

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

SWIMMING • DIVING • MASTERS



DIVING INFORMATION PACKET 2025-2026

LETTER FROM THE HEAD COACH – Welcome to Tennessee Aquatics Diving! We're excited to have your family join our program and community. Our mission is to help young athletes build confidence, discipline, and technical excellence in the sport of diving—while having fun and growing as individuals.

We offer several training groups tailored to age, experience, and goals. Whether your athlete is just learning to dive or competing on the national stage, we're committed to helping them reach their potential.

This packet will walk you through everything you need to know—from practice expectations to competition schedules and communication tools.

Thank you for trusting us with your diver's development. We look forward to a great season!

Warm regards,
Nicholas Rusek
Head Dive Coach, Tennessee Aquatics
nrusek@tnaquatics.com

TEAM REGISTRATION – The TNAQ registration fee of **\$175** is paid annually. This covers a team suit, three team shirts, and AAU Membership. Each diver must hold either an AAU or USA Diving membership depending on their group level, as this provides insurance for all training sessions and competitions.

The Tennessee Aquatics website, www.tnaquatics.com, is our system for billing, entries, announcements, etc. Registration will open on August 19 for returning and new families. Ideally, all registration and initial payments are received prior to September 5th. This ensures athletes receive their t-shirts on time and can be entered in the first meet. If you are a returning athlete, please update your t-shirt and swim suit size.

DIVE FEES – Annual fees vary by training group. Divers are assigned to training groups by the coaching staff according to grade, age, and ability. All fees are paid online during your registration process. The payment terms are stated on the attached **2025-2026 Fee Schedule**.

If a family moves out of the community during the diving season, a prorated refund may be requested if the fees were paid initially at the start of the season in a lump sum. We will have payment plans, monthly payments, and the option of paying with credit cards. All credit card and automatic debit fees will be passed onto the families. *Refunds after the start of the season will be given for medical conditions, injuries, and moving more than 50 miles away.*

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

For any questions regarding billing / membership cancellation, please contact Lizzie Fleming, TNAQ's Business Manager, at lfleming@tnaquatics.com.

2025-2026 GROUP PARENT MEETINGS – These meetings will help new and returning parents find answers to any questions they might have. We will be discussing general information for the upcoming season (e.g. volunteer requirements, fees, etc.). Additionally, we will be discussing any new information or changes from previous seasons. All parents are responsible for information given during group parent meetings. All meetings will take place at one of the training facilities in September. Your group coach will inform you of the day and time of meeting.

TEAM CORE VALUES – At Tennessee Aquatics Diving, we are guided by core values that shape how we train, grow, and support one another—both in and out of the pool.

1. Technique First: We build strong fundamentals for long-term success.
2. Character Counts: Respect toward coaches, work ethic, and resilience matter.
3. Progress Over Perfection: Every step forward is a win. Trust the process.
4. Team Culture: Support your teammates, push yourself past your comfort zone, and learn to love the journey—not just the destination.

SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND CULTURE – All Tennessee Aquatics Diving coaches are certified through AAU Diving, USA Diving, and SafeSport. The safety of our athletes is the top priority both in and out of the water. We strive to build confidence, discipline, and resilience in a positive and inclusive environment. We encourage athletes to communicate with coaches about any injuries, concerns, or personal challenges. We are here to support every diver's development and well-being.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS – Divers should come prepared for every practice with their suit, towel, and dryland training clothes. Being on time is expected—arriving 10 minutes early is considered on time. The program runs year-round, except for the High School/Middle School seasonal group. Each practice may focus on specific skills, so consistent attendance is important for progression. Absences should be communicated to your coach in advance when possible. Group placements and assignments are reviewed throughout the season. Practice schedules for each group are available on the Tennessee Aquatics website. Any changes or cancellations will be communicated via Sports Engine or WhatsApp.

MEETS AND COMPETITION PARTICIPATION – AAU and USA Diving competitions are available for divers in the Lessons Group, Homeschool Group, Age Group, and National/Elite Team. High School and Middle School divers may participate in KISL and TISCA meets. Meet schedules, timelines, travel details, and registration deadlines will be communicated via email and posted on the Tennessee Aquatics website. Meet info packets will also be shared through the Sports Engine app or WhatsApp. During meets, divers must wear TNAQ team suits and team apparel. For home meets, family volunteer assignments are mandatory. For away meets, travel arrangements may vary by group, and participation should be discussed directly with your coach.

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

HOME DIVE MEETS – Home dive meets are not merely competitions, they are also essential TNAQ fundraisers. We ask that each family volunteers for a shift (i.e., hospitality, announcer, concessions, etc.) at our home meets. This allows us to run high level home meets throughout the year. **Divers are responsible for wearing team apparel on deck and the team suit during all competitions.**

AWAY DIVE MEETS – The meet schedule will be posted on the Tennessee Aquatics website and shared via email. While changes may occur throughout the season, most competitive divers will have multiple travel meet opportunities. On occasion, the team may attend an away meet together via bus or van travel. **Divers are responsible for wearing team apparel on deck and the team suit during all competitions.** Away meets are open to competitive groups but are not mandatory for all. Please consult your coach to determine which meets are appropriate for your diver.

