

DCAC Groups and Move up requirements



**** Please note group expectations change and grow as we grow as a team.**

At DCAC, swimming is about more than just improving speed and technique; it's about developing life skills that extend beyond the pool. One of the most important qualities we cultivate in our athletes is mental toughness—the ability to stay resilient in the face of challenges and setbacks. From the earliest developmental stages, swimmers are encouraged to view mistakes as opportunities for growth and learning. As athletes progress through the program, they gain a deeper understanding of the demanding nature of competitive

swimming and learn strategies to manage disappointment, such as missed personal bests or errors during races. Our upper-level groups receive focused support on how to process and overcome setbacks constructively, building confidence and perseverance that will serve them both in sport and in life.

Development 1

Development 1 is the entry-level group at DCAC, designed for swimmers who are new to competitive swimming. The primary focus of this group is to build comfort and confidence in the water while establishing the foundational skills necessary for long-term success in the sport. Swimmers will learn proper technique in freestyle and backstroke, and will be introduced to the basics of butterfly and breaststroke. In addition to stroke development, we emphasize key concepts such as circle swimming, understanding disqualifications (DQs), and the importance of teamwork in a group training environment.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Development 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can swim ~25 yds Free & Back - 15 yards Breast or Fly attempt - Follows instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 25 yds legal Free & Back ■ 25 yds Breast and Fly attempts ■ Intro streamline & breathing ■ Can swim a 50 with minimal rest

Development 2

Development 2 is the second level in our Development pathway. Swimmers in this group have demonstrated a clear understanding of freestyle and backstroke technique, and are familiar with the basics of butterfly and breaststroke. Typically, they are able to swim legally in at least three of the four competitive strokes. In this group, swimmers will begin learning flip turns and open turns, as well as be introduced to the Individual Medley (IM), including proper stroke transitions and sequencing. At this stage, swimmers have a solid foundation in swimming and will be encouraged to begin participating in swim meets to gain experience in a competitive environment.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Development 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 yds legal Free & Back - 25 yds Fly & Breast attempts - Comfortable in group setting - Perform streamline push-off from wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 25 yds legal all 3 strokes ■ 100 IM completion ■ 50 Free ~< 1:10 ■ Flip turns introduced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can do a start from a kneel

Development 3

Development 3 is the third and final stage in our Development pathway. This group focuses on refining technique across all four strokes with an emphasis on maintaining legal form over longer distances. Swimmers will work toward consistent technique beyond 25 yards, develop more advanced starts from the blocks, and improve their flip and open turns.

We also begin to introduce performance benchmarks, such as aiming to swim a 50-yard freestyle in under one minute and other 50-yard strokes in under 1:30. Swimmers will start developing pace awareness and consistency—for example, completing 4x50 freestyle on a 1:15 interval. Greater emphasis is placed on building race-readiness, including consistent starts, turns, and stroke transitions.

Participation in meets is strongly encouraged, with a goal of attending at least one meet every other month to gain competitive experience and track progress.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Development 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Legal in 3 strokes- 100 IM mostly legal- can do a start from a kneeling position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Legal 100 IM■ 50 Free ~<1:00■ Can swim other 3 strokes under 1:30■ 4x50s on 1:15 holding freestyle■ Starts/turns consistent■ Can attend swim meets

Foundations

Foundations marks the transition from development to performance-focused training. Swimmers in this group are expected to demonstrate legal technique in all four competitive strokes. Flip turns and open turns are now required where appropriate, and swimmers should be able to understand intervals and leave on their own during sets.

Dryland training is introduced at this level, with a focus on safety, coordination, and body awareness. Attendance is encouraged at 2–3 practices per week to support consistent progress. Swimmers will also be introduced to USA Swimming time standards and begin working toward achieving their first **regional qualifying times**. The Foundations group builds the discipline, endurance, and technique needed for the next stage of competitive swimming.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Legal in all 4 strokes- 50 Free < 1:00- Starts/turns consistent- Interest in competition- Can swim other 3 strokes under 1:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Legal 200 IM■ 100 Free ~<1:30■ Competes at meets consistently■ Training 2–3x/week■ Basic dryland readiness■ working toward or achieved a regional cut

Age Group Performance

Age Group Performance is designed for swimmers who have demonstrated a strong commitment to their personal development and to the DCAC program. Athletes in this group consistently attend **3 to 4 practices a week** and participate in **dryland training twice a week**, showing dedication both in and out of the water. Swimmers should have achieved a **100-yard freestyle time faster than 1:30** and regularly compete in **multiple strokes** at swim meets, demonstrating versatility and competitive readiness.

