



Team Handbook



Inwood Athletic Club

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Joliet Park District Mission Statement

The mission of the Joliet Park District is to provide quality recreational programming and events that promote healthy, active lifestyles to enhance the quality of life for our entire community.

Blue Tides Swim Team Mission Statement

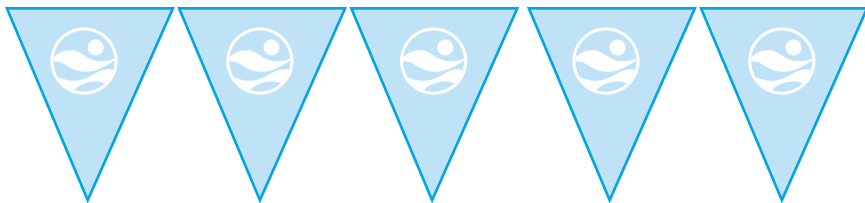
The mission of the Joliet Park District Blue Tides Swim Team is to provide an environment for competitive swimmers and to embrace team and individual goals in combination with personal growth.

History of the Team

The Joliet Park District Blue Tides' inaugural season began in the fall of 2010. The team's name is derived from USMS Blue Tides Swim Team that started in the fall of 2008. The Blue Tides started with just over 30 swimmers, and ended the second season with 40! Over the first decade, the team grew to over 100 members with several Regional, State and Zone qualifiers, competitors and champions. The team brought home it's first Regional Championship in 2017.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought some obstacles over 2020 and 2021, but thanks to being a Park District pool, the Blue Tides were back in the water by July of 2020. We were able to offer our very first sanctioned event in November of 2020 which led to 2 more time-trial type meets and the first Open Invite held in December of 2021, the Candy Cane Classic.

The team now regularly has over 100 swimmers registered, several dedicated coaches and offers clinics for new swimmers and a summer pre-team for those wanting to just give swimming a try.



Letter from the Coaches

Welcome swimmers and families to the Blue Tides Swim Team! The Joliet Park District takes great pride in our swim program and the community we've established within the team.

As coaches, we focus on developing swimmers both in and out of the pool. We will spend time on improving swimmers technique and preparing them for competition, while at the same time instilling life lessons. Values like leadership, commitment, and sportsmanship will be stressed throughout ones time with the Blue Tides. Our goal is to produce not only great swimmers, but great people.

You are now a part of the Blue Tides community. Welcome to the team.

-The Coaches

Participation in the Blue Tides Swim Team

Swimmers who are interested in joining the Blue Tides need to swim all 4 competitive strokes; freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. If the strokes are acceptable then the new swimmer will be allowed to register for the team based on openings.

Swimmers do not have to be a resident of Joliet, or a member of the Inwood Athletic Club to participate.

The coaching staff and parents foster an environment that, while competitive, is centered on having fun and loving the sport. We realize the importance of swimmers, especially young swimmers, enjoying themselves in the water, wanting to come to practice, and participating in meets.

Swim Team Fees

Seasons are set up with a total training fee that is broken down into an initial deposit upon registration and monthly fees throughout the season. Billing is done through the Team Unify site and automatically withdrawn on the first of each month.

Swim Meets are billed separately and fees are set up by the host team. These are billed on the first of the month following the meet. Once a meet entry has been submitted, the fees are charged to the team & swimmers are billed for their entries. These are non-refundable after that point and will be billed to the swimmer regardless if the swimmer swims in the events.

Practice Groups

The Blue Tides are divided into six practice groups to allow swimmers to practice at a pace and ability level comfortable to them.

Blue: An athlete needs to be able to swim a 50 of freestyle and backstroke. The swimmer must also be able to perform a legal breaststroke kick with a general concept of the rhythm. The swimmer must perform the general concept of the butterfly. This groups practices for 60 minutes at a time. The Blue group focus on stroke technique with starts and turns.

White 1: This group will focus on technique and turns while increasing distance, and practices for 60 minutes at a time. This group will also be introduced to the pace clock for set intervals.

White 2 & 3: White groups will focus on stroke technique, turns & dives. This group will become proficient in reading the pace clock and emphasis in interval training. This group practices for 75 minutes at a time. Proficiency of stroke is defined in this group. The introduction of Body weight only dryland will begin within this group, as well as a focus on speed with good technique, and distances over 200 yards. White groups are required to compete in meets.

Junior: This group continues to focus on stroke technique in all for competitive strokes. There will be more of an emphasis placed on interval training for endurance and development of speed. This group will also have advance dryland training focusing still with body weight as the main form of resistance. Junior groups are required to participate in meets. The swimmers in this group are expected to practice for 90 minutes or more at a time.