2025-2026 Fall and Winter Meet Schedule

Date	Meet Name	Location	Groups to Participate
October 19	Georgia Classic Invitational	Athens, GA	Elite, Age Group, Homeschool, Lessons
October 24	KISL Meet 1	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
October 29	KISL Meet 2	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
November 8-9	Tennessee Aquatics Fall Speedo Invitational	Knoxville, TN	Elite, Age Group, Homeschool, Lessons
November 14	KISL Meet 3	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
November 19	KISL Meet 4	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
December 5	KISL Meet 5	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
December 6-7	Atlanta Diving Invitational	Atlanta, GA	Elite, Age Group, Homeschool, Lessons
December 11-14	USA Diving Winter National Championships	TBA	Elite
December 12	KISL Meet 6 – Ray Bussard	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

January 10	KISL Meet 7	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
January TBA	KISL City Meet Championships	Knoxville, TN	High School and Middle School Group; TNAQ Club
February 6-7	TISCA High School State Championships	Nashville, TN	High School Group and TNAQ Club

Meet Schedule Note: All divers in middle school and high school on the TNAQ club team are expected to participate in KISL meets. The spring meet schedule will be released after the high school and middle school season is done.

APPAREL – All divers **must** wear official TNAQ apparel during meets. This includes the team suit and team shirts provided during registration. Apparel must be worn during both home and away competitions, and divers are expected to represent the program professionally on deck

PARKING FOR ALLAN JONES AND THE SAC – More information will become available in September.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS – Tennessee Aquatics Diving encourages a healthy and respectful parent-coach-diver relationship. Parents play an important role in their child's development, and we ask for your partnership in fostering a supportive environment. Please encourage your athlete—especially on the tough days—and trust the coaching process. Attend parent meetings, read team emails, and communicate honestly with your child's coach when needed. Volunteering at home diving meets is both appreciated and expected when shifts are available. For any questions or concerns throughout the season, please contact your group coach directly.

To maintain a productive training atmosphere, we ask that parents avoid standing on the pool deck or near training areas during practice. Coaching from the stands and comparing divers' progress is discouraged, as every athlete develops at their own pace. If a concern arises, please do not approach coaches during practice hours—email is always the best method for communication. For concerns that require the attention of the Head Coach, please email Nicholas Rusek at nrusek@tnaquatics.com.

COMMUNICATION – Tennessee Aquatics Diving uses the www.tnaquatics.com website as its main communication platform for schedules, updates, billing, and announcements. Communication will also be distributed via Sports Engine and WhatsApp. All meet info, changes, or cancellations will be shared through these platforms. To ensure you receive important updates, please make sure your contact information is current in your Sports Engine account.

EMAIL – The TNAQ mass e-mail system is used weekly by our board members and coaches. Emails sent pertain only to Tennessee Aquatics and we do not solicit your emails. This is our only way for reliable communication between parents, coaches, and board members. Please make sure that TNAQ has a reliable email address for your family at home and work and that

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

you check your email regularly.

Each week you will receive an email from your diver's appropriate group coach.

TEXT – If you wish to receive updates via text, please opt-in by adding your cell phone number in your personal Team Unify portal. We also have a [WhatsApp group text](#) that parents can join for fast, real-time updates throughout the season.

SOCIAL MEDIA – We will be utilizing our [Instagram account](#) (@tnaquaticsdive) for updates on team, meet or practice information. However, in compliance with USA Diving and Safesport policies, the TNAQ coaching staff is prohibited from using personal social media accounts to communicate with TNAQ families or athletes.

CONTACT PERSONS BY GROUP – For any coaching and/or team questions please contact the coach or staff member associated with your specific group.

Name	Contact Info	Groups
Nick Rusek Head Dive Coach	nrusek@tnaquatics.com	National Team and Homeschool Group
Shannon Richardson Assistant Coach	srichardson@tnaquatics.com	Age Group and Lessons Group
MacKenna Peterson Assistant Coach	mpeterson@tnaquatics.com	Age Group and Lessons Group
Dillon Richardson Assistant Coach	drichardson@tnaquatics.com	High School and Middle School Group
Tim Bauer Executive Director and Head Swim Coach	tbauer@tnaquatics.com	
Lizzie Fleming Business Manager	lfleming@tnaquatics.com	

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

ABOUT OUR TEAM

ABOUT TENNESSEE AQUATICS DIVING – Tennessee Aquatics Diving is a nationally ranked springboard and platform diving program based in Knoxville, Tennessee.

