



# Types of Swim Teams

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**Club:** An association of two or more people united by a common interest or goal.

**Team:** A group of two or more people organized to work together. Team members need to learn how to help one another, help other team members realize their true potential, and create an environment that allows everyone to go beyond their limitations.

For the purpose of this article, the word “team” will be used when defining a swimming organization, as Penguin Swimming aligns itself more with team values rather than just an interest in a common goal.

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## 1. PARENT GOVERNED SWIM TEAM

The most common swim club model in Canada is the parent governed team. Parent governed teams are generally nonprofit organizations governed by a board of directors made up of parents. Parent governed teams in Edmonton include: *Edmonton Keyano Swim Club, Olympian Swim Club.*

### Advantages

- Limited legal and financial liability for directors and staff.
- Organization structure and purpose tend to promote altruistic aura that can facilitate financial and volunteer support.

### Disadvantages

- Turnover of leadership (both Board and Coaching Staff) often leads to lack of continuity in organizational vision and purpose.
  - Parent directors often do not understand the role of a Board and tend to micromanage the staff and organization.
  - Young and/or inexperienced head coaches sometimes struggle with successfully fulfilling the CEO responsibilities.
  - Tend to be somewhat reliant on fundraising revenue to meet resource needs.
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## 2. COACH GOVERNED/OWNED SWIM TEAMS

Many successful competitive swimming programs in Australia, the United States (and now starting to emerge in Canada) are coach owned and/or governed. Coach owned/governed swim teams in Edmonton include: *Penguin Swimming.*

### Advantages

- Continuity and consistency of vision and purpose.
- Organization, program, and leadership stability.
- Coach is involved in every aspect of the program and business.
- Ability of the team to properly develop athletes over the long term (ie. avoid burnout and overtraining) as the coaching leadership has the time to plan over the long term.

### Disadvantages

- Greater financial risk for coach, and the coach is often personally liable for business debts.
  - More limited financial resources.
  - Sometimes more difficult for privately coach owned teams to foster volunteer support.
  - Coach is involved in every aspect of the program and business.
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