Senior: From the junior group, athletes move into this group. Minimum age for this group is 14. This group has an advance-based knowledge of stroke technique. Practices will focus on conditioning of the swimmers' energy systems and stroke technique. Goal setting, race strategy, and end of season focus are constantly reinforced. The swimmers in this group are expected to practice 1 hour 45 minutes or more at a time. This group will also have a focus on advance dryland training.

Practices

The Blue Tides Swim Team practices at Inwood Athletic Club, 3000 West Jefferson Street, Joliet. The indoor pool is an 8-lane 25 yard pool, with removable starting blocks. Pool depth ranges from 3 ft., 6 in. on the shallow side to 9 ft., 6 in. in the deep end. It is equipped with non-turbulent lane markers.

Dryland practices will occur on the pool deck, the grassy area behind the pool along the backside of the Inwood Golf Course, the Joliet Park District's Memorial Stadium or Board Rooms, or the Inwood Athletic Club's Studios. In order to participate in dryland, swimmers must arrive in proper clothing and closed-toed gym shoes.

Swimmers will be required to swim with their assigned practice groups. Swimmers will not be allowed to swim with a different practice group due to the inability to make their assigned practice time.

Swim practices for each group will involve a combination of stroke technique training and endurance work. Swimmers at the blue and white 1 level will participate in practices based almost solely on technique, while the higher levels will involve the added elements of endurance and speed.

Locker Room Access

Each swimmer will have access to the public locker room at the Inwood Athletic Club.

Family changing rooms are intended for the use of parents/guardians with children of the opposite sex. Single users with no children and parents/guardians with children of the same sex should use the public locker rooms. Reserving the family changing rooms is not permitted and users should be respectful of time spent in them.

Equipment

Goggles are required for swimmers in order to participate in practice. We encourage swimmers to have 2 pairs of goggles in their swim bag in case a pair breaks. Caps are required if necessary to keep long hair off the face.

Swimmers are required to have an equipment bag with fins, kickboard, and a snorkel. Pull buoy and hand paddles depending on group. The Blue Tides have partnered with The Swim Team Store. Visit our team site for equipment purchases.

Swimmers are required to bring a water bottle to practice. This helps keep the swimmers hydrated during practice.

There are no requirements for swimmers to purchase equipment for dryland training. The team will provide training items such as medicine balls, resistance bands and mats.

Dress Code

For practice, female swimmers are required to wear a one-piece suit and jammers or racer suit for male swimmers. Senior swimmers may wear a drag suit. All swimmers, with hair length past the ears, are required to wear a cap. For swim meets, all swimmers are required to wear the Blue Tides team suit and team swim cap. The team suit will not be allowed to be worn during team practices. The team suit should be reserved for meets only. This is important so the suit keeps form for competition and not everyday use. Technical suits will be allowed at the Regional and Championship meets and other meets stated by the Head Coach.

Swimmers need to wear appropriate apparel, consisting of gym shoes in good condition and athletic wear, while participating in dryland workouts outside of the pool deck. A swimmer will not be allowed to participate if they are not wearing proper apparel. Hair should be pulled back and out of the face.

It is required that the swimmers wear a Blue Tides T-shirt, hoodie, or team track jacket during the meet in order to present a team appearance. Team apparel must be purchased by the swimmer and will be available for purchase at the beginning of each season.

Footwear is important and not to be ignored while at a meets or at practice. For meets, pack comfortable shoes that can be dried out if they get wet.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at each practice including dryland. Blue & White 1 are recommended to attend 3 practices or more a week; White 2 & 3 are recommended to attend at least 3-4

days per week; Juniors are recommended to attend 4-5 days per week and Seniors should attend 5-6 days per week. If your swimmer is planning on missing more than the stated percentage due to an after school sport, activity or club, email the coach prior to that activity starting. If the absence is long-term medical, please have the doctor write a note and if it is a short-term illness (sick), please send an email for excused absence.

With over 100 members, our practice groups are nearly full. If swimmers do not regularly attend practice, they may be removed from the team so that swimmers who are waiting to join the team can be added.

Goal Setting

At the start of each season, the coaches will meet with each swimmer about his or her goals for the season. Please encourage your swimmers to discuss these goals and to keep them at the front of their minds – it is very important for young athletes to have realistic goals in order to attain the sense of achievement that comes along with reaching said goals. The coaches will document the goals which will be continuously reviewed throughout the season.

Competitive Swimming Seasons

The Short Course fall/winter season starts in September and goes through February/March. Competition takes place in a 25-yard pool.

The Long Course spring/summer season begins in April and ends in July/August. Competition takes place in a 25-meter or 50-meter pool.

Swim Meets

The Blue Tides participate in USA Swimming sanctioned meets. USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming is divided into Local Swimming Committees (LSC's) divided by geographical areas. The Blue Tides belong to Illinois Swimming LSC. A conference is a separate governing body that is not recognized by Illinois Swimming.

