

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

View commonly asked questions on a range of topics. If you have a question that is not listed, send us corrections or comments through the "Contact Us" button on the toolbar on the left of the website.

### General Swim Team Questions

#### Q. What is Blue Tide?

A. Blue Tide is the oldest and most established year round swim team in the Kingwood/Humble/Atascocita area.

#### Q. What is the organizational structure of Blue Tide?

A. Blue Tide Aquatics is a non-profit organization which is coach-run and Board-supported. Members of the Board of Directors are elected by the general membership from the general membership.

#### Q: Why should my child swim?

A: There are so many benefits to getting your child involved in competitive swimming!

- Swimming promotes physical development.
- Swimming develops aerobic endurance and is one of the most beneficial forms of cardiovascular exercise.
- Swimming enhances a child's natural flexibility and promotes muscle development.
- Swimming develops superior coordination.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring children fitness and enjoyment for life.
- Swimming promotes time management and is **one of the top academically achieving sports.**
- Swimming is an important safety skill for young children.

#### Q: What is a swim team and why would I want my child to participate?

A: It's fun. It's great exercise. It builds confidence. It's a great way for your child to meet other kids in the neighborhood. It's a great way for you to meet other parents.

#### Q. How much does it cost to be a member?

A. Please refer to [Monthly Dues](#) for dues, and USA and GULF swimming registrations, which is valid from September through August regardless of when the swimmer joins.

#### Q. When is a good time in the year to start swimming?

A. Anytime! You are always welcome.

#### Q: How can I join Blue Tide Aquatics?

A: It's very simple! Just click the contact us to schedule an athlete evaluation. The evaluation will allow the coaching staff to place your athlete into the proper training group. Be sure to bring your athlete's best swim times if he or she has competed previously.

#### Q. How often will my child swim?

A. Our groups are offered anywhere from four times per week (Tidal Wave) to 6-13 practices a week (for the National level swimmers). Please check our **Practice Schedule** sub menu under the [Calendars](#) tab to see a general idea of what practices are offered for each practice group.

#### Q. Are there practice requirements?

A. **PLEASE speak to the coaches regarding the expectations of these groups.**

**Q: Who can answer my questions about the swim team?**

A: Send your email questions to the Contact Us button on the top of the website. Your question will be answered quickly (usually the same day) or direct you to the right person.

**Q: What strokes do the swimmers use in competition?**

A: Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

**Q: What swimming strokes does my child need to know to join the team?**

A: If your child is 5 to 18 and can swim a lap of the pool then they should come to swim team practice and have the coach evaluate them for the team.

**Q: I just want my child to learn how to swim better. Do they have to swim in competition?**

A: Blue Tide Aquatics is a competitive swim team and all athlete members are required to compete at all applicable meets possible. We understand there may be a conflict in scheduling and an athlete may not be able to attend. You should discuss this with the coach.

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## Billing and Registration Questions

**Q: What do I do after I submit my registration?**

A: Once you have registered online, you will receive a welcome email from the team letting you know information about the team.

**Q: When and how do I receive my bill?**

A: Group dues, Meet fees, merchandise, travel trips, etc will be charged on the first of every month.

**Q: How do I pay my bill?**

A: All Blue Tide members are expected to have a payment form on file whether its ACH or credit card. If your payment form fails for any reason, you will have 10 days to update the payment form or you will be charged a \$25 late fee.

**Q: Where can I see the detailed charges on my account?**

A: You may view these under your private parent portal

**Q: What kinds of charges are posted to my account?**

A: First, you will see monthly dues for your practice team on your account each month. In addition, all meet entry fees charges will be charged on the accounts. If you order merchandise it will be charged to your account as well. If your swimmer receives any GULF fines from any meets, those will also charge as well. **Please note**, that while it is unfortunate that a swimmer may become ill and unable to attend a meet, the member account is still responsible for those meet fees, as those fees have already been paid to the host team. Blue Tide cannot get those fees refunded.

**Q: How do I cancel my membership?**

A: If you wish to cancel your membership, a written email notice must be sent to our team registrar at [registrar@swimbluetide.org](mailto:registrar@swimbluetide.org) by the 3rd day prior to the end of the month (e.g. 28th in a 31 day month, 27th in a 30 day month) to withdraw for the next month. **Informing a coach is NOT sufficient notice of dropping.** Telling a board member in passing is NOT sufficient notice. The only way to cancel is to inform the registrar IN WRITING via EMAIL and receiving CONFIRMATION back of the drop.

