



SUNDFÉLAG HAFNARFJARÐAR

STOFNAD 1945

Ásvellir 2 - 221 Hafnarfjörður - Ísland
<http://www.sh.is> sh@sh.is sími 555 6830
kennitala 640269-2789 - reikning 0327-26-022345

Swim Team Group Move-Up Guidelines

SH divides its practice groups based upon skill level and less on age. Moving up to a higher level is merit based and not an entitlement.

With our practice groups, coaches are best able to focus on techniques, skills and intervals that are best suited for our swimmers' development. We strive to develop the athlete in place and then provide a larger training program when the athlete is ready both mentally and physically for the next level. We take a long-term approach in setting up your athlete's developmental path. SH looks to the motto of **Attendance + Effort = Success**, we will factor in attendance and practice effort into the decision for moving into higher level groups as each level does require an increased level of commitment.

The SH coaches want their swimmers to move up to the next level. We want to know the athlete and their swimming goals. The most effective way for our coaches to know the swimmer is by watching them swim in practice **and** at swim meets. The best indicator of how a swimmer will perform at the next level is based upon how they swim in practice today. Swimmers and parents may inquire about a swimmer's readiness for the next level at any time throughout the year. Coaches will consider the following when evaluating an athlete's readiness for moving up:

- Athlete's Goals
- Lane Leadership & Practice Attitude and Commitment
- Attendance at practices & meets
- Listening and implementing coach guidance
- Understanding drills & technique and implementing that into the training
- Speed requirements (endurance test (2000m or 30 minutes), kicking speed etc)
- Perception of the athlete's ability to handle the next level of practices

Moving to a higher level can be very challenging to athletes as well as their parents due to the increased time at the pool and/or the increased level of exertion in the new workouts. SH typically moves athletes to the next level in August and January, for the beginning of the Short Course Season and Long Course Season. This is generally a good time to move kids as we ramp up for the season.

Once a swimmer is eligible to move-up, we will work with the swimmer to build a successful transition plan. Sometimes the move is immediate and other times it is a transition over two to three weeks up to a full season. This will vary swimmer to swimmer.

Some points to consider for moving up a group

There isn't much that is more exciting than improving for swimmers.

And with young age group swimmers, this improvement is happening like *crazy*.

Personal best times tumble fast and furious thanks to a whirlwind combination of new skills, increased conditioning, and the natural strengthening and size that comes with sprouting like a weed.

This rush to progress is often felt by the swimmer who feels they have outgrown their group.

They look at the faster swimmers in the next group and know that they can compete and take on the enhanced demands of a more senior group.

But just because a swimmer thinks they should be moved up doesn't mean it oughta happen.

For the swim parent who is curious as to why their kid isn't zooming along to the next level on the team, here is a breakdown of what you need to know about your swimmer moving up a group.

Why and when a swimmer gets moved up

There are a few different reasons that a swimmer graduates to the next group. Some are critical (attendance, practise attitude), while others, like meet times, aren't as important as one might think.

Here's a breakdown of the common guidelines coaches use when considering to move a swimmer up:

Attendance.

This is about as basic a requirement as you can think of. Is the swimmer making all of their present swim workouts?

Of course, weak attendance can sometimes be explained by factors outside of the pool (they have a family trip, or were playing in a concert), but when they miss for the sake of not wanting to be there or poor time management that is a different story.

If somebody misses quite often because of sickness or injury, the workload of that actual program might be very high and a sign, that the workload of the next group might be absolutely too much. In this case it might even be better to go back one group to have a reduced training load.

Attendance is an easy and subjective way to measure commitment. Senior groups require more commitment, so you could say that this is a biggie factor in determining whether a swimmer should advance groups.

Compatibility with group. Basic Swim Speed

Can the swimmer keep up with the next group? Will they be able to compete a little bit with the other swimmers in their new group?

Coaches operate at their best when the swimmers they coach are largely similar in ability and speed.

If one swimmer is far behind, in terms of skill or conditioning, this swimmer will require specialized training apart from the rest of the group, cutting instruction time for the other swimmers.

Technique.

Proper stroke mechanics and understanding of the rules of the sport are important when it comes to group advancement.

Has the swimmer progressed technically to the point that they are where they need to be? Are they completing races and practices with the proper technique over the whole distance and throughout the whole time?

Meet times and results.

Although the scoreboard and medals might tell you otherwise, meet times are not really as important a factor as most swim parents would think.

The results and what happens on race day acts as a limited snapshot of how your swimmer is doing in the water, but it doesn't always reflect what kind of attitude and commitment the swimmer is showing at practice.

Where meet times can start to influence decision-making is when it comes to qualifying for higher-level meets. For example, athletes that have national team cuts are more likely to train together, regardless of age.

Coachability.

Does the swimmer do the sets properly? Follows directions when instructed? Shows up on time and is a positive influence on the group?

Ability and talent don't count for squat if the swimmer is spoiling team culture or disrupting practices.

Coaches will be very resistant to reward a swimmer that resists instruction and negatively impacts the training environment by moving them up.

Keep in mind that the next group will require *more* from the athlete, which sets the uncoachable swimmer on a collision course with failure.

Check in with your coach for move-up requirements

Talk to the coach.

Get an idea of where your swimmer is at, what the next group demands, and base your expectations from there.

Trust in the process

We can understand the anxiety and pressure to want to move up groups as fast as possible.

This desire is good, and will keep the swimmer hungry, even if it means they are feeling a little impatient at times. And no, your child won't be getting left behind if they aren't being rushed through the groups. Just the opposite.

The experience shows that swimmers, who climb up the steps too fast, get tired and overwhelmed from the increasing training load and quit earlier than tohers.

Make sure they are earning the reward

Ultimately, moving up a group is a reward and not an entitlement.

It's an acknowledgement that the swimmer has excelled where they are at and are ready to level up.

It's recognition that they can take on more.