With athletes ranging from brand new to national champions, Head Coach Nick Rusek and his staff aim to serve the local diving community across all skill levels. Operating primarily out of the Allan Jones Intercollegiate Aquatics Center on the University of Tennessee's campus, Tennessee Aquatics' divers have access to dryland training, trampolines, spotting rigs, as many as seven springboards, and a full tower on a regular basis.

Priding ourselves on athlete development, our program focuses on offering a safe and enjoyable environment for athletes of all levels. If you can swim across the pool then we have something for you! Whether you are stepping on the boards for the first time, or you're looking for a competitive atmosphere to pursue the highest levels of the sport, Tennessee Aquatics' coaching staff is ready to work with you to pursue your goals.

We're proud to be the host of the 2024 USA Diving Olympic Trials and to be able to offer competitive opportunities for our athletes both home and away each year. With eight USA Junior National Titles, two International Gold medals, and multiple appearances on the USA Diving Junior National Team roster over the past decade, Tennessee Aquatics Diving has a track record of creating opportunities for our dedicated divers to truly excel. We're especially proud to see a significant majority of our graduating divers continue to pursue the sport at the collegiate level, competing at universities across the country.

PRACTICE GROUPS – Tennessee Aquatics offers both competitive and non-competitive groups. All group placement decisions are made at the sole discretion of the Tennessee Aquatics coaching staff.

Lessons Group (Non-Competitive and Competitive) – The Lessons Group is designed for athletes ages 12 and under who are new to the sport. No experience is required—this is diving 101, where divers begin building a strong foundation in a safe and supportive environment.

This class focuses on fundamental skills and drills, including safe approaches, takeoffs, and proper entries into the water. Dryland and trampoline work are also used to reinforce technique. With consistent progress, athletes may be invited to move up to the Age Group team.

- Athlete Age: 12 and Under
- Practice Days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
 - *Note: Divers may attend **up to two practices per week**. Families can choose the days that best fit their schedule.*
- Goal: Progress to Age Group
- Optional: Participate in meets or move into the competitive track
- Coaches: Shannon Richardson and MacKenna Peterson

Homeschool Group (Non-Competitive and Competitive) – The Homeschool Group is designed for divers of all ages who participate in flexible academic or homeschool programs.

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

Practices take place during the daytime and focus on building strong fundamentals across all boards (1m, 3m, and platform).

This group supports both recreational and competitive divers. Athletes are encouraged to develop at their own pace and can choose between training once per week or attending all three offered practice days.

- Athlete Age: All Ages
- Practice Days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Location: Allan Jones Aquatic Center
- Goal: Progress to National Team
- Optional: Compete in KISL, TISCA, AAU Diving, and USA Diving meets
- Coach: Nicholas Rusek

Middle School & High School Group (Beginner to Competitive) – This seasonal program runs from October through February and is designed for athletes who want to compete during the middle school and high school diving season.

The focus is on preparing full dive lists for school competitions, with coaching that aligns with KISL and TISCA rules. Friday meets will be hosted throughout the season, leading up to championship events like the City Meet, Ray Bussard Meet, and State Championships.

- Athlete Age: Middle School and High School
- Practice Days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Season: October – February
- Location: Allan Jones Aquatic Center
- Competitions: KISL & TISCA sanctioned meets
- Dive Requirements:
 - Middle School: 4 dives (regular season), 6 dives (City Meet)
 - High School: 6 dives (regular season), 11 dives (State)
- Coach: Dillon Richardson

Age Group Team (Competitive Team) – The Age Group Team is intended for divers who have advanced from the Lessons Group or who already have a basic understanding of the sport. Divers train across all events (1m, 3m, and platform), with a strong emphasis on skill development, strength training, and dryland work.

Athletes in this group are expected to attend regularly, participate in AAU competitions, and uphold a positive team culture. USA Diving competitions are optional but encouraged for those looking to progress further.

- Athlete Age: All Ages
- Practice Days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- Location: Allan Jones Aquatic Center
- Goal: Prepare for progression to National Team
- Requirements:
 - 85% attendance
 - AAU meet participation

TENNESSEE AQUATICS

- Adherence to team culture and expectations
- Optional: USA Diving competitions
- Coaches: Shannon Richardson and MacKenna Peterson

National Team (Elite Competitive Group) – The National Team is for athletes ages 10–18 who have qualified for or are preparing to qualify for top-level competitions including AAU Nationals, USA Diving Regionals, Zones, Junior Nationals, and collegiate programs.

This group is by invitation only and features a highly customized training schedule. Athletes train in springboard and platform diving year-round, with additional focus on strength and conditioning, mental training, and technical refinement.

- Athlete Age: 10–18
- Schedule: Customized
- Location: Allan Jones Aquatic Center and Offsite Meets
- Goal: Success at National-Level Meets and Preparation for Collegiate Diving
- Requirements:
 - Full commitment to training and meets
 - Participation in springboard & platform training
 - USA Diving membership
 - Strength, conditioning, and mental training
 - Performance benchmarks must be met
- Coach: Nicholas Rusek