

How are age group motivational standards determined?

Answer:

- All swimmers are ranked according to their best achieved time in each event.
- A swimmer must swim an event at a sanctioned meet for the time to be official.
- A swim must be performed legally to be accepted. (No disqualified times will be accepted.)
- All swimmers legal times from each meet are then loaded up to the USA Swimming national database. [Click here to look up your swimmers times.](#)

Age Group motivational standards are set on a four year, or quad, base. The current Age Group standards started on 9/1/2012 and run through 8/31/2016.

To start, the last time of the top 16 (or top 10) for the previous four years is compared to the 16th fastest time in an age group for the current year. If there is no difference, the motivational time standard remains the same.

Swimming Time Standards Explained

Provided by Mat Luebbers

USA Swimming Top-16 Based Time Standards –
[B, BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA](#) (see 2nd page for short course yards)-

[USA Swimming publishes sets of time standards](#) for various reasons. One of the reasons behind standards is their usefulness for setting goals. They are also used to control the size of swim meets, as each higher or faster level in the standards has fewer swimmers - as the standards get faster, a smaller number of swimmers achieve them. Almost every swimming federation in the world uses some form of stepped standards within their system.

Standards can also be used to offer swimmers a general idea how they match up with other swimmers in their age group and between age-groups, but raw times work better within age-groups. In a general sense they can be used to compare swimmers in different age-groups with each other, but just because a swimmer has "AAA" times as a 9-10 year old does not mean that same swimmer will get "AAA" times as a 13-14 year old. There are several reasons for this, including differing maturation rates, changing interests, and even injuries.

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Time Standards by Percentile

AAAA	98%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 2% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
AAA	94%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 6% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
AA	92%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 8% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
A	85%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 15% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
BB	65%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 35% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
B	45%	This standard means your swimmer is ranked in the top 55% of swimmers their age-group, their same sex, in that stroke and distance.
C		This standard is for all swimmers with times below the "B" standard. Everything from 0.00 up to the "B" standard is a "C" time.
Notes		It is very normal for your swimmer to have different time standards for different strokes. They may even have different standards for the same stroke but different distances. As your swimmer matures their best stroke and distances may change. A swimmer should not specialize until they have completed physical maturation. Swimming all the strokes and all the distances will only improve your swimmers physical and mental development throughout their career.

Bottom line - Time standards are great for goal setting and should be used to motivate your swimmer, but while improvement is desired it should not be required. Be patient and let your athlete improve at their own pace. P.S. Never compare your swimmers success to another swimmer. All swimmers are individuals with unique abilities and each will develop at their own rate.

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Percent of USA Swimming Swimmers by Time Standards (2009 Data)

Nationals	1.09%
US Open or Faster	1.24%
Juniors or Faster	2.14%
AAAA or Faster	5.71%
AAA or Faster	13.36%
AA or Faster	21.55%
A or Faster	29.00%
BB or Faster	46.58%
B or Faster	52.44%
