



Guidelines for Group Moves



Crawfish Aquatics is committed to placing each athlete in the training environment that best supports their long-term development, success, and enjoyment of the sport. As such, decisions regarding movement between training groups (“move-ups”) are made through a comprehensive and thoughtful evaluation process rather than a single fixed standard.

While performance benchmarks such as racing times and competition results are important indicators, they represent only one part of the overall picture. Equally important are an athlete’s practice habits, technical skills, consistency, work ethic, and ability to meet the expectations of the next training level. Daily engagement, coachability, and demonstrated commitment in practice are all carefully reviewed as part of this process.

It is important to recognize that athlete development is not always linear or identical from one individual to another. For that reason, move-up decisions are not entirely black and white. Each athlete is evaluated holistically, and timelines may vary based on readiness across multiple areas.

Ultimately, coach discretion plays a critical role in these decisions. Coaches use their experience and understanding of each athlete to determine when a move will best support continued growth and confidence. Our goal is always to ensure that athletes are both challenged and set up for success in their training environment.

We appreciate the trust families place in our coaching staff and are committed to making decisions that prioritize each athlete’s development and well-being. Here are the things that our staff discusses on each athlete.

Moves within Senior Division

Senior White → Senior Black

- **Practice Discipline & Priorities**
 - All equipment present & in good order prior to start of workout
 - Performance of necessary stretching/medical needs prior to start of workout
 - Attentive & Focused during coach interactions
 - Making best efforts at technical and/or speed goals during sets
 - Proficiency in strength exercises
 - Ability to complete entire workouts without compromising health
 - Limiting biological function interference with workouts
- **Attendance/Commitment**
 - Meeting requirements of target, not merely current, group
 - Competing in all Crawfish Aquatics meets
 - Committed to competing with team through LC season of Sr. year

- **Leadership within current group (behavioral and/or verbal)**
 - Is an athlete someone to whom teammates can turn for explanation, advice, and/or support?
 - Does athlete's conduct, both at and outside of team functions, align with team ideals and reflect positively on Crawfish Aquatics?
 - Will athlete attempt to honor team commitments and obligations despite time constraints arising from social engagements?
 - Does athlete demonstrate respect for teammates/coaches/competitors/officials?
- **Meet Discipline & Emotional Management**
 - Warmup & warmdown
 - Filming Races
 - Establishment of positive racing habits (Pre & Post)
 - Prioritizing strategy & process above emotion in outcome assessment
 - Making emotions work for, rather than against, more successful outcomes
- **Dry-side Discipline**
 - Recovery Prioritization
 - Nutrition, hydration, sleep, mobility, etc.
 - Core & Pullups
 - School work management

Senior White → Senior Grey

- The moves as described from Senior White to Senior Grey Group apply for this move
 - The primary move to Senior Grey is to be able to do additional workouts to compliment their training in senior white assisting in
 - Being able to be apart of Team One
 - More preparatory work for move to Senior Black

Senior Red → Senior White

- **Engagement**
 - Demonstrating internally-motivated desire to progress in sport
 - Ability and willingness to communicate with coaches & teammates at a reasonable level of maturity and focus
 - Consistently attending competitions and non-competitive team functions
 - Athlete's family demonstrates willingness to volunteer for roles at team competitions and non-competition team functions
- **Commitment**
 - Attendance figures meet (preferably exceed) Senior White requirements
 - Regular attendance of weekend practices when they are available
 - Prioritizing swimming first among non-academic extra-curricular activities
 - Athlete and family commit to scheduling long-term absences (vacations, summer camps, etc.) such that interruptions to in-season training are minimized

- **Ability**
 - Consistent demonstration of physical competency in both strength and in-water workouts
 - Proficiency in, and quality of, all swimming skills has progressed during their time in Senior Red
 - Advancement in level of competition attributable to more than growth in strength/stature resultant from natural teenage physical development
 - Athlete is physically capable of completing daily Senior White workouts without risking injury or the worsening of a pre-existing medical condition
- **Leadership within current group (behavioral and/or verbal)**
 - Is athlete someone to whom teammates can turn for explanation, advice, and/or support?
 - Does athlete's conduct, both at and outside of team functions, align with team ideals and reflect positively on Crawfish Aquatics?
 - Does athlete demonstrate respect for teammates/coaches/competitors/officials?

Moves from Junior Division to Senior Division

Moves from the Junior to Senior Division are usually made in July, at the end of our swimming year. This allows athletes, when the team returns to practice in August, to begin the season with their new training group. Junior to Senior moves will ordinarily be made when athletes are aged 13. This is not, however, a hard and fast timetable; the coaching staff will occasionally move athletes prior to their 13th or after their 14th birthdays. These coaching choices are always made with the best interests and unique needs of individual athletes in mind!

The typical structure of Junior to Senior group moves is as follows: Jr. Black to Sr. White, Jr. White to Sr. Red. There will be exceptions made according to individual circumstances. For instance, some athletes from Jr. Black may benefit from the greater degree of technique instruction in Sr. Red; some athletes may be possessed of all the above-listed criteria which make them a good fit for Sr. Black. As stated, however, these are exceptions to the rule and subject to coaches' discretion.

