

What determines advancement from one training group to the next?

There are no hard and fast rules or requirements that are standardized in our program relating to group advancement. Instead, we as a staff recognize when an athlete has exceeded their stay in a certain group and is ready to move on to a higher level group. Any athlete that wishes to move up to another level will be considered by the coaching staff on a case-by-case basis.

We want the athletes to be more than ready to move up to the next group. We at PCST often prefer to allow an athlete some added time in their respective group to master the skills of that group, until we see that the athlete has in effect "outgrown" that group. At times we may "transition" the athletes into the next level to allow for proper preparation and adjustment.

Keep in mind that our groups continue to get better and improve throughout the course of each season. Additionally, the groups may have evolved since an older sibling went through the program.

Many times the coaches will approach parents when they have determined an athlete is ready, but please feel free, if your child has shown an interest in moving up, to ask your coach. More than likely, our coaches have already planned out the move up period for your athlete long before you may have even thought of it.

Below you will find just a few of the aspects we look for and questions our coaching staff evaluates before advancing a swimmer to the next training group.

Age / maturity: All children develop at different rates, some faster or slower than others. It is crucial that a swimmer is not only old enough, but also mentally and physically mature enough to handle the increased training yardage, drylands, and skills of the next group. One of the common mistakes that can be made by coaches and parents is pushing a swimmer "too far, too fast".

Commitment: Is the swimmer committed to his/her swimming? Do they come to a significant majority of practices and are they leading the group by example and attitude? Swimmers need to be allowed the opportunity to show they are ready to commit to the expectations of a group before moving on.

Development in current group: How has a swimmer developed his/her strokes in their current group? Have they out-grown the current group? Do they successfully complete the skills desired by their current coach? Are they still progressing as a swimmer and person in their current group?

Technique and skills: Does the swimmer have satisfactory stroke technique to handle increased yardage? Will their body allow them to continue and develop the same technique in the next group? Are they able to not only show a skill once, but use that skill repeatedly throughout practice? Can the swimmer remember sets and intervals? Do they use proper skills and technique during drylands?

Responsibility: Does the swimmer possess the desire to show they can handle the increased expectations in the next group? Does the swimmer bring the required equipment to practice each day? Does the swimmer arrive on time, or hurry to get in the water as quickly as possible if late? Is the

swimmer able to establish and communicate goals with their coach?

These are just a few of the factors our coaching staff evaluates before deciding if a swimmer should progress to the next group. While there are sometimes exceptions to a few of these guidelines, the majority of swimmers successfully demonstrate these attributes before moving into the next group.