**Q: What if my swimmer wants to take a break from swimming for a couple of months?**

A: Same procedure as above.

**Q: Can I rejoin and do I need to pay the registration again?**

A: If you wish to rejoin BTA during the same year (September 1<sup>st</sup>-August 30<sup>th</sup>), you just email

our registrar at [registrar@swimbluetide.org](mailto:registrar@swimbluetide.org) to reactivate your monthly dues. We allow swimmers to rejoin for a \$50 reinstatement fee.

**Q: Who do I talk to if I have a question on my bill?**

A: If you have a question on your bill, send your inquiry to [registrar@swimbluetide.org](mailto:registrar@swimbluetide.org)

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## Website Operation

**Q: I forgot my password! What do I do?**

A: On the "Sign-In" page, click the link and your password reset will be emailed to you. Your password will be auto-emailed to the email address on file with your members-only account.

**Q: Can I change my password?**

A: Yes. Click forgot password on the login page

**Q: How can I change my email address or other contact information?**

A: When you are logged in to your parent portal click my account and then my account again. It will take you to the correct screen.

**Q: Why require username/password to use the Blue Tide website?**

A: Members-only login protects private information. Because our website draws traffic from all over the country and around the world, each family's username and password allows access to their specific family account. Some portions of the website are activated by signing-in and are viewable only by registered families, including meet entries and team directory.

**Q: Do I need a username/password for each family member?**

A: No. Membership is set up as ONE ACCOUNT PER FAMILY. A family account can cover multiple swimmers in that family and multiple family members can be logged into the system at the same time. You can even enter your swimmers email address so they can receive updates directly!

**Q: How can I get a Member Directory?**

A: On the Team tab

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## Swim Team Practices

**Q: How do I know which training group is right for my child?**

A: Returning swimmers will receive an email and/or notification from the coaches telling them which group they will be placed in for the new year. New swimmers should use information under the [Practice Groups](#) tab, and then may attend trial practices and work with coaches to find the best fit. **Coaches will always make the final group placement decisions.** For a coach-to-parent discussion of your child's needs please contact a coach by email.

**Q: When and where are practices for my child?**

A: Check the 'Practice Schedule' sub menu under [Calendars](#) menu to see a general practice schedule. ALSO, you can use the [Calendars](#) page and use the drop down to see your individual group. Please remember, the Regular Schedule is subject to change, depending on conflicts with space, meet schedules, and holidays. Emails will be sent weekly that will include any changes for the week.

**Q: How do I know what training equipment my child needs?**

A: Under Practice Groups menu, you will see a sub menu marked [Equipment](#). Please check this to see what supplies your swimmer will need for their practice team. It is not necessary to have these items for your first practice, but we do suggest you picking them up as soon as possible. Please visit the [Store](#) in Atascocita to purchase these items.

**Q: Can I stay at the pool and watch my child's practice?**

A: For our younger groups, yes. But, you must remain in the stands and not be on the pool deck. Parents are also requested to not address their children during practice or attempt to discipline them. The coaches are more than capable of handling all situations that arise, so please allow them to do so. Parents may not approach the pool at any point (due to insurance). Also, parents must keep ALL siblings with them in the stands and not allow them to run around the buildings.

Please DO NOT talk to the coaches during practice, as their attention needs to be on the kids in the water. If you need to speak with a coach, please do it before or after practice or preferably by email/phone. If the coaches feel that parents aren't following the above requests, the team will adopt a 'closed deck' policy at practices.

**Q. Is the club associated with the school district?**

A. No. Although Blue Tide practices at Kingwood and KPark High Schools, we are not affiliated with the schools. We are guests in their facility and pay rent to use the water and space.

**Q. Can I join Blue Tide if I'm already swimming for my high school and/or neighborhood summer league team?**

A. Absolutely. The high school and summer league seasons are too short for those that love to swim. Our programs always have high school swimmers who train with Blue Tide as well as their school during the year. Also, the majority of high school swimmers that advance to regional and state meets and the summer league swimmers who go to the top Invitational meets are "year-round" swimmers. Coaches are well aware that many swimmers are swimming for both teams. They will work together to make your season as successful as possible.

**Q. Do you have to be a fast swimmer to be on Blue Tide?**

A. No. There is a common misconception that Blue Tide is only for 'Elite swimmers'. While we certainly do have swimmers at that level, we have MANY swimmers at EVERY level. If you love swimming and want to improve, we have a place for you!

