g. 5 x 100m free)
 The pool is 25 metres long at most workouts and 50m long at other times. To swim 100 metres you would swim 4 lengths of 25m.
 5 x 100 means you would swim 4 lengths, take a rest and repeat this another 4 times.

Ch = choice (your choice of stroke other than Front Crawl: i.e. Fly, Backstroke or Breaststroke)

Dr = drill (focuses on specific aspects of a stroke)

K = kick (kick only, no pulling with arms)

P = pull (swim with Pull Buoy, arms only, no kick)

10 sec = 10 seconds rest

SC = stroke count. The number of full strokes to swim a lap (25m or 50m)

IM = Individual Medley, swim fly, followed by backstroke, breaststroke and front crawl for the total distance indicated

MI = Contrary to common belief, this is not an acronym for Myocardial Infarction ("heart attack" in common parlance) but it simply means reverse-order Individual Medley: front crawl, followed by breaststroke, backstroke and fly for the total distance indicated.

Build = get progressively faster in the swim

⚡ Descending (descending lap time, increasing speed, same as build)

⚡ Ascending (ascending lap time, decreasing speed) [*you won't see this very often*]

Warm-up = the period of the workout where you get your body warmed up

The Cool-down = the period of the workout where you slow your body down to finish the workout

Lane Etiquette

It's a strange fact that guidelines for lane etiquette are often not written or well communicated to members of Masters swim clubs. It makes life easier when we're all aware of what's expected and what constitutes 'good manners' in Masters swimming. To assist members, we've decided to add a **website article on lane etiquette**.



OMSC has anywhere from 15 to 40 swimmers swimming at workouts. With 4 to 8 lanes this means up to 6 swimmers per SC (25m lane) and up to 10 swimmers per LC (50 m lane). There must be some order to how people swim together. Usually the developmental or slower swimmers are in the lanes with the lower numbers, and we gradually progress to the faster lanes with improved technique. If you are not sure where you should swim or have not swum for a while, talk with the coach, who will help you select a lane compatible with your speed and fitness level.

Remember: we were all beginners at some point. There's nothing to be embarrassed about if you start in a slower lane or have to ask questions. Our coaches are there to help get you to your prime again, and your fellow swimmers will be happy to help a new member of the family.

Many of the rules of swimming etiquette are unwritten, which can be really awkward, especially if you're unknowingly breaking any of the important ones. You've heard of **'road rage'**, well there's also something called **'lane rage'**, and you can avoid it by following some important guidelines and rules.



1. When you enter the water, **never dive, jump, or push off into oncoming swimmers**. Wait until they have made the turn and pushed off the wall;
2. **Introduce yourself to the people in your lane.**

This is the social part of our club. People in your lane become your friends, can help you decipher the workout and encourage you along your fitness track.

3. Lane Directions

- If there are two swimmers in a lane, you can agree whether one keeps to one side of the lane and the other to the opposite side, or whether you want to circle swim.
- If there are three or more swimmers in a lane, they must circle swim. The custom is to swim with the lane rope on your right shoulder ('anti-clockwise'), unless you're swimming adjacent to another lane, in which case it's best to agree direction beforehand with adjacent lanes, as follows:
- If one lane is swimming counter-clockwise, the next lane should swim in the opposite direction (egg-beater style). Swimmers in adjoining lanes should agree on swim direction before they enter the water. This will help reduce the incidence of "colliding" arms.
- Note: the rules of etiquette for passing are written for anticlockwise circle swimming. If your lane happens to be swimming clockwise, exchange 'left' for 'right' and vice versa.

4. **Make sure everyone understands the section of the workout** before you start out.

Each lane develops its own leaders, usually determined by the speed of the individual swimmers. Each person has their own stroke strengths and weaknesses. It will take you a few sessions to figure out where everyone belongs. Don't get discouraged, you'll work it out.

5. **If you arrive late** at workout it is up to you to determine where your swim mates are in the workout and join in at that point.

It is disruptive for someone to show up late and break the rhythm of the swim already in progress. It's also discourteous to the coach and fellow swimmers to arrive late, or to leave early, so try to avoid doing it if you can.

6. If you do arrive late, wait until the swimmers are resting at the wall to **announce your arrival**.

Do not surprise them by just hopping in and swimming behind them. This often leads to collisions.

