

Our goal is to find the most appropriate practice group for each swimmer that will allow them to develop and progress at NCAC.

Group placement is based on many factors and a fair amount of coaching instinct. However, there is a big picture, team-wide philosophy that drives group placement decisions. The NCAC program has a plan that we follow for athlete progression. We hope that communicating these ideas will allow for a better understanding of the coaches decisions in determining group placements.

Some of the most important factors driving group placement are the following:

- Commitment (practice attendance, meet participation, priority of the sport)
- Maturity (chronological age, physiological age, and emotional development)
- Training ability and technique.
- Coach-ability (willingness to take direction and commit oneself to make changes necessary for improvement)

Racing times are not a primary factor for group placement, although they may be an indirect factor as racing times translate to meet qualification and training needs.

One of our goals at NCAC is to teach swimmers the process of achieving a goal. Coaches want swimmers to concentrate everyday at practice on the process of what they should be doing to reach their goals. If they are focusing on the process then the goal of the practice level assignment will ultimately take care of itself.

The swimmer's group placement determines a floor, not a ceiling. And by that, we mean that each group has different standards for membership (the floor), but does not have upper limits of achievement (the ceiling). In no way does group placement communicate the coaches' belief about a swimmer's potential.

A swimmer's group is not meant to be a predictor of future success, nor an indicator of his/her worth to the team or to the coaches. First and last, we view swimmers as outstanding young people, and the more we can do to remove inaccurate status labels from groups, the better.

Finding the appropriate group for each swimmer is the goal, and doing so is our challenge. As the swimmers grow physically and emotionally (often rapidly), their needs change. The more we think and talk in terms of appropriate group placement and the changing needs of swimmers, the healthier our team culture will be.

Also, we understand that group moves are not a small change in your lives as parents. Group moves often change schedules, which potentially affect other activities, car pools, team dues, coaches, and expectations. But just like going from middle school to high school, or from one level of math to the next, these moves can be looked upon as necessary steps along the way.

You may check your TeamUnify account to see what practice level your child will be assigned to on Wednesday, August 5. We will have practice group parent meetings after we come back in September or you may touch base with the coaching staff the end of August if you or your child have any questions regarding his / her placement.

We wish your family a great break and look forward to seeing everyone on August 31!

Sincerely,

NCAC Coaches