

Training Group Advancement

Group moves are always a hot topic of conversation at the beginning and conclusion of each season. Who is moving up? Who is staying where they are and why? I want everyone to know the coaches sit down and discuss each swimmer in our program and what we feel is in their best interest.

We look at several factors when considering moving a swimmer up to the next training level. We first look at the level of commitment the swimmer has had to the group they are currently training in. Do they make the recommended weekly attendance? When they are at practice do they work hard on a consistent basis? Do they try to go first in their lane or do they always go to the end of the lane and go through the motions? Can they handle all the work their current training level is doing? When the practices get to be challenging are they sitting out, fixing their goggles or going to the restroom to get out of working hard? Do they need more work on their stroke technique? Some swimmers can easily handle specific practices in their best strokes. We have to look at whether they can make the work in all four strokes plus kicking. If a swimmer can easily make the training sets in freestyle but have a hard time making the intervals in the other strokes and have a hard time making the kicking sets we are most likely going to leave the swimmer in the group they are currently in. We would rather have a swimmer in a group where they can be a leader in their lane, get plenty of rest between repeats and continue to develop their strokes so when it is time to make group moves at the end of that season there is no doubt they are ready for the transition in to the next level.

It is our job to place swimmers in the appropriate training level based on what they can handle not where their friends are. We have seen a great deal of success in this sport with swimmers who have been placed in groups differently than their friends. They become much more focused on working hard, developing their skills, and becoming great leaders. It never seems like it at the time but in many cases the swimmer that stays in the lower group tends to benefit more than those who move up. We know that we can't make everyone happy and there will always be some swimmers and parents who will be disappointed with their group placement.

Factors that weigh into group placement and group move-up decisions:

The following is criteria the Coaching Staff uses when determining which swimmers are ready for more. Generally, swimmers can tell when they are about ready for a move by thinking about how they practice. A swimmer, who consistently leads the fastest lane in practice, consistently uses good technique, consistently demonstrates an outstanding attitude, and consistently attends practice, is someone the coaches will be looking at to move to a higher training level. On the other hand, if a swimmer has a poor attitude, low attendance, and is not swimming in the fastest lane of the current group or has difficulty handling the training requirements of that group, moving that particular swimmer would not be in the best interest of the team or that individual.

- Level of commitment to practice attendance and competition expectations
- Technical readiness
- Training group effort and behavior
- Psychological readiness
- Physiological needs and readiness
- Competitive maturity
- Independence and self-reliance
- Age
- Coachability