



INFORMATION AND WELCOME PACKET

Butler University Health and Recreation Complex
530 W. 49th St. Indianapolis, IN 46208

Contact Information

Assistant Director of Aquatics & Safety: Steven Thompson
Bulldawg Swim School Program Manager: Natalie Schacht
Bulldawg Swim School Site Managers: Andrea Curtis and Ali Sierazy
Phone: 317-940-5969 | Email: aquatics@butler.edu

INTRODUCTION

BullDAWG Swim School is a year-round, progressive system designed to meet participants where they are and support continuous skill development. Instruction begins with foundational water safety and water competency skills through **Swim School**, and progresses into stroke development, technique refinement, and endurance training through **Stroke School**.

Our curriculum is based on Starfish Swim School, a nationally recognized, research-based swim instruction curriculum used by aquatic programs across the country. The Starfish framework emphasizes water safety, body position, breath control, and independent movement in the water, providing a consistent and widely understood foundation for participants of all ages. This universal curriculum supports transferable skills and aligns with nationally accepted aquatic education standards.

Instruction is offered primarily through small-group lessons, allowing for individualized feedback, consistent progression, and a safe, supportive learning environment. As the program continues to grow, additional instructional formats—including private and semi-private lessons—may be offered to better meet individual learning needs and program demand.

Each level intentionally builds on the skills of the previous one, and advancement is based on demonstrated readiness rather than age alone. Detailed level descriptions, prerequisites, and skill benchmarks are outlined in the sections that follow.

SESSION STRUCTURE & REGISTRATION

Swim lessons are offered in structured sessions to support consistent instruction and skill development. Participants will register for three-week sessions, with classes meeting **two times per week for 30 minutes per class**. Participants will select either a **Monday / Wednesday** or **Tuesday / Thursday** class schedule.

Participants attend the same scheduled days and times throughout the duration of the session to promote continuity, relationship-building with instructors, and steady progression of skills. Registration is completed by session, and participants are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings within their selected session. Specific session dates, class times, and availability will be published prior to each registration period.

AGE & PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Participants **must be at least 3 years of age** at the start of their registered session to be eligible for enrollment. This minimum age requirement ensures that participants are developmentally prepared for structured instruction, group participation, and basic water safety expectations.

All participants **must be fully potty trained** or wear appropriate swim diapers while participating in lessons. Regular diapers are not permitted in the pool at any time. Swim diapers must be designed specifically for aquatic use and worn according to manufacturer guidelines. These requirements are in place to help maintain a safe, hygienic, and positive learning environment for all participants.

SWIM SCHOOL – LEVEL OVERVIEW

The Starfish Swim School curriculum is a nationally recognized, research-based program designed to build **water comfort, safety, and foundational swimming skills** for participants of all ages. Instruction progresses through five color-coded levels, each requiring swimmers to demonstrate both a safety benchmark and a swim benchmark in order to advance, ensuring balanced development of water safety awareness and independent swimming ability.

WHITE – Water Comfort & Submersion

Focus: Building trust, comfort, and willingness to submerge

Prerequisite: Minimum age of 3

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Always ask permission before entering the water
- ☐ Swim: Relaxed submersion

Key Skills: Safe entry and exit, Pour water over head and face, Tuck and stand (front), Breath-hold and look underwater

RED – Floating & Air Recovery

Focus: Body position, floating, and rolling for air

Prerequisite: Successful completion of White

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Put on a lifejacket, jump in, and kick 3m / 10ft on the back
- ☐ Swim: Jump/roll onto back and breathe for 3–5 seconds

Key Skills: Starfish float on front and back, Bobbing (5 times), Tuck and stand (back), Kicking on front and back (3m / 10ft)

YELLOW – Forward Movement & Direction Change

Focus: Propulsion, direction changes, and self-rescue sequences

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Red

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Surface support (tread) for 10 seconds
- ☐ Swim: Swim–roll–swim for 10m / 30ft

Key Skills: Beginner stroke on front (face in), Beginner stroke on back, Roll from front to back, Beginner stroke with direction change

BLUE – Rotation & Rhythmic Breathing

Focus: Body rotation, coordination, and breathing efficiency

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Yellow

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Reach or throw assist with flotation
- ☐ Swim: Side–roll–side with kick for 5m / 15ft

Key Skills: Front and back streamline with kick, Underwater swim (1m / 3ft), Side-breathing position with kick, Side–roll–side progression

GREEN – Integrated Skills & Endurance

Focus: Combining strokes, safety skills, and endurance

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Blue

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Disorienting entries and recovery

- ☐ Swim: Starfish SaferSwimmer Award™

Key Skills: 3 strokes – STOP drill, 3 strokes – ROLL drill, 3×3×3 drill, Tread water for 40 seconds

STROKE SCHOOL – LEVEL OVERVIEW

Starfish Stroke School builds upon the foundational skills developed in Swim School by **refining technique, increasing endurance, and developing proficiency across the four competitive strokes**. Instruction follows the same five color-coded level structure. Emphasis shifts progressively toward efficiency, coordination, fitness, and sustained swimming.