For swim meets, a swimmer's age determines the placement for competition. For USA Swimming, the age breakdowns are as follows; 8 and Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and Seniors. Furthermore, it is divided by girls and boys.

For meet relays during the regular season meet schedule, relays will be built by the fastest four who are attending the meet and will go to the next fastest four if there is enough swimmers. Coaches will decide swimmers and the order of the relay. Swimmers should always check with a coach before leaving a meet to make sure they are not on a relay. The cost of a

relay may be split up and billed to the 4 swimmers participating. For the post season, a relay will compete at the Age Group or Senior Champs meet when the top 4 fastest swimmers combined time meet or exceed the Champs qualifying time. If there are 4 swimmers in the same age group at regional a relay will be swam.

A dual meet is a competition that occurs between two teams. These meets usually take only a few hours to complete and are held over the course of one day or one evening during the week. An invite is a meet held over a weekend between several different swim teams. The meets are split into morning and afternoon sessions, and are divided by age group. For example, if the Saturday morning session includes events for swimmers in the 9-10 and 11-12 age groups, then the Saturday afternoon session would include events for swimmers in the 8 & Under, 13-14, and Senior age groups. There are sometimes upwards of 500 swimmers at these meets.

An ISI Regional Championships meet for Illinois Swimming has the State divided into regions, each of which hosts a Regional Championships meet at the end of season. A swimmer must achieve qualifying times to become eligible to swim in the Regional Championships.

The ISI Age Group State Championships meet for Illinois Swimming is the final state-level competition for the season. Swimmers must achieve qualifying times to compete in this meet.

The ISI Senior State Championships meet for Illinois Swimming is similar to the ISI Age Group State Championships but for the Senior age group. Swimmers must achieve qualifying times to participate in this meet.

Swim Meet Registration & Fees

The meet schedule is determined by the coaching staff for each session. The meets for the season will be posted on the Team Unify website. It is there will you will need to commit to a meet by the deadline stated on the website. Coaches will select events, but parents/swimmers may include notes on what events they would like to swim. The coaches reserve the right to change or alter events as they deem necessary. One philosophy of the Blue Tides is that it is important for young swimmers to be well-rounded in each stroke and not to favor their best event.

Team entries are submitted by coaching staff by the deadline provided by the host team. The coaching staff has the right to register for meets that are a couple of hours away, or even out of state. If an athlete would like to compete in a meet that is not on the original schedule, the coaching staff will need to be notified for review.

Swimmers will pay for their meet fees on the Team Unify team website. Meet fees will be

included on the following months bill and will come out automatically on the first of the month. This is the only accepted way to pay for meet fees.

Blue Tides do not have an escrow account for meet fees. Once meet entries are accepted fees cannot be refunded and entries cannot be edited. The host team reserves the right for additions or deletions of swimmers for the meet after original scheduled due date.

Attending Swim Meets

For swimmers and parents who have never attended a USA Swimming sanctioned meet, the first experience can be somewhat daunting - a lot of people (a lot of swimmers) and a lot of activity! But don't worry - after the first day you'll see that everything somehow manages to run very smoothly and that it is very easy to navigate your way to a safe and fun experience. Visit the documents tab on the website for "New Swimmer Meet Tips" to help answer any questions you may have.

For meet information, visit the events tab on our Team Unify website for links to the host website and location, meet entries, meet fees along with meet results once the meet is completed.

Prior to the date of the meet, please discuss with your swimmer the events they are swimming and the goals they wish to achieve at the upcoming meet. It is important for swimmers to have realistic goals in mind when racing so that they have something to strive for.

On the day of the meet, be prepared to arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the warm-up session.

While in attendance at a swim meet, coaching staff, parents, and swimmers are representing the Joliet Park District. This means that all need to be on their best behavior. Swimmers are expected to have respect for their teammates, swimmers on other teams, coaches, parents, officials, meet volunteers, and anyone else who may be present at a swim meet. As coaches we will not tolerate our swimmers making fun of each other or swimmers from other teams. Our goal is to foster a positive atmosphere and good sportsmanship. Please encourage your swimmers to act respectfully.

If a swimmer/parent scratches or misses an event without coach approval, that swimmer may be removed from the rest of their events in that session.

Unfortunately, adults also need to be reminded occasionally of the need for good sportsmanship, patience, and understanding. As a parent, if you are upset about an incident that happens at a swim meet, please approach your Blue Tides coaches first for discussion and never an official or meet staff member. If you are upset by something that one of the Blue

Tides coaches has done, please wait until the meet session is over, and approach the coach to discuss the matter in a mature and professional manner. Parents are not allowed on pool deck before, during, or after meets.

Awards may be distributed by the discretion of the host team. It is not uncommon for a swimmer to participate in a swim meet and not receive an award.