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## Swim Meets

**Q: Where do I find information on upcoming swim meets that my child may be eligible to enter?**

A: Click view meets when logged in at the bottom of the screen.

**Q: How do meet entries work?**

A: You will need to go to the bottom of the screen when logged in and click on the meet name to read the meet announcement and see if your swimmer is qualified for that meet. If so then go to the edit commitment button on the right. Either commit your swimmer or say no (leave a note regarding certain days you cannot swim, if you are unavailable for this meet or other info you want the coach to know) and then choose the correct events.

**Q. Where are meets held?**

A. Most meets are in the Houston area and some are even hosted by Blue Tide. Occasionally, the club travels to an out of town meet in Texas or even other states. The best way to get an idea of exactly where meets are held during a typical season is to look over the schedules on the Meets page.

**Q. When are the meets held and how long do they last?**

A. This depends on the age of the swimmers. 8 and under meets are typically one day, Saturdays, and are usually done by 1pm. Meets for 9-14 year old swimmers are usually

scheduled for Friday night (6:30-9), Saturday and Sunday (9am-1pm for 13 and up and 11-12 girls: 1pm-5pm for 12 and under boys and 10 and under girls-all approximate). Sometimes the meets are only Saturday and Sunday. The events scheduled for Friday night are usually longer distances for older kids. (500 Free, 400 IM, etc.) Although the start times are pretty consistent the finish times vary widely depending on the number of swimmers entered. Remember, your swimmer can choose their events, and only go to one day of the meet if you want. You don't HAVE to go all 3 days! Meets for Senior swimmers (ages 15+) vary in times depending on the format. Please speak to the Coach for information on these.

**Q. Can I use my best summer league times when I enter a meet?**

A. No, you can only use times from a sanctioned USA meet. Summer league in this area is governed by a separate entity called NWAL while Blue Tide is governed by [USA Swimming](#) and [Gulf Swimming](#). You are allowed to enter most meets without an entry time if you've never swum the event at a USA meet. It's referred to as entering with a "no time" (NT). There are a few meets that you must have a time to enter.

**Q. How much does it cost to enter a meet?**

A. This varies from meet to meet and will be clearly marked in the meet description. You pay per event for your swimmer (between \$5-10, most are closer to \$5-6/event). All swimmers also pay a 'per swimmer' charge to enter the meet. This covers the host teams' fees to Blue Tide, processing fees and coaches fees. **THE PER SWIMMER CHARGE FOR MEETS will be \$20 for all meets unless otherwise marked.**

**Q. Where do my seed times come from that are in the heat sheet?**

A. The team keeps a database of all times swam by each swimmer. When the events you've chosen for a meet are entered into the computer it selects your best time for that stroke and distance to use as your seed time.

**Q. What is meant by "Short Course" and "Long Course"?**

A. These terms generally refer to the length of a pool. Short Course is a 25 yard (or meter) pool and Long Course is a 50 meter pool. However, the names are also used for the two seasons in USA Swimming. September to March is the Short Course season when meets are held in 25 yard pools. April to August is the Long Course season as meets are held in 50 meter pools.

**Q. What is TAGS?**

A. TAGS is the acronym for Texas Age Group Swimming but the term is usually used to refer to the TAGS meet or its qualifying times ("TAGS times"). The Texas Swimming Association organizes two end-of-season TAGS Championship meets each year, one for short course in early March and the other for long course in late July. These meets are the top championships for swimmers in the state that have not yet achieved a Jr. National qualifying time. Swimmers must achieve the qualifying times for each event during the season in order to enter that event at TAGS.

**Q. What is an "unattached" swimmer?**

A. According to Gulf Swimming rules, if a swimmer switches from one USA Swimming club to another, he or she must enter meets as unattached for a period of 120 days since they last competed for (not practiced with) their old club. That means that they cannot score points for their new club or swim on relay teams. The main purpose of this rule is to prevent swimmers from switching clubs just before an important meet so they can add to the new team's point total.

**Q. I've heard people refer to "Junior Meet" and "Elite" meets. What does that mean?**

A. USA Swimming publishes time standards for boys and girls by age group that can be used as

a scale to gauge a swimmer's level of achievement in each event. They are, from slowest to fastest, B, BB, A, AA, AAA & AAAA. You can view the standards on [USA Swimming](#) website.