Though times achieved and competitive successes are important, they are not the sole determinant of group placement. Demonstration of emotional, physical, and social development are greatly factored in by coaches. The following standards are considered by coaches when placing athletes into new training groups:

Practice Discipline & Daily Habits - Athletes demonstrate ownership of their training environment and daily preparation by:

- Arriving prepared with all required equipment in proper condition
- Maintaining focus and attention during all coach instruction
- Consistently working towards execution of practice objectives in both technical and speed training

- Showing proficiency and self-discipline in strength and core exercises
- Demonstrating the ability to fully complete workouts without: compromising health, falling behind established standards of effort, and/or stopping for personal reasons (i.e. bathroom visits or equipment failure)

Attendance and Commitment - Athletes, rather than merely being present, participate in the process by:

- Meeting attendance expectations of their target group, not only their current group. This includes attendance of strength and core sessions
- Active participation in all Crawfish Aquatics meets and non-competitive team functions
- Ability and qualifications to attend a high-level post-season meet (i.e. Far Westerns, Futures, and Jr. Nationals)

Sportsmanship and Team Impact - Athlete positively represents Crawfish Aquatics and impacts those around them by:

- Serving as a good example for teammates in behavior, attitude, and work ethic
- Providing support, encouragement, and guidance for peers (with appropriate timing)
- Consistently demonstrating respect towards coaches, teammates, competitors, and officials
- Representing Crawfish Aquatics with integrity both in and out of the team environment
- Honoring team commitments, even when confronted with competing social or personal wants

Meet Discipline and Emotional Maturity - Athletes show the ability to manage themselves in a competitive environment by:

- Consistently executing proper warm-up and warm-down routines
- Taking responsibility for race preparation; including talking to coaches before and after races
- Demonstrating strong pre- and post-race habits which align with team expectations
- Effectively managing emotions before and after competition
 - Using emotions as a tool for performance rather than allowing them to hinder outcomes
 - Demonstrating the ability to respond to adversity with composure and accountability

Lifestyle Responsibility - All athletes must understand that performance is affected by factors beyond the pool. How an athlete handles the following helps determine the training group which best serves them.

- Recovery (sleep, nutrition, hydration, and overall wellness)
- Management of academic responsibilities alongside demands of training
- Extra-curricular activities

Final Consideration: Readiness Beyond Performance

Advancement to the Senior Division reflects the social and emotional readiness to enter a high school training environment. The group placement is determined collectively by the coaching staff and is not based upon isolated performances, but upon an individual athletes' demonstration of maturity, accountability, and of the independence required to thrive alongside older peers.

Moves into and within the Junior Division

Moves into and within the Junior Division are usually done at the end of the swimming year in July, ready to start the new season when we return to practice in August.

9&U or Age Group into the Junior Division.

Athletes are recommended for these advanced competitive groups by the coaching staff and are approved by the head age group/Junior Division coach.

Meet performance and results are important, but not the only indicator an athlete is ready to move into or up in the Junior Division. Equally important are the athlete's practice habits, attendance, technical skills, work ethic, and meet participation.

Advanced training concepts, race strategies, core and strength training are added to a foundation of increased skill and aerobic development.

Athletes within each group commit to the sport year-round as prerequisites for moving into the higher levels of each division.

Junior Red - Typically ages 7-9 or 10

- Swimmers in this group can swim, with legal technique, 25-50 yards of all four competition strokes, can perform a legal 100 Individual Medley, and know the basic progressions for underwater streamlines, flip turns, and IM turns
- A strong emphasis is placed on development of excellent technique alongside the essentials of competitive swimming
- Progress in this group is evaluated by:
 - Proper technique in practice and competition
 - Strength of stroke
 - Practice attendance and habits
 - Meet participation and performance
- Athletes will, when deemed ready by coaches, ordinarily progress from this group to Junior White

Junior White - Typically ages 9-12 going-on-13

- Swimmers in this group can, with legal technique, swim 50-100 yards of all four competition strokes with proficiency, can perform legal 100 & 200 IM and the relevant turns/underwaters
 - Coaches will also have evaluated swimmers in this group as being physically capable of progression to a higher level of swim training
- Practices will continue with a strong emphasis on stroke technique while introducing concepts and developing skills such as:
 - Aerobic conditioning and kick strengthening
 - Beginner training sets
 - Using the pace clock and practicing good lane etiquette
 - Creating and using race strategies
- Core and Strength workouts will also begin in Junior White
- Progress in this group is evaluated by:
 - Capability of an athlete to maintain technique over greater distances/periods
 - Strength of stroke and improved kicking ability
 - Growing social and emotional maturity
 - Completion and comprehension of workouts; including intervals/paces
 - Overall dedication and work ethic
- Athletes will, when deemed ready by coaches, ordinarily progress from this group to Junior White or Senior Red

Junior Black - Typically ages 9-13 going on 14

- Swimmers moving to this group exhibit advanced levels of skill in the four competition strokes and have progressed to being capable of handling practices with an increased level of intensity, complexity, and expectations
- The group emphasis is on:
 - Refining and perfecting technique
 - Personal responsibility and being a good teammate
 - Total body conditioning and aerobic development with a greater kicking demand
 - Continuing to develop overall athleticism through more demanding core and strength workouts
- Swimmers in the group are expected to utilize advanced training methods and stroke technique drills
- Coaches provide instruction in all strokes and events and introduce advanced start and turn techniques
- Race strategies are reinforced and developed to include concepts such as race tempo
- Athletes will, when deemed ready by coaches, progress to the Senior division
 - Group placement is based on performance at practices and competition, attendance, and commitment
 - Evaluative criteria are those listed above in the Senior division portion of this document