

BST 2010 Frequently-Asked Questions

What is the Bedford Barracudas Swim Team (BST)?

The Bedford Barracudas Swim Team is a recreational summer-only swim team. BST competes as a member of the Granite State Swimming Association (GSSA) but is not a member of USA Swimming. It operates as a program of the Bedford Parks & Recreation department, but is managed by its own volunteer Board of Directors.

The team is not “instructional” in that it does not provide “swim lessons”; rather instruction is given to improve competitiveness in the fundamental age-group skills given below.

The team practices at the Bedford Memorial Town Pool (20 County Road, Bedford, NH), part of the recreation complex with tennis courts and the DiNicola Playground.

The Bedford Memorial Town Pool is an **outdoor, un-heated** 25-yard-length, 6-lane pool with diving well; starting blocks and lane-lines are installed for team practices and competitions. The pool house contains changing rooms and showers, and it and the pool deck are handicapped-accessible.

Who can register for the team?

The team is open to any swimmer who can meet the age-group requirements below (youngest children should be comfortable on their own in the water and with the coaching staff, without a parent’s assistance). The age range for the team is as young as 4 years old, and up to age 19 (a swimmer can no longer compete in the GSSA as of their 20th birthday), provided they are able to perform the following:

Age 8 & Under: Able to swim one 25-yard length of freestyle (crawl or similar stroke), unaided, and comfortable on their own (without a parent’s assistance) on the pool deck.

Age 9 & 10: Able to dive and swim 2 pool lengths (50 yards) each of both freestyle and backstroke.

Age 11 & 12: Able to dive and swim 2 pool lengths (50 yards) each of freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke.

Age 13 & Up: Able to dive and swim 4 pool lengths (100 yards) each of freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke.

Are there try-outs for the team?

There are no try-outs for the team. Parents, and the child, should make the decision to register based on best judgment of the swimmer’s ability. There is a short new-swimmer evaluation required *only for those swimmers NEW to the team, and who have been accepted*, the day before regular practice starts (date and time to be announced), so that swimmers can demonstrate their age-appropriate skills (see above) to the coaches.

How long is the Bedford Barracudas Swim Team season?

The team is a **summer-only** team, and the first day of practice is generally within 2-3 days following the last day of school for Bedford. The final day of the season is the last day of the weekend-long GSSA Championship meet, scheduled this year for August 7 & 8, 2010, in Dover NH.

When does the team practice?

The team practices every weekday morning Monday-Friday, in 45-60 minute sessions based on age group size and ability. The **TENTATIVE** practice schedule for summer 2010 is shown below as a reference only and is subject to change based on age-group size after registration is complete! Practice groups and times will be finalized by late April:

7:00-7:30am: *TENTATIVE half-hour optional endurance practice for 13&Older swimmers ONLY*

7:30-8:30am: regular practice for all 13&Older swimmers

8:30-9:15am: regular practice for all 11-12 swimmers PLUS 9-10 girls only

9:15-10:00am: regular practice for all 8&Under swimmers PLUS 9-10 boys only

Do I need to stay at the pool for my child's practice?

Parents may drop their children off and return to pick them up promptly at the conclusion of their practice session. Parents must ensure that their children arrive ready to get into the pool (wearing suit, cap, goggles, sandals and with a dry towel). Swim bags may be kept on deck, and there are locker rooms in the pool house for use by the swimmers. Parents should plan to stay if their child needs assistance or support, or if they wish to observe practice.

Parents cannot be on the deck or anywhere inside the chain-link fence (pool house entry-way and outside the chain-link is OK) during practice due to team and town insurance regulations.

Are practices or meets ever cancelled?

Practices are cancelled only if there is visible lightning and/or audible thunder within 30 minutes prior to practice (we still swim in heavy rain or very hot weather). Swimmers cannot re-enter the water until lightning and thunder have not been seen or heard for 30 minutes.

It is very unusual to cancel practice or a meet, but if weather is continually severe (as opposed to a passing storm) or hazardous (high winds, unseasonable cold) we will do our best to post a cancellation alert to the team's website as soon as a decision is made on practice/meet status, **so be sure to check the team's website if in doubt!** If there is no notice, plan to attend.

How many meets are there, and when and where are they held?

The team participates in 5-6 local meets (1-2 away, 4-5 home) during the season, culminating with the two-day GSSA Championship away meet in August. Home meets take place at the Bedford Memorial Town Pool, usually from 7am-12pm on weekdays (Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays). Away meets (local GSSA teams within 30 minutes of Bedford) are generally at the same time and days of the week.

