**BASIC TEAM INFORMATION**

**Q. Tell me about the Bulldog Aquatic Club?**

A. The Bulldog Aquatic Club was formed by a group of families in January 1964. It is a competitive swim team, not a recreational team. Our swimmers are coached by professional swim coaches and compete in swim meets sanctioned by Michigan Swimming and USA Swimming. Our swimmers swim in assigned practice groups based on skill and ability. Group placement is determined by our coaches.

**Q. How can I find out information about the team?**

A. All information that you need about the team can be found on our website**, www.bulldogaquaticclub.com,** which is updated regularly. Most of the information on the website can be accessed without signing in. In order to access all **information on the website**, however, you must be signed in. You will be given sign in information once you register.

 Information about team activities in the form of weekly “Doggie Updates” and information regarding entering upcoming swim meets is emailed to registered members. M**ake sure you provide your email when you register** **and remember to update your email information if it changes so that you receive team emails.** This same information is also available on the website. There is a Doggie Updates column and a News tab that includes the Doggie Updates information. You can access meet entry information by clicking on the **Events** tab on the Home page.

 The website contains a great deal of other information about the team and about swimming. For example, under the Coach’s Corner tab, there is a great deal of information about training, preparing for meets, setting goals, and other helpful tips. You must be logged in to access the Coach’s Corner. There are also links to the Michigan Swimming data base where you can find your swimmers times and rank and other useful information. Take the time to look through the website; it should answer all of your questions. If you still have a question about the team or would like to express a concern or make a comment, feel free to contact the BAC President at president@bulldogaquaticclub.com.

 While most team information is provided on-line via the website and emails, all swimmers also have a “family folder” at their practice pool. The folder will be marked with your swimmer’s name and is kept in a crate in the office or on the pool deck. Make sure your swimmer checks the family folder regularly. Ribbons from meets and other items are distributed to swimmers by use of the family folder.

**SESSIONS AND DUES/FEES**

**Q. Do I have to join for the full year?**

A. No. There are 3 sessions each year that swimmers can participate in. The sessions begin on the following dates: Session 1 = September 1st; Session 2 = January 1st; Session 3 = May 1st. You must register on-line for every session that you plan to swim. Registration for each session opens a couple of weeks before the session starts. Active members will receive an email announcing the opening of registration. Returning members start the registration process by clicking on the Returning Member Registration tab on the home page of the website.

**Q. Is my continued membership on the team guaranteed if I don’t swim all 3 sessions?**

A. No. Our groups do fill from time to time. Priority is given to swimmers currently swimming and active members. If a group is closed, you can be placed on a wait list. Our membership chairperson manages the wait list.

**Q. What does it cost to be a member of the team?**

A. Every year all team members must become a member of Michigan Swimming. There is a fee charged by Michigan Swimming that BAC collects and then forwards to Michigan Swimming. This fee may change from year to year.

 The team charges dues for each session based upon the practice group. Due to the differing length of time of each session, the dues for each session differ based upon the length of the session. The current dues schedule can be found under the Our Team tab under the link for New Dues Schedule.

 In order to swim in meets, swimmers must pay a fee charged by the host team based upon the number of races entered (this includes a Michigan Swimming fee of $1.00 per meet). These fees are collected by BAC and forwarded to the host team.

**TEAM OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

**Q. Besides paying dues and fees, what are my other obligations as a member of the team?**

A. There are certain obligations that all team members and families agree to upon joining our team. These include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) families agree to comply with the volunteer requirement and agree to pay a financial penalty if they fail to fulfill the volunteer requirement; (2) swimmers and parents of swimmers agree to abide by codes of conduct; (3) swimmers and parents must complete and sign a concussion form upon joining the team for the first time; (4) members agree to pay their dues and fees in a timely fashion and agree to pay a financial penalty if these amounts are not paid timely; (5) families agree to pick up their swimmers in a timely fashion at the conclusion of practice; (6) families agree to submit and keep updated an emergency contact form. Failure to comply with any of the team obligations can result in suspension and/or removal from the team.

**Q. What is the volunteer requirement?**

A. We are a non-profit club that exists because of the volunteer efforts of our families. One of our most important team events and a significant fundraiser for the team is the Winterfest swim meet. We may also host other meets such as shorter dual meets and a summer meet. **We require that all families with a swimmer that swims even one session during the year volunteer to help with a specific number of sessions at these meets**.

 Our “volunteer year” begins March 1st and ends the following February 28th. Team members who volunteer during that time period earn credits for the volunteer year. Our “volunteer requirement” applies to all swimmers who swim in any session starting with Session III (starting May 1st) of each year and continues through Session I (starting September 1st) and Session II (starting January 1st). The volunteer year ends February 28th and the volunteer requirement must be met by February 28th. The Winterfest Meet is held in January each year during Session II. **All families with a swimmer who has been on the team during ANY SESSION starting with Session III in May must volunteer at Winterfest.**  For example, if your swimmer swims in Session III (May-August) but doesn’t swim Session I (September – December) or Session II (January - April), you are still required to work at the Winterfest Meet in January and you are still required to complete your volunteer commitment. By way of further example, if your swimmer just swims Session I, but doesn’t swim Session II or III, you are still required to work at the Winterfest Meet in January and you are still required to complete your volunteer commitment.