WHITE – Freestyle & Backstroke Foundations

Focus: Stroke fundamentals, body position, breathing, and propulsion

Prerequisite: Successful completion of all Swim School levels

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ **Safety:** Always ask permission before entering the water
- ☐ **Swim:**
 - Freestyle – 25m/yd
 - Backstroke – 25m/yd

Key Skills: Body position and breathing, Arm action, Leg action (flutter kick), Coordination and timing

RED – Resting & Endurance Strokes

Focus: Alternative strokes for endurance and efficiency

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Stroke School White

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ **Safety:** Put on a lifejacket in the water; kick on back 10m / 30ft
- ☐ **Swim:**
 - Elementary Backstroke – 25m/yd
 - Sidestroke – 25m/yd

Key Skills: Body and breathing position (glide/recovery), Arm action, Leg action (whip kick or scissor kick), Coordination and timing

YELLOW – Butterfly Introduction

Focus: Rhythm, body undulation, and timing

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Stroke School Red

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ **Safety:** Emergency scenario response
- ☐ **Swim:** Butterfly – 25m/yd

Key Skills: Body position and breathing, Arm action, Leg action (dolphin kick), Coordination and timing

BLUE – Breaststroke Development

Focus: Kick timing, arm coordination, and streamlined glides

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Stroke School Yellow

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ **Safety:** Survival float for 2 minutes
- ☐ **Swim:** Breaststroke – 25m/yd

Key Skills: Body position and breathing, Arm action, Leg action (whip kick), Coordination and timing

GREEN – Integrated Strokes & Endurance

Focus: Fitness, efficiency, and sustained swimming

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Stroke School Blue

Benchmarks to Pass

- ☐ Safety: Tread water or survival float for 5 minutes
- ☐ Swim: Continuous swim – 300m/yd

Key Skills: Endurance development, Turns, Vertical fitness, Racing dive (optional)

GROUP LESSONS

Group swim lessons are offered in a **small-group instructional format**, allowing participants to learn alongside peers while receiving structured, skill-based instruction from a certified swim instructor. Group lessons follow the same color-level progression and instructional benchmarks used in both Swim School and Stroke School, ensuring consistency in skill development, safety expectations, and advancement standards across all program formats.

Participants are grouped based on a combination of skill ability and age, with group placement determined by instructor availability, facility space, and overall program needs. Instructor-to-participant ratios typically range from **2 to 6 participants per group**, with 4 participants per group identified as the ideal class size to balance individualized feedback, safety oversight, and group engagement.

Advancement in group lessons is based on demonstrated readiness and successful completion of required safety benchmarks and swim benchmarks. Group lesson availability, scheduling, class size, and instructor assignments are determined by program capacity, facility availability, and staffing considerations, with additional policies and registration details outlined in the sections that follow.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private swim lessons are offered in a **one-on-one (1:1)** instructional format between the participant and a certified swim instructor. Private lessons follow the same color-level progression and instructional benchmarks used in both Swim School and Stroke School, ensuring consistency in skill development, safety expectations, and advancement standards across all program formats.

Private lessons may be appropriate for participants seeking individualized instruction, accelerated skill development, additional confidence in the water, or targeted support with specific skills. Advancement within private lessons is based on demonstrated readiness and successful completion of required **safety benchmarks** and **swim benchmarks**, consistent with group lesson expectations.

Private lessons are offered on a limited basis and are subject to instructor availability, facility scheduling, and overall program capacity. Because private lesson schedules are coordinated individually between program management, instructors, and participants, they offer greater schedule flexibility than the standard group lesson schedule. Private lesson dates and times are only available during the active lesson weeks outlined in the program schedule within this packet.

Private lessons may be scheduled as either: One lesson per week for six weeks, or Two lessons per week for three weeks. To inquire about availability or begin the scheduling process, please email aquatics@butler.edu. Instructor requests cannot be guaranteed; however, every effort will be made to maintain the same instructor throughout a session. Payment is due in full at the HRC Front Desk on the first day of lessons.

PRICING

Swim lessons are offered in **structured three-week sessions**, with classes meeting **two times per week** for a total of **six 30-minute class meetings** per session. This session-based structure supports consistent instruction, skill retention, and measurable progress across each level. Pricing is established on a per-session, per-participant basis and reflects the instructional format, class size, and staffing required to deliver high-quality swim instruction. Session pricing, available schedules, and registration deadlines will be published prior to each registration period.