Trying to reach the next level in a particular event can be motivational to swimmers. Meets are often restricted to swimmers above or below a certain level to limit the number of entries. For example, to enter an event at an Elite meet you must have at least 3 A times or better to enter that meet. Other times age is used to limit entries to a manageable number. (11 & Up, 10 & Under)

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## Swim Meet Officials

### **Q: What steps are involved in becoming an official?**

A: If you are interested in becoming an official, please contact us through the "contact us" button on the website and we will put you in touch with the correct person to help you. Blue Tide is always looking for new officials, especially those with experience in summer league or high school officiating. But, even if you have no experience and want to learn, we want you.

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## Volunteer Hours Requirements

### **Q. What are your volunteer hours requirements?**

A. Information about our team's volunteer requirements can be found under our [Volunteer Fees](#) tab.

### **Q: Can I donate volunteer credits to another family if I have extra?**

A: No. We thank you for your additional support to Blue Tide.....we couldn't run our meets without parents like you!

### **Q: I want to be more involved. Are there any jobs for me beyond the meets?**

A: Of course! Please contact our volunteer coordinator or any board member. We can find you a perfect job based on your ability, skill set, time available and interest. If you want to do more, we want your help!

### **Q: My swimmer will never swim any meets. Why do I have to volunteer?**

A: Blue Tide hosts several meets each year to bring income to the team. Without these meets, ALL PRACTICE GROUPS in Blue Tide would see a large increase in dues. The meets are a way to off-set our operating costs. Even if your child doesn't plan to swim any meets, we still consider your swimmer and your family a valuable part of the Blue Tide team and we need your help filling volunteer jobs.

### **Q: How do I sign up to volunteer?**

A: Just like meets, on the homepage at the bottom

### **Q: What if I signed up to volunteer and then am not able to? What do I do?**

A: All volunteer sign-up jobs have a closing date when members can no longer sign up to volunteer. If your plans change before the signups are closed, please log on and delete your sign up so someone else may choose that job. If your plans change after this date, it is your responsibility to find a suitable replacement for your shift and contact the volunteer coordinator. Dropping your volunteer slot at either time does not mean you are still not required to volunteer.

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## Board Meetings and Directors Information

### **Q: How often are board meetings scheduled?**

A: The Blue Tide Board of Directors (BOD) meets monthly. Each regular meeting of the BOD is posted on the website.

**Q: How do I contact board members?**

A: On the home page under the coaches tab at the top.

**Q: Are non-board members allowed to attend board meetings?**

A: Anyone is welcome to attend, but we request that you RSVP to the secretary ([secretary@swimbluetide.org](mailto:secretary@swimbluetide.org)) so we can ensure adequate seating. Meetings may be closed at any time if sensitive issues are being discussed.

If you are planning to attend, please refer to Section 7 of Article IV in by-laws:

All Board of Directors meetings, except Closed Board of Directors Meetings, shall be opened to the Membership. All Members in good standing, as defined in Section 3 of Article III, shall have the right to speak at Monthly Board of Directors Meeting, provided that notice of intent to speak and the topic to be discussed is provided to one of the members of the Board of Directors at least three (3) days prior to the meeting so that such matters may be placed on the agenda.

**Q: How can I get an item on the board meeting agenda?**

A: Members may present issues of concern to the Board at any meeting. All that is required is your issue of concern be placed on the meeting schedule by sending a request to the Secretary. A typical board meeting includes a block of time for member questions/comments at the beginning of the agenda.

If you are planning to attend, please refer to Section 7 of Article IV in by-laws:

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**Q: How can I see the Blue Tide bylaws?**

A: On the website, look under the parent portal

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## Merchandise

**Q: Where do I get all that really cool Blue Tide gear??**

A:

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## Social Events

**Q: How do I find out about social events?**

A: All events are announced on the website's "Team News" and also posted on the calendar and events page.

**Q: How do I volunteer to help organize social events or offer ideas?**

A: Please contact us through the "Contact Us" tab and we will put you in touch with the coordinator.

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## Team Fundraising Requirements

**Q: What are the tax benefits of making a gift to Blue Tide**

A: Your gift is tax-deductible as specified in IRS regulations. Blue Tide is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

**Q: Will we have to do fundraising as Blue Tide members?**

A: We would appreciate any help in participating with Blue Tide fundraising. We are able to

purchase things that will benefit the team like televisions to show videos of stroke and technique, ipads for all coaches to video and track stats.