 Failure to comply with the volunteer requirement will result in a monetary assessment which will be automatically applied to your account. By volunteering, you will not only meet your requirement, but it is a great way to meet other families on the team and is a lot of fun. Information regarding the volunteer requirement can be found at the **Our Team** tab under the Forms and Policies link - Financial Responsibilities Policies and Procedures Volunteer/Meet Obligations. This requirement is also set forth in detail in the registration process and you agree to it upon registration. **In brief, we require all families to volunteer for a total of 3 sessions during the year, at least 2 of which must be performed at our Winterfest Meet in January**. For those families that can only volunteer for 2 sessions at Winterfest, there are other opportunities to meet the 3rd session requirement, including volunteering at a dual meet or summer meet or volunteering for another activity that has been designated as equivalent to a volunteer session by the BAC volunteer coordinator. **For those families that haven’t gotten a one session credit for their volunteer work before the Winterfest Meet, you must work 3 sessions at Winterfest.** Failure to complete the volunteer requirement will result in the imposition of a fine of $60 for each session missed.

**Q. What are the Codes of Conduct?**

A. BAC has adopted a parent code of conduct and an athlete code of conduct that sets forth both expected behavior and behavior that is prohibited by both parents and athletes. The codes are included as part of our on-line registration process. Each time you register, you must agree to comply with these codes and you do so by clicking on the box following the codes of conduct. These codes are also found at the Our Team tab under the Team Administration link.

**Q. When must I pick up my child after practice to be considered timely?**

A. Parents are expected to be at the practice pool at the conclusion of practice to pick up their children. If a parent arrives even one minute after the conclusion of practice, this will be considered late. Late fees may be assessed if a parent is late in picking up his/her swimmer. The late pickup policy can be found by clicking on the Our Team tab and clicking on the Link for Forms and Policies.

**Q. Why do I have to fill out and sign a concussion form?**

A. State law requires BAC to obtain and retain a concussion form from all swimmers that is signed by both the swimmer and the parent. The form provides information about concussion symptoms. Once you have submitted a completed form, the team will keep it on file for the entire time your swimmer is a member of the team and you will not have to submit another one. The form should be submitted to the membership chairperson or a coach when you join the team. There are also concussion form folders in the BAC bins at the pools where you can place your completed forms. You can find the form by clicking on the Our Team tab on the home page. Then click on the Forms and Policies link.

**Q. What other forms must I submit in hard copy besides the concussion form?**

A. All swimmers must submit up to date Athlete Emergency Contact forms. These forms should be updated at least once per year and delivered to the coach or placed in the emergency form folder in the BAC crate in the office/pool deck. A copy of the emergency contact form can be found at the Our Team tab by clicking on the Forms and Policies link.

**JOINING THE TEAM FOR THE FIRST TIME**

**Q. How can I join the team?**

A. At the beginning of each of the team’s three sessions, there will be scheduled evaluations during which prospective members can be evaluated by coaching staff for group placement. In order to participate in an evaluation, you must contact our membership chairperson at least a month prior to the session start date at membership@bulldogaquaticclub.com and arrange to attend. You may not participate in an evaluation without the permission of the membership coordinator. There will be no evaluations scheduled after a session has begun.

 Once you have arranged with the membership coordinator to attend an evaluation you must complete and bring with you to the evaluation two forms: (1) the Athlete Emergency Contact Form and (2) the Concussion Form. These forms are all available on the team website bulldogaquaticclub.com. Click on the Our Team link and then click on the Forms and Policies link to find these forms.

 After you have attended an evaluation, the coach will advise what your group placement would be and whether there is space in that group for new swimmers. If there is room in the group, then you must complete the on-line registration and pay the dues and fees for that session. If a group is full, you can be placed on a wait list which is maintained by the membership chair. Questions regarding membership can be directed to the membership chairperson at membership@bulldogaquaticclub.com.

**Q. How do I register to swim on the team as a new swimmer?**

A. Once you have been evaluated and the coach has assigned you to a group, you may register on-line for that session. New swimmers must be placed in a group by a coach before they can register. Do not try to register on-line before you have been evaluated and approved for placement in a group. Registration for each session is done on our website bulldogaquaticclub.com. Once you have been approved for group placement, you can register by clicking the Registration Link and filling in all of the required information. Questions about registration can be directed to assttreasurer@bulldogaquaticclub.com.

**RETURNING MEMBER REGISTRATION**

Q. Once my swimmer has joined the team and wants to continue swimming with the team, what do I need to do?

A. All swimmers must register on-line for every session that they want to swim. Registration for each session opens a couple of weeks before the session starts. Active members typically receive an email announcing the opening of registration. Returning members start the registration process by clicking on the Registration tab on the home page of the website. If your swimmer is ready to advance to the next level, you will have received an email from the coach. If you have not received an email, your swimmer will continue with the current swim level. Swimmers do not advance automatically after each session.