Class Type	General Public Price	Current Butler Student/Staff (Full-Time)
Group Lesson	\$100 per session	20% off discount
Private Lesson	\$250 per session	20% off discount

SCHEDULE

BullDAWG Swim School offers multiple sessions per academic semester, each running over a three-week period. Lessons are held on a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule, with evening time slots available. Session dates and lesson times are published prior to each registration period and may vary based on program needs.

Session	Dates	Schedule	Time
September 2026	September 14 – October 1, 2026	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm
October 2026	October 5 – 8, 2026 and October 19 – 29, 2026	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm
November 2026	November 2 – 19, 2026	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm
January 2027	January 25 – February 11, 2027	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm

February 2027	February 15 – March 4, 2026	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm
March 2027	March 15 – April 1, 2027	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm
April 2027	April 5 – 22, 2027	Mon/Wed Tue/Thu	5:00 – 5:30pm 5:45 – 6:15pm 6:30 – 7:00pm 7:15 – 7:45pm

REFUNDS, CANCELLATIONS, SCHEDULE CHANGES, & MAKEUPS

BullDAWG Swim School is committed to providing consistent, high-quality instruction while balancing instructor availability and facility scheduling. In the event of a **participant-initiated cancellation** or need to reschedule, the program will make reasonable efforts to accommodate a makeup lesson when space and instructor availability allow. Makeups are not guaranteed and may be limited by class capacity, session structure, and staffing constraints.

Because lessons are delivered in structured, session-based formats, **refunds are not issued for missed classes** due to personal scheduling conflicts, illness, travel, or other participant-related circumstances.

In situations where BullDAWG Swim School is required to **cancel a lesson due to operational reasons** (such as instructor availability, facility issues, or unforeseen circumstances), refunds will **not** be issued. Instead, the program may, at its discretion, issue a **swim lesson voucher or coupon**. Issued vouchers entitle the recipient to one (1) complimentary swim lesson, not a full session. Vouchers may be redeemed during registration for a future swim lesson session by applying a designated discount code, which will deduct the cost of a single lesson from the total session fee. Swim lesson vouchers are issued on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of BullDAWG Swim School. Vouchers have no cash value, are nontransferable, and may be subject to expiration or additional terms outlined at the time of issuance.

Requests for schedule changes must be submitted in advance and are subject to availability. Temporary or one-time schedule changes may not be accommodated. All policies related to refunds, makeups, and schedule adjustments are administered consistently to ensure fairness across participants and to maintain instructional continuity.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTIRE

All participants are required to wear **proper swimwear** that is appropriate for aquatic instruction and allows for safe movement in the water. Swimwear should be secure, form-fitting, and designed specifically for swimming. For comfort and effective instruction, **one-piece swimsuits** and **secure swim trunks or jammers** are recommended. Participants should avoid loose-fitting clothing, streetwear, or garments not intended for aquatic use, as these can restrict movement and impact safety. Swim caps and goggles are

optional but encouraged, particularly for participants with longer hair. Jewelry, watches, and other accessories should be removed prior to lessons. Footwear is not permitted in the pool. These attire guidelines help ensure participant safety, support effective instruction, and maintain a professional learning environment.

PARKING

Participants may park in the Hinkle Fieldhouse parking lot free of charge after 5:00pm, or in the Sunset Avenue Parking Garage for a small fee during all hours. On days when athletic events are scheduled at Hinkle Fieldhouse, the lot may be reserved for event parking and unavailable to swim lesson participants. In these cases, the Sunset Avenue Parking Garage will remain available. Participants are encouraged to review the Butler basketball schedule in advance and plan accordingly.

BUILDING ENTRY

The Butler Health and Recreation Complex (HRC) is open Monday through Friday from 6:00am–11:00pm. Both main entrances are unlocked during operating hours. Participants should enter through the entrance most convenient to their parking location and proceed directly to the front desk.

CHECK-IN

All participants must check in at the HRC front desk prior to each lesson, where Member Services staff will assist with verification and directions. After checking in, participants should remain in the HRC lobby until it is time to report to the Aquatic Center. Participants are **not permitted on the pool deck more than five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled lesson start time**. This allows instructors adequate time to prepare the pool area, review lesson plans, and ensure a safe instructional environment. When instructed, participants may proceed to the pool deck and wait in the designated area until their lesson begins. This check-in and arrival process helps ensure accurate attendance, minimizes congestion on the pool deck, and supports a smooth transition into each lesson.

