

Bulldog Aquatic Club Handbook



Team Handbook
(As of 8/19/2019)

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to explain what the Bulldog Aquatics Club (BAC) is and to outline all of the several standard operating policies and procedures. All families are expected to read it to become familiar with the club.

We are delighted to welcome you to BAC. Our program is a year-round competitive swim team for children ages 5-18 that offers instruction, training, and competition to young people of all ages and abilities. Competitive swimming develops discipline, self-esteem, sportsmanship, character, and the ability to deal with success and failure; besides having fun. It is also a wonderful lifetime activity that can be continued at any age and fitness level.

Vision & Values

Louisiana Tech University has developed twelve guiding principles, or tenets, that exemplify the qualities that Tech students should possess upon graduation. It is expected that our swimmers will conduct themselves according to these tenets during their membership in BAC and continue to personify these tenets for the remainder of their lives. In essence, these tenets become more than ideas to be learned; they become a moral and an ethical compass with which to navigate through life.

The Tenets of Tech are as follows:

- *Confidence – A sense of self
- *Excellence – Appreciation for first-rate experiences
- *Commitment – Accept responsibility as a member of BAC
- *Knowledge – Understanding of ideas
- *Integrity – Ability to defend, evaluate, or question one's own beliefs
- *Respect – Acknowledgment of other's beliefs
- *Leadership – Guidance through service, involvement, and mentoring
- *Loyalty – Faithfulness to values, commitments, and responsibilities
- *Enthusiasm – Excitement for personal characteristics and future opportunities
- *Caring – Affinity for beauty, performing arts, and human culture
- *Hope – Belief in future experiences and growth opportunities
- *Pride – A sense of self-respect

Team Information

Mission Statement

The Bulldog Aquatic Club's mission is to develop character and self-discipline in each athlete regardless of age, gender, or ability through the child's participation in organized practices and competitions. BAC strives to promote individual and team growth with instruction of proper swimming techniques within a positive and encouraging environment.

Team Philosophy

The goal of BAC is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success no matter their level or ability.

The coaching staff defines success as improvement in four areas; attitude, effort, skill mastery and time improvement. We believe that there are no good or bad swimmers, but rather many children who are at different levels of development. It is our hope to provide a successful and enjoyable experience to all who enter our program.

The practice groups are structured to be developmental for the younger swimmers and progress to a more competitive practice for the older swimmers.

All team members are reminded that every Olympic swimmer started out exactly where they are – having fun, getting fit, and making friends.

Coaches & Board Members

A list of our coaching staff can be found on the team website under the 'Coaching Staff' tab. A list of our board members can be found on the team website under the 'General Information' tab.

Organization

Bulldog Aquatic Club is registered with USA Swimming, the national governing body for amateur and professional swimming. The country is divided into LSCs (Local Swim Committees), and BAC is a part of the Louisiana Swimming LSC. If you wish to learn about any news, current, or future events pertaining to the LSC, you may visit louisianaswimming.org.

Our team is governed by an elected volunteer Board of Directors and follows By-Laws established by the BoD. Information about board members and monthly board meeting minutes can be found on the team website. Board meets are always open to the public, and the minutes are always posted on the website after the conclusion of the meeting.

Communication

Good communication is vital to the success of any organization and BAC is no exception. We have multiple systems to help with the dissemination of information to our swimmers and families.

1. Team Website

Our website is a wealth of information. Meet schedules, maps, results, and more are available. This is our most valuable communication tool- please check it regularly.

2. **Email**

The fastest and most efficient form of communication is email. You will receive regular notification of events and deadlines via email. This is also the best and most reliable ways to communicate with our coaches.

3. **Parent Meetings**

Required parent meetings will be held twice per year, once in the fall and again in the spring. Although attendance is not required, this is the perfect opportunity to ask questions about our program.

4. **Texting**

Texting is NOT an official form of communication. Any information, vital or not, that needs to be communicated with the coaching staff should be through email. This helps the coaching staff keep documentation of all communication making it easier to keep coaches, parents, and swimmers all on the same page.

Training Information

Training

Practices are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent practice is needed to progress and meet goals. Therefore, it is important that each swimmer attends as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program. Pool time is our most limiting factor, it is important not to waste it.

Practice Levels

The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in proper practice groups. The groups have a logical flow and upward mobility based on a combination of several factors, including but not limited to age, maturity, commitment and ability of each individual. Details of what is expected at each level and the promotion requirements are available on the team website.

We currently use the following levels:

Dog Paddlers

Pool Pups

Junior

Pre-Senior

Senior

National

Practice Schedules

Practice schedules are established by the Board of Directors and coaching staff with the understanding that it is subject to change due to time of year, University closure, team numbers, events, and pool availability. Be sure to check the team website regularly for changes and updates to the schedule.

Practice Policies

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the team's policies regarding practices. These policies are designed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

- 1) Swimmers should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before their scheduled practice time and be ready to swim 10 minutes before their scheduled practice start time.
- 2) Before practices swimmers are expected to remain on the pool deck while waiting for their practice to begin. They are not allowed to play or hang out in the locker rooms.
- 3) Plan to stay the entire practice. If your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, a parent must notify a coach. A swimmer will not be released early without notice from a parent.
- 4) Swimmers are expected to follow the verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will swimmers be disrespectful toward the facility or the coaching staff.
- 5) Swimmers are expected to show respect and support their teammates at all times.
- 6) Any swimmer showing disrespect towards any teammates or coach may be dismissed from practice.
- 7) Abusive language, lying, stealing or vandalism will not be tolerated.
- 8) Chewing gum during training is not allowed.
- 9) You will be notified by email of any changes to the practice schedules.
- 10) While at practice, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practices swimmers are never to leave the pool area without permission of the coaching staff.
- 11) Parents are allowed to observe practice from the seating area only. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer or coach from the seating area.
- 12) Please do not visit with a coach during practices. They have a limited amount of time to work with the athletes and need to spend it focused on them. Coaches are available to speak with parents before or after practices, by email, or through a private meeting.

Swim Meets

Philosophy of Competition

While swimmers train for many reasons – to improve their strokes, their health and fitness – but ultimately, most swimmers train order to compete. The coaching staff firmly believes in the value of competition at all levels, including beginners. Racing is fun, and most swimmers eventually NEED this motivation to keep working hard. For this reason, we encourage parents to participate in meets.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records and other material benefits of competition. They will however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting and enhanced self-image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential and to contribute to the world they live in.

In order to promote team participation in meets, BAC is requiring all of its competition team members to compete in a certain number of meets each Short Course and Long Course Season. Those meets will be outlined before each season.

Championship Meets

Each season concludes with championship meets. BAC's ideology around competition ultimately leads to attempts to participate in these championship meets with as many swimmers as possible.

Volunteer Obligation

Volunteerism is crucial to keep any athletic organization running smoothly. Families are expected to volunteer their time in helping with team functions such as fundraising, swim meets, banquets, etc. BAC requires each family to participate in the HOME TEAM Volunteer Program. Program guidelines, requirements, opportunities, and rewards are available on the team website.

Fundraising

The club's philosophy has been to keep the fees as low as possible to allow as many athletes as possible to participate in these programs. The fees charged only cover about two-thirds of the cost of running the club. Fundraising generates most of the remaining club income. We will host fundraising activities regularly and as needed. Information will be distributed when a fundraiser is scheduled.