The two-day Champs meet is in Dover, NH and takes place on a week-end, full days both Saturday and Sunday (though swimmers need attend only when they are scheduled to swim: generally 10&Under on Saturday approximately 7am-2pm; 11&older distance (200-meter) events Saturday afternoon approx. 2-5pm; and all remaining 11&Older events on Sunday, approx 7am-4pm.)

Does my child have to attend every meet and practice?

We understand that many families have summer vacation and camp plans which will conflict with team activities. Please use your best judgment when considering registering for the team – if your child will be absent for the majority of the season, consider registering them in the future when they will be able to participate more fully. Missing a few days here or there, or one or two full weeks for vacation or camp is fine. There are no refunds or pro-rated fees for swimmers able to attend only a partial season.

IMPORTANT: Every swimmer must participate in a minimum of TWO regular season meets in order to be eligible to compete in the Champs meet.

What is the "Parent Meet Job Commitment"?

Parents are required to perform at least two hours of a meet job (meet equipment set-up and breakdown, lane timers, runners, etc – more details coming) at any meet in which their child is swimming. Over 60 people are needed to run a home swim meet and we count on parent volunteers to fill these jobs to run a quick, efficient meet. If you are unable to fulfill this requirement, please speak to a Board Member about other volunteer opportunities. Please remember that, even if you volunteer for the team in another capacity (serving as a Board member or Chairperson for example), a member of your family must still help out with a swim meet job!

There is a mandatory Parents-Only Meeting to be held in May 2010 (exact date and time to be announced) where more info about Parent Meet Jobs will be presented.

How do I register my swimmer for the team?

In-person registration (no mail-in or on-line registration is available) will be conducted for the 2010 season on two dates: Wednesday, April 7 and Tuesday, April 13, from 6:00-7:00p.m. at the McKelvie Intermediate School cafeteria. Registration forms (“Swimmer Information Form” and “Conduct Clause” are available by clicking [HERE](#), and should be completed in full and brought to registration with payment. Payment in full (cash or check only to “BST”) is required at the time of registration (for new swimmers, we do not cash checks for registration or apparel until the swimmer has a confirmed spot on the team; in the event that a new swimmer is not placed on the team, all fees will be returned).

What is the registration fee?

The fee for 2010 is \$120 per swimmer for every swimmer in a family. The fee includes a team logo latex cap, t-shirt and GSSA Champs entry fees for each swimmer. Other optional apparel (swimsuits etc) can be ordered separately at registration.

If our child’s summer plans change, what is the team’s refund policy?

We understand that swimmers may need to withdraw from the team due to illness or injury, change in summer plans or if, after giving it a try, they decide that the swim team experience is not a good fit for them, However the team begins incurring expenses based on the team roster count as of mid-May, and spaces freed up by withdrawals after that time are difficult to fill from the wait-list. For this reason, the team has revised its refund policy for 2010 as follows:

- * Withdrawal requested from date of swimmer’s registration through May 15: 100% refund of registration fee minus a \$10 administrative fee per swimmer.
- * Withdrawal requested from May 15 through June 16: 75% refund of the registration fee.
- * Withdrawal requested from June 16 through third day of practice: 50% refund of the registration fee.
- * Withdrawal requested after third day of practice: no refund.

If my swimmer withdraws, what about the swimsuit and apparel that I pre-ordered?

The team cannot refund the cost of swimsuits or other apparel that was ordered prior to your swimmer’s withdrawal. We will notify you when the apparel arrives.

How do I order other apparel, and learn more about team requirements such as Parent Meet Jobs and Fundraising opportunities?

At the same time and place as registration, we will be conducting a Swim Team “Open House” where swimmers can try on and order (optional) team swimsuits, order other team apparel, find out about team fundraising and sponsorship, meet the coaches, and learn about the required Parent Meet Job commitment

As new swimmers, are my children guaranteed a spot on the team?

The team is limited to approximately 150 swimmers and available spaces are filled in accordance with the team by-laws which state the following priority:

1. Returning swimmers (having swum on the team within the last two seasons)
2. New siblings of returning swimmers
3. New swimmers who are Bedford residents
4. New swimmers from towns other than Bedford.

How do new swimmers get a space on the team?

Prospective new families in groups 3 and 4 will be given lottery numbers at the time of registration. There will be a lottery drawing at the close of registration to determine new swimmer family priority within groups 3 and 4. There is an equal chance of receiving a high lottery priority regardless of what night a new family registers on, so no one is penalized for attending the later of the two evenings. Once placement is known families have the option to remain on a waitlist, or to have their registration materials (forms and check) shredded or returned to them. No checks are cashed nor apparel ordered for any new swimmer family until they confirm their acceptance to the team.

