

Group Move-Ups

Move-Up Recommendations

Move-ups from one group to another are recommended by the Lead Coach. The recommendations occur at any time a Lead Coach determines an athlete consistently exceeds expectations for the current group placement and would achieve better results by moving to another group.

Fall placement moves are determined in mid-June for fall placement (September), prior to the release of enrollment information for the coming swim year.

Many factors influence group placement: some can be explained easily, while others may be influenced by coaching instinct or experience. Clearly communicating our philosophy for practice group placement enables a better understanding of the decisions that determine placement. RSA strives to place each individual in the group that best fits the athlete's skill set and age. Practice group placement is not an indication of a coach's belief about the athlete's future success. RSA prioritizes each athlete's individual needs and an athlete develops at a unique rate; therefore, **athletes in some lower level groups are sometimes faster than those in higher level groups. Overlap always exists.**

Upward group movement is not meant to be a reward, but rather a next step in development. Additionally, **fall group placement does not dictate an athlete's group placement for the entire year.** Coaches are continuously evaluating their athletes and will move them based on the best interests of the athletes. **The coaching staff has the final discretion regarding an athlete's practice group placement.**

Some of the important factors driving practice group placement are:

Training Ability and Technique

- Does the athlete practice at the same level as the athlete races?
- Does the athlete make the technical changes requested by the coach?

Leadership

- Are the athlete's actions positively influencing others in the group?

Commitment

- How frequently does the athlete attend practice?
- How frequently does the athlete participate in meets?
- How does the athlete prioritize swimming as a sport?

Maturity

- How old is the athlete?
- Is the athlete emotionally ready for the next level of training?
- Is the athlete physically ready for the next level of training?
- How well does the athlete deal with change?

Meet Results

- How do the athlete's results translate to training needs?
- How do the athlete's results translate to meet qualifications?

Group Size

- What is the maximum number of athletes allowed in a practice group to ensure appropriate lane space and the ability to effectively coach the athletes under the caveat of ensuring internal movement is allowed for developing athletes?

RSA realizes that changes in practice groups can impact family routines. Practice group moves can affect schedules, carpools, team dues, coaches and expectations. Hopefully, the providing insight into RSA's practice group placement philosophy provides information to aid families in anticipating practice group movement and the factors determining when a move will occur.

The information below is designed to help current RSA member families understand coach expectations for athletes to move TO a particular group. The moveup criteria noted herein supersedes any information contained in the 2025-2026 Swim Team Enrollment Information.

The driving criteria to move to a group are noted in the group categories, **but it is important to note that the coaching staff has the final discretion regarding an athlete's practice group placement.** It is also important to note that the coaching staff is continuously evaluating athletes to determine the best movement strategy for each athlete.

Move-Up Communication

The process for notifying an athlete of a move-up recommendation includes:

- An email from the current Lead Coach to the individual athlete's family indicating the athlete has been recommended for a move-up
- A move-up letter via email from the Head Age Group Coach

For older athletes (PreSenior, Redtail, Senior Onyx, and Senior Silver), a move-up recommendation may also include a discussion in the athlete's goal meeting with the Lead Coach.

A written acknowledgement agreeing to the move-up is required from the parents/guardians prior to proceeding.

Move-Up Criteria: Sonner Facility Groups

Introductory:

To Tarpon (to move up from lessons): monthly commitment

- Age: 4 to 5 years old or a 3-year-old with a WSA Swim Lesson Referral
- Ability to swim 12.5 yards of 'freestyle' independently with a propulsive flutter kick
- Ability to swim 12.5 yards of 'backstroke' with an independent back float and a propulsive kick
- Ability to demonstrate progression toward rhythmic side breathing
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is limited: Mock meets with lead coach approval

To Seahorse: monthly commitment

- Age: 5 to 6 years old
- Ability to swim 12.5 yards of freestyle continuously and unassisted
- Ability to swim 12.5 yards of backstroke continuously and unassisted
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge of breaststroke or butterfly for 12.5 yards continuously and unassisted
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting

- Ability to demonstrate progression toward rhythmic side breathing in freestyle
- Commitment to attend Saturday practices consistently
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is limited: Lead Coach recommendation required, in addition to participation in a mock meet or a block party meet prior to a meet hosted outside RSA

To SeaStar: monthly commitment

- Age: 6 to 7 years old
- Commitment to attend two (2) practices weekly, particularly Saturday practice
- Tenure of at least one swim year in the Seahorse group
- In addition to all Seahorse requirements:
 - Ability to swim 25 yards of freestyle
 - Ability to swim 25 yards of backstroke
 - Ability to demonstrate rhythmic side breathing in freestyle
 - Ability to demonstrate a breaststroke kick
 - Ability to demonstrate breaststroke arms in coordination with breaststroke kick
 - Ability to demonstrate a butterfly kick
 - Ability to demonstrate an understanding of freestyle and backstroke flip turns
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to demonstrate a seated, kneeling or standing dive from the side of the pool
- Ability to swim comfortably in deep water
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is limited: Lead Coach recommendation required, in addition to participation in a mock meet or a block party meet prior to a meet hosted outside RSA

Elementary:

To Nova: annual commitment

- Age: 7 years old (turning 8 within 2-3 months) to 9 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of two (2) practices weekly
- Tenure of at least one swim year in the SeaStar group
- In addition to all SeaStar requirements:
 - Ability to demonstrate freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly legally for 25 yards
 - Ability to demonstrate the four (4) stroke kicks legally using a kickboard or on their back
 - Ability to demonstrate progress toward freestyle and backstroke flipturns
 - Ability to demonstrate a standing dive from the starting block
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is recommended.

To Dolphin: annual commitment

- Age: 8 to 11 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three (3) practices weekly, in addition to dryland
- Tenure of at least one swim year in the Nova group
- In addition to all Nova requirements:
 - Competition experience in USA Swimming short course and long course swim meets

- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
 - Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

To Jack: monthly commitment

- Age: elementary school student; minimum age 8 years old or