Training intensity and volume increase significantly in this group, with a seasonal goal of reaching **4,000 yards per practice**. Emphasis is placed on refining technique, building aerobic and anaerobic capacity, and improving race strategy. A primary objective is to achieve **11–12 age group state qualifying standards**, or to get within close range of those times. This group is ideal for **motivated swimmers** who are ready to commit to a more structured, challenging, and competitive training environment as they progress toward higher-level swimming.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
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Age Group Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200 IM legal - 100 Free < 1:30 - Competes at meets consistently - Good practice habits - Working toward or achieved a regional cut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 200 IM legal + strong transitions ■ State-level or near 11-12 cuts ■ 4000+ yds per practice ■ Committed to training 3-4x/week ■ Dryland 2-3x/week
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Junior Performance

Junior Performance marks the beginning of DCAC's upper-level training groups. Swimmers in this group have achieved at least one **state qualifying time** and are committed to taking the next steps toward high-level competition. Goals for this group include qualifying for **Zone Championships** (for 14 & under swimmers) or **Speedo Sectionals**, depending on age and progression.

Training emphasizes advanced stroke efficiency, race strategy, and underwater work, with a focus on maximizing performance. Dryland becomes more structured and challenging, supporting athletic development beyond the pool. Swimmers are expected to attend **4-5 practices per week** and are encouraged to aim for a **100 freestyle time under 1:10** as a benchmark of speed and endurance. Junior Performance prepares athletes for the demands of senior-level swimming and higher-level competition.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Junior Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State-level competitor or close - 100 Free ~<1:10 - Dryland 2x/week - Strong turns & underwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 200 IM strong technique ■ State finals or Sectional potential ■ proficiency in dryland movements ■ 4-5x swim/week consistently

Senior Training

Senior Training is designed for athletes in high school—or entering high school—who may be multi-sport athletes or are primarily focused on preparing for high school swimming rather than full-time club competition. The group emphasizes stroke refinement, race preparation, and training habits that translate directly to high school swim success.

In addition to physical training, there is a strong emphasis on leadership, maturity, and team culture. Athletes are expected to model positive behavior, support their teammates, and take ownership of their growth. Those pursuing collegiate swimming receive personalized support from the head coach, including guidance on the recruitment process and strategies for engaging with college programs

Swimmers will be pushed to perform at their personal best, with training aligned to help them achieve both their individual goals and team-wide expectations.

	Entry Criteria	Exit Criteria (to move up)
Senior Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- High school swimmer- May have state cuts or not- Multi-sport athletes welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Training consistency 4–5x/week■ Technically sound across strokes■ College prep optional■ Leadership potential in team

Senior Elite

Senior Elite is DCAC's highest level of training, designed for swimmers who are deeply committed to excelling in the sport and continuously advancing their skills. The focus is not solely on reaching this group, but on the ongoing journey of growth, learning, and mastery.

Swimmers in Senior Elite are expected to train year-round with DCAC, maintaining their commitment outside of the high school swim season. These athletes have achieved **Speedo Sectional cuts** or **Speedo bonus cuts**, demonstrating a high level of competitive performance, and often aspire to qualify for **USA Swimming Futures** and beyond.

Leadership and professionalism are core expectations; swimmers in this group serve as role models both in and out of the pool. Those pursuing collegiate swimming receive personalized support from the head coach, including guidance on the recruitment process and strategies for engaging with college programs.

	Entry Criteria
Senior Elite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- State/Sectionals/Futures-level swimmer- 5–6x/week swim + dryland- Performance and goal-driven- Sectionals or higher achievement- College prep path- Training year-round- Team captain or mentor role