LOCKER ROOM USE

Participants are encouraged to **arrive at the pool already dressed in swim attire**, with appropriate clothing worn over top. This helps streamline check-in, reduce congestion, and limit overcrowding in the locker rooms. Locker room use should be limited to restroom access prior to lessons or changing after lessons conclude. Locker rooms are a shared space within the Health and Recreation Complex and are used by a variety of patrons. All participants must always adhere to appropriate gender-designated locker room assignments. For those who prefer additional privacy or require alternative accommodations, single, gender-neutral family restrooms and changing rooms are available in the Aquatic Center corridor.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you offer trial lessons?

BullDAWG Swim School does not offer trial lessons. Our session-based structure and progressive curriculum are designed to support consistent learning and skill development across each session.

My child will turn 3 years old in the middle of a session – can I register, or must I wait for the next session?

Participants must be 3 years old by the first day of the session to be eligible to register. If a participant turns 3 after the session has begun, they will need to wait until the next available session to enroll.

Can I go in the water with my participant if they are nervous or scared?

Parents and guardians are not permitted to enter the water during lessons. Our instructors are trained to work with participants at all comfort levels and will use appropriate strategies to build confidence, trust, and water safety skills in a supportive environment.

Can family members watch from the pool deck?

A parent, legal guardian, or designated supervisor must be present on the pool deck for the duration of the lesson. All non-participating family members, including children, must be actively supervised at all times and remain away from the pool.

What should my participant bring to lessons?

Participants should arrive dressed in appropriate swimwear, with a towel and any optional personal equipment such as goggles or a swim cap. Participants with longer hair are encouraged to secure it prior to the lesson.

Are swim caps or goggles required?

Swim caps and goggles are optional but encouraged. Goggles which allow free air exchange from the nose are the only acceptable goggles to be used. Goggles that cover the nose limit the participants' ability to progress through the curriculum adequately and safely. **Participants with longer hair are encouraged to have a hair tie or swim cap.**

Will my participant always have the same instructor?

Whenever possible, participants will remain with the same instructor and group for the duration of a session to promote continuity and comfort. Instructor changes may occur due to availability, staffing needs, or if a different instructor is better suited to support a participant's skill level. Instructor assignments may change between sessions.

I have multiple children registered for group lessons. Will they be in the same group with the same instructor?

Group placement is based primarily on skill level, safety, and instructor availability, and participants may be placed in different groups if needed to support effective instruction.

How do I know what level my participant should register for?

Participants will be assessed on the first day of lessons to confirm appropriate placement. Families can assist with accurate placement by completing the "Get-To-Know Your Swimmer" information sheet included in this packet and submitting it prior to the first lesson.

Can my participant move levels mid-session?

Level changes typically occur between sessions to maintain group consistency. In rare cases, a mid-session level change may be recommended by instructional staff if a participant's skill level is significantly mismatched. Any level changes are subject to availability and instructor approval.

What happens if my participant arrives late?

Late arrivals may join the lesson in progress, provided it is safe to do so and does not disrupt instruction. Lesson end times will not be extended for late arrivals, and missed portions of a lesson are not eligible for makeups or refunds.

What if my participant needs a break or leaves early?

Participants are welcome to take brief breaks as needed during lessons. If a participant needs to leave early, instructors will accommodate as best as possible; however, missed instruction time is not eligible for refunds or makeups.

What happens if a lesson is cancelled?

If BullDAWG Swim School must cancel a lesson due to operational reasons, we will communicate directly with participants regarding next steps. When possible, we will attempt to reschedule the lesson or issue a swim lesson voucher, as outlined in the program's cancellation and voucher policies.

Are make-up lessons guaranteed?

Make-up lessons are not guaranteed. While the program may attempt to accommodate a makeup when space and instructor availability allow, makeups are offered at the discretion of BullDAWG Swim School and are subject to program capacity and session structure.

What is the water temperature?

The pool is typically maintained between 80–82 degrees Fahrenheit to support comfort, safety, and effective instruction.

How do I create an account or register for lessons?

To register, click the registration button on our swim lessons page on our website. From there, you will be navigated to our registration page. Sign up for an account in the top right corner of the page (if you are with Butler University, you can link the account to your Butler account). Once your account has been created, go into your account settings and add members to your household for all your swimmers who will be enrolled. Once your swimmers' profiles have been created, return to our offerings page and enroll in lessons.

What if I have a question that isn't answered in this packet?

Additional questions may be directed to the Butler University Aquatics Department by emailing aquatics@butler.edu. Messages will be responded to during regular business hours.

APPENDICIES, ATTACHMENTS, AND FORMS

GET TO KNOW YOUR SWIMMER

Please see the form on the following pages. Download and email back or print and return at your first lesson.

MEDIA & GENERAL USE WAIVER

Butler University Recreation & Wellness requires the use of a media and general use waiver for all participants using our facility. Waivers will be signed online during registration or at the front desk on the first day of lessons.