**When Should An Athlete Advance Levels On This Team?**

  I would like to point out that we, the coaches, are not the ones who should be making this decision. It should be the ATHLETE in each and every case who makes the decision. The decision that I speak of is the decision to utterly prove that they need moved up through their own actions in the pool.

They should decide to be at practice whenever they can, they should decide to swim as much as they can on a year around basis, they should decide to be the first one in the pool for practice, they should decide to be a leader in dryland, they should decide to work harder than anyone else in their group, they should decide to focus intently on improving their technique, they should decide to be the one who is always out front in training sets & they should decide to be a leader for their teammates through their own positive actions. Plain and simply… THEY decide to do what it takes to separate themselves from their group to be out front in as much as they can in everything that they do and give us no choice but to move them on to the next level.

 No matter what sport you are in, what program you are with or what city you are in, an athlete will still be assigned to the practice group they should be in with that program and will have to prove that they need moved to a new group within that program through their own actions in the water or on the field. So… wherever you are at it will STILL be the athlete's decision. If one of our athletes wants moved up to the next level I would set forth a challenge to them to make that decision FOR us through their actions in the pool. I would ask them to MAKE us decide to move them up through their actions at practice.

 I doubt any of those athletes in the Olympics that are exciting all of the swimmer's in America kept changing teams until they got what they wanted in terms of being moved up in training groups without first proving that they wanted to do whatever it took through their own actions in the pool to merit such an honor. These athletes we are watching are the ones who have decided, THEMSELVES, to prove to their coaches, and to the world, that they'd do anything that was necessary in the pool and on dryland to earn the right to be called an Olympian. They didn't barter for the right to become an Olympian. They weren't handed the right to become an Olympian. They didn't jump around from team to team hoping to get around or skip over what it simply takes to become an Olympian. These are the athletes that EARNED the right to become an Olympian through their own actions in the pool, in the arena or on the field.

 I would ask any athlete on our team to do the same… make the decision, themselves, to be great and make the decisions that give us no choice as a staff but to keep challenging them more and more on up through the ranks of this team. I challenge our athletes NOT to take the easy road, NOT to ask for something that they haven't deserved, NOT to ask for something that wouldn't be fairly given to their teammates, NOT to ask for something that they hadn't utterly proven that they deserved through their own everyday actions and decisions &, above all else, to NOT turn their back on their teammates. There have always been other options here in central Ohio. And yet, we have still produced more Olympic Trail Qualifiers, more World Ranked swimmers, more International Team medalists coming through our ranks as age group swimmers than any other team and, in fact, all teams combined. This isn't fact from long ago as it's current as current can be. Two swimmers coming through our ranks made finals at Olympic Trials this year and were also members of USA Swimming National teams last year. And they were the only two central Ohio bred swimmers to achieve such honors. The common thread that holds these athletes and their predecessors  together is the fact that they stuck through the good times and the bad, they stuck through the fact that they would have to prove their own desire and want in the pool through their own decisions and actions and they learned that the future of their own success lay entirely in their own hands right here on our team. And those are some powerful words…"here on our team" as we are not a club!

We are the Greater Columbus Swim TEAM of Ohio and thanks for being a part of our TEAM!