Why is there a limit on the team's size?

Swimmer safety is our primary concern. There is a finite amount of space in the pool, and a limited number of swimmers that the coaches can observe safely and train effectively. We make every effort to accept as many swimmers as possible, but due to a large increase in the number of applicants over the past several years, we have had to turn some swimmers away, based on available space in some age groups.

We maintain wait-lists based on lottery priority and will notify those wait-listed as soon as possible when and if a space becomes available.

So, not knowing if my swimmer will get a spot, should we register?

Absolutely! Few families are denied space on the team (the 10&Under age groups usually receive the most new swimmers), and most get on to the team the following year. We will e-mail new swimmer families as to whether or not their lottery number placed on the team, and if not, with their place on the waitlist, within a few days of the last registration event. We maintain a list of those swimmers who did not get a spot the prior year, and we maintain their lottery placement for the upcoming year's registration. We do not cash any checks or place any apparel orders until it's confirmed that your swimmer has a spot on the team.

When will I hear if my wait-listed swimmer has a spot?

As withdrawals and other adjustments to age groups having a wait-list become known, the team will contact waitlisted swimmers as soon as possible in order of their placement on the wait-list. There is no way to know in advance if spots will open up, but we work as quickly as possible to try to get waitlisted swimmers on the team. Some swimmers withdraw during the first few days of practice, so it is possible for wait-listers to be placed as last as the first week of the season.

Will I have a chance to order a team swimsuit or other apparel if my child is accepted late to the team?

Swimmers accepted late to the team can order a team suit directly from the swimsuit vendor (info will be available at the team's website). Other apparel may be available on a per item basis, you can find out from the team's Purchasing Coordinator once your child has been accepted to the team.

Why have the registrations fees increased to \$120?

The board of directors has raised the registration fees for Bedford Swim Team for the first time since 2004 because the projected expenses for this year exceed our projected income plus the amount of money in our reserve fund. Every year since 2005, the cost of running the team has exceeded its income from all sources. Over that time, the board was able to absorb the deficit using its reserve fund. However, this year, the reserve fund is too low to absorb the projected deficit and a fee increase is unavoidable. The board assures all of you that we will work hard to control our costs so that fee increases continue to be a rare occurrence in the Bedford Swim Team.

Why has the multi-child discount been discontinued?

The board felt that we needed a different approach to helping those families who have difficulty affording the cost of having their children participate in this great summer program. We want to make sure that we get help to those

who need it most. In these times we realize that it is more than just the number of children that can place a financial burden on a family. The old multi-child discount assumed that every family with more than two children needed financial help and, moreover, that no family with one or two children needed any help at all. So this year, the board has decided to be proactive. We are taking the money that would normally be ear-marked for the multi-child discount and making it available to any family that feels they need help paying for membership in the Bedford Swim Team.

I can't afford the registration fees this year, how can I get some help?

The board will accept requests for partial or full registrations fee forgiveness. We will accept requests from new and returning members. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to honor all requests since we have a limited budget for financial assistance, but we believe we've allocated a sufficient amount. The deadline for submitting a request to the board will be **May 1, 2010**. All requests will be reviewed by the board at the May board meeting and we will notify all those requesting aid shortly after the meeting. This will allow plenty of time to seek other solutions if the board cannot honor your request.

For new members, a request for financial assistance will have **no affect** on the results of the lottery for a position on the team should one be held this year.

If you think you will be requesting aid, you may leave that amount off the payment you make at registration. If your request is later granted by the board, you will be covered partially or in full for registration. Should the board not be able to honor all or part of your request, you will be able to get a full refund of payment made if you decide you cannot join us this year.

Your request must be made in writing or e-mail by May 1 – you can give it or mail it to any board member. The request must include your name, address, phone number, and, if you have one, e-mail address. The request should give a brief and very general explanation of why you need aid – details are neither needed nor desired – and the amount of fee forgiveness you are requesting.

Here are some examples of requests for financial assistance.

A sudden and unexpected loss of an income this year has placed financial pressure on our family. We are requesting a reduction of \$50 in our registration fees for the 2010 season.

Some recent and unexpected health costs have made it very difficult to find money for recreation this year. We are requesting a reduction of \$100 in our registration fees for the 2010 season.

We have three children who really want to swim for the Barracudas this year, but we feel we simply can't afford the cost for all of them to participate. We are requesting a \$60 reduction in fees so that all three children can participate in the 2010 season.