

# The Levels of Competitive Swimming

Competitive swimming allows swimmers of all ages and ability levels to strive for goals and standards at all levels from the first year beginner to the seasoned veteran. Here is a basic description and key words you may be confronted with as your young swimmer pursues new levels in his/her swimming career.

**PASS level:** This is the introductory level of competitive swimming. In order to attend PASS (Progressive Assessment Skill Sessions) Meets the swimmer must show the ability in practice to both complete a 100 IM (one length of each stroke) and to dive off the block. PASS meets are short very active sessions where the swimmers will swim up to 9 events in a three-hour session that will test his/her technique, skills and endurance. Within the PASS system the swimmer can progress through three levels before graduating to the next level. These meets will all take place in Vancouver and will occur about six times throughout the year. Some will be our club only and some will include other Vancouver teams.

**Regional Level:** Once a swimmer can complete their 200 IM under 4:00 in the PASS meets or at an in-club meet they now advance to the regional level. Regional meets combine both the events/skills that were practiced in the PASS sessions with the events swum at the Provincial level. Regional meets are usually 2-day meets that are approximately 4 hours each day. Within the regional level each stroke will have standards to strive for (A, AA and AAA) as well as some Regional standards to achieve. Twice a year there is a regional championship, which is taking the place of what used to be AA Championships. This is a meet for swimmers who obtain a qualifying time in the 200 IM or 400 Free. Regional meets occur approximately once a month at location around the lower mainland.

**Provincial Level:** The next step for the swimmer to take is at the provincial level. Swimmers who obtain AA times is the entry end of this level and swimmers who can obtain at least one AAA time are invited to attend Provincial Championships held twice a year. AA and AAA swimmers will start to have some travel opportunities both for swim meets and training camps that can take them as close as Victoria to as far as Montreal or California.

**National Level:** The next step for a swimmer after Provincial level is to swim at the National level. National times come in a number of forms. There are National standards for each age group from age 12 – 16 that can qualify a swimmer for a year-end meet. There are Youth National standards for 16 & Under and the are Senior National standards which are open age group and is the highest level of National swimming.