Safe Sport

The Blue Tides implements the most current policies in place by USA Swimming and its Safe Sport Mission for the following which may be accessed at www.usaswimming.org. "USA Swimming is committed to safeguarding the well being of all its members, with the welfare of its athlete members as the top priority." Please see the Safe Sport tab on the website for contact information, policies, and guidelines.

Health and Wellness

Nutrition: It is important to focus on providing the swimmer proper nutrition, as it will ensure that they stay healthy and strong athletes. The main things to remember are to keep your swimmers hydrated and to help them eat balanced meals, including plenty of carbohydrates and proteins. Make sure your swimmer drinks plenty of water throughout the day, and please be sure to have them bring a water bottle to practice. Water bottles and sports drinks with sealable tops are allowed on the deck of the pool, and due to the fact that it gets very warm in the pool area and the workouts can be physically taxing, it is important that each swimmer have something to drink as needed during practice.

Injuries: A swimmer's complaints of pain should never be taken lightly, regardless whether it is related to swimming or some other cause. If during a practice a swimmer complains of pain, they will be asked to sit out in order to review the pain and notify parents. In order to return to practice, a swimmer must be at the discretion of the parent or provide a physicians' note. If chronic pain persists, an official diagnosis will be necessary. If a swimmer has sustained an injury, the coaching staff needs to be made aware.

Weather: Living in Illinois can be difficult when it comes to weather extremes. We need to be sure that our swimmers are dressed appropriately. In the summer months, please be sure that swimmers are wearing appropriate clothing for dry land sessions. In the winter months, please be sure that your swimmer is dressed warmly enough, especially with hats and scarves to cover wet hair after practice.

There may be times when bad weather forces the coaching staff to cancel swim practice. This will be a decision made on the day of practice and based on current weather conditions. If practice is cancelled please be aware that the cancellation is made with swimmer and

family's safety in mind. No later than an hour before the first practice session is scheduled to start, we will send an email. Please be diligent in checking your email or team calendar to ensure that you are aware of a cancellation.

Communication

With Coaches: There are several forms of communication available to reach coaches. Parents may email headcoach, lead age group coach, or administrator depending on the situation. Email is checked frequently and we make sure to respond to every question or concern very promptly. The head coach is available on his/her respective cell phone if needed. Feel free to schedule an appointment with the coaches to review any issues. If there are concerns regarding the Head Coach and team development, please contact the Aquatics Coordinator.

Nick Koenig (Head Coach), can be reached at nkoenig@jolietpark.org.

Emily Koscielski (Lead Age Group Coach), can be reached at ekoscielski@jolietpark.org for any issues regarding Blue and White swimmers and practices.

Molly Hoover (Team Administrator), can be reached at mhoover@jolietpark.org for questions on registration, billing, apparel, and special events.

The Blue Tides Swim Team has a team website. This is where you will find all your information about the team, meets, current news, and events. You can also check the team calendar and email coaches via this website. It will be the main form of communication for you. You can locate the website at: www.teamunify.com/iljpd/

Social Media

The team has a facebook page open to the public under Joliet Blue Tides Swim Team with very general information and updates.

There is also a private group for current, active swimmers and families under Blue Tides Kids' Team Group. This page will have more details about current happenings going on with the team. This group is closed and parents/guardians will be admitted after approval.

Volunteers

For The Team: The coaches may need help organizing certain activities, including holiday parties or special events. We will ask that the parents be willing not only to cooperate with these activities, but to help plan and execute them, as well.

At Meets: Host swim teams ask for parent volunteers as timers or officials. Volunteer opportunities will be posted on the club's Team Unify site.

Fundraising

The Blue Tides do not require participation in any fundraising activities. The team does reserve the right to enact fundraising based on the financial needs or goals of the team.

Code of Conduct

Joliet Park District Facilities: As a registered patron of a Joliet Park District program, it is the swimmers responsibility to adhere to the facility rules in place by the Joliet Park District. The rules are posted on site at each facility.

At Swim Meets: Swimmers and their parents are required to follow the rules of the host facility and USA Swimming guidelines.

In The Community: Swimmers need to be responsible for their actions in the pool as much as outside of the pool for they are representing the Joliet Park District Blue Tides Swim Team. Swimmers are prohibited from using alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, including performance enhancing drugs.

A copy of the Blue Tides Code of Conduct, Coaches Code of Conduct, Bullying Policy, Photography Policy, and Grievance Procedure can be found on the website under the Safe Sport tab. Swimmers and parents agree to follow these documents when registering for each season.

Agreement

By signing up for the Blue Tides Swim Team, all participants are expected to become familiar with and follow the guidelines in this handbook. Any swimmer found not following the guidelines here, as well as, team Codes of Conduct and Bullying Policy, may be subject to discipline, suspension, or removal from the team at the decision of the Head Coach, Head Age Group Coach, and/or Park District Personnel.