7. **Passing**: If you need to pass a swimmer, pass on the left. Preferably tap the foot of the person in front of you before passing. If you are being overtaken at the turn, stop, and wait until the other swimmer has pushed off. **It is best to make the pass at the wall rather than in the middle of the laps**, as follows:

- *Passer*: Gently taps feet of Passeur;
- *Passee*: At the next turn, pulls over to the right-hand corner, stops and waits;

- *Passer*: Makes flip turn at left-hand corner of wall;
 - *Passee*: Starts swimming again, behind the Passer.
8. If you need to stop for a rest / clear your goggles / adjust your fins / gasp for air etc, **squeeze into the corner to the right** of incoming swimmers, so they will have sufficient room to turn on the left.
 9. **Don't leave early from the wall.**
If the lane is going 5 seconds or 10 seconds apart, do not leave earlier than that. In no time at all, you will be on the feet of the swimmer in front, and that is annoying.
 10. **Allow others to finish their set** by moving to the corner of the lane.
Usually the way this works is at the end of a set the first person touches in on the far left side of the lane. The second person touches in the centre, and remains there. The third person touches to the far right, and then immediately moves away from the wall to the centre of the lane. Now the fourth person can touch in on the far right. It seems complicated, but it works if everyone plays along. With more than four swimmers, each additional person needs to move to the centre of the lane after they touch in on the right. NB: it is annoying for a swimmer coming in to finish, if there is no space for him/her to touch the wall. Touching the wall is part of the finish.
 11. **At all times be aware of what is going on within your lane.** Try not to kick or swing your arms into another lane or across your own lane especially when near to another swimmer.
 12. Keep your **toenails and fingernails trimmed.**
 13. Do not stand in front of or obscure the **pace clock** when others are still doing the swim set, or trying to read the next set.

Competitive Swim Meets

One thing you will enjoy more than you thought possible, is to participate in a competitive swim meet together with your OMSC friends. It's true: we've all had stage fright and a hundred and one excuses why there shouldn't even be a 'first time'. You're worried that you're not fit enough, fast enough or slim enough to compete. Fact: Masters swim heats are seeded according to swim pace (estimated times), so you will swim with people of similar speed. Masters offers an opportunity for everyone to have fun and participate. Once you've swum one competition with us, you'll be back for more. Here are a few of the highlight swim meets you could pencil into your Agenda:

OMSC SpringFling Feb/Mar (previously FrightFest in October)

OMSC hosts a signature half-day sanctioned meet every year. Previously held as 'Fright-Fest' at the end of October, we have rebranded the event as 'SpringFling' scheduled for end February to early March. This is a great opportunity to 'dip your toes' into the competitive pool. The meet dovetails with several others held in the Okanagan, and is great preparation for those planning to participate in BC Masters Provincials (late April) or Canadian Masters Nationals (late May). The OMSC meet is generally no longer than 4-5 hours, but heaps of fun! Dress for the occasion, take part in a couple of fun relays. OMSC may offer complementary SpringFling entries to its members.

MSABC BC Provincials - April

The BC Provincials Masters Swim championship is a three-day meet held every year around the third week in April. Our club hosted the very successful 2011, 2014 and 2017 Provincials short course meets at the H2O Adventure & Fitness Centre. We generally attract 230-250 swimmers from BC and further afield. 2017 was also the fifth time OMSC has hosted the BC Provincials.

CMSC Canadian Masters Swim Championships - May

The CMSC is a four-day meet held every year on the May long weekend. The meet is held in western Canada every other year. OMSC co-hosted the successful 2012 CMSC short-course meet at the H2O together with two other local clubs.

[Kelowna Apple Triathlon](#) – early July

The Kelowna Apple has been held almost every year since 1983. It is hosted by the Kelowna Apple Triathlon Society 'KATS'. The three-day event offers entry level, Sprint and Olympic distance triathlons. OMSC coordinates all of the swim elements of the Kelowna Apple triathlon events.

ATLS Across the Lake Swim – mid July

This is the longest running annual open water race in British Columbia, ATLS attracts participants from all over, to undertake the 2100m open water crossing, hosted by the ATLS Society. It's a great event, and worthwhile training for.

Rattlesnake Island Swim– early August

A sister event to ATLS, Rattlesnake Island Swim offers a 3.1km and a 7km swim from the beach in Peachland.

Gellatly Bay Swim – end August

The Gellatly Bay swim started as a tribute to much-loved OMSC swim coach Eli Dimitrov, who passed in 2013. In 2019 it changed to the Gellatly Bay swim, offering a 2.5km and 5km open water swim.

Social

Masters swimmers around the world have been known to eat heartily, drink beer and wine, and have a seriously good party. We're no different in that respect. We try to arrange social events from time to time, so members can get to meet each other outside of the pool environment. We're creatures of habit: you'd be surprised how many members have never met 'the other half' of the club. This is because roughly half of us swim mainly in the mornings and half of us like to swim in the evenings. The other half ... well, who knows what they do! A social event is a way to bridge that gap, so we would encourage you to join the party any time we arrange one.

Communications

We send out regular emails to members, advising of important events and happenings, swim meets and other events that might interest our members. We also keep our website updated regularly at www.okmasters.com.

We have a very active [Facebook page](#) - and a Facebook OMSC Chat Group for members only. Please like us for lots of good information and swimming tips.

Annual General Meeting

We hold our Annual General Meeting in the fall, usually late October / early November. We'd encourage all the members to attend and find out about the club and what we're up to. This is also a good time to put your name forward to serve as a volunteer member of the board.