**PRACTICES AND PRACTICE GROUPS**

**Q. How do I know what practice group my swimmer will swim with?**

A. Swimmers are placed in a practice group based upon their skill level. New swimmers will be evaluated by a coach for group placement. Swimmers will be assessed for movement into the next higher group by the coaches and will be advised if their group assignment changes. If you do not receive an email stating that your swimmer is ready to advance to the next level, your swimmer will remain at the current level for the next session. Swimmers do not advance automatically after each session. Swimmers will not be moved in the middle of a session. A description of the expectations for each group can be found on the website under the **Our Team** tab by clicking on the Swim Groups link. Questions regarding group placement should be directed to your coach.

**Q. Does my swimmer have to attend all practices to remain in the practice group?**

A. Swimmers are encouraged, but not required, to attend all available practices for their group. Practices are structured to maximize your swimmers performance based upon 100% attendance. Since differing skills are focused on at practice on differing days, missing practice days will mean missing the training that was the focus of that day. **Your swimmers performance and development are directly related to their attendance.** The practice schedule is available on the website under the **Practice Calendar** link in the right column or under the **Calendar** tab.

**Q. What can my swimmer do to improve?**

A. The best way for all swimmers to improve is to come to all available practices and for those in groups with dryland practices to attend all dryland practices as well.

**SWIM MEETS**

**Q. What swim meets must my swimmer swim in?**

A. We are a competitive swim team and expect that all of our swimmers will participate in swim meets and will participate in the championship meets. We are not a recreational team, nor are we a swim school. Typically there are at least 2 swim meets per month that the team has identified as team meets that we expect our swimmers to participate in. We understand that schedules and family obligations may mean that a swimmer does not attend all meets, but effort should be made to attend as many meets as possible. All team meets are announced and included on our website under the Events tab.

**Q. Does my child have to swim every day of a team swim meet?**

A. No. Swim meets typically run Friday, Saturday and Sunday or just Saturday and Sunday. While we encourage our swimmers to enter events occurring over the whole weekend, we understand that schedules and family obligations may mean that swimmers can only attend one or two days of a meet.

**Q. How are the events my child will swim in a meet chosen?**

A. Typically, the team allows the swimmer to choose their events. The coach may encourage swimmers to swim in particular events. If you or your swimmer is uncertain of what events to choose, the coaches will help you select events to swim. Questions about what races your swimmer should swim should be directed to your coach.

**Q. How are relays chosen?**

A. Whether the team enters relays for any given meet is decided by the coaching staff. The swimmers who swim on a relay are chosen by the coaching staff. The swimmers selected to swim on relays at the championship meets are chosen by the coaching staff. At the championship meets in particular, the coaching staff will seek to put together the fastest relays based upon individual performances during the course of the season. Selection for participation on a championship relay is not based upon having been on any other relay during the course of the season.

**Q. How do I enter my child in a swim meet?**

A. You can enter your swimmer in a meet by using the entry procedure on the website by clicking on the **Events** tab and selecting the meet you want to enter and the races you want your swimmer to swim. Questions about how to use on-line meet entry should be directed to meetentry@bulldogaquaticclub.com. All meets have entry deadlines that are announced by email and on the website. You must submit your entry by the entry deadline. The fees that must be paid to the host team are collected from you by BAC and submitted directly to the host team.

**Q. How do I communicate with my child during a swim meet?**

A. Typically, parents should not seek to communicate with their child during a swim meet. The swimmers should remain on deck with the team and the coaching staff during the entire meet until their last race is complete and they have cooled down. That way they will be available to warm up, race and cool down at the appropriate times and will be properly prepared for their races and will not miss their races. Swimmers need to focus on swimming during the meet and parental involvement while well-meaning can be a distraction during the meet. Make arrangements before you drop off your swimmer on how and where to meet your swimmer at the conclusion of the meet. Michigan Swimming rules prohibit parents from being on the swim deck during a meet. If there is an emergency and you need to contact your swimmer during the meet, you can ask a safety officer in an orange vest outside the locker rooms to relay a message to your swimmer or coach.

**TEAM SUITS AND APPAREL**

**Q. What type of swimsuit must my child wear?**

A. Each year the team designates a team suit that should be worn by swimmers at meets. You can purchase the BAC team suit at Sun & Snow Sports in Plymouth for a team discounted price. You must tell the clerk that you are part of the BAC team to get the discount. It is a good idea to purchase suits that your swimmer will use just for practice. You can find discounted practice suits at Sun & Snow. Ask the clerk to direct you to the bin of discounted suits. You can also find discounted suits on-line through Amazon or swimoutlet.com.

**Q. Where can I get team shirts or other apparel?**

A. BAC team shirts, team sweat suits, and other BAC apparel may be purchased through our vendor in the fall at our parent meeting.

**FUNDRAISING**

**Q. What types of fundraising does the team do?**

A. BAC does a limited amount of fundraising during the year. Our primary fundraiser is the Winterfest Meet in January. The proceeds from this meet help keep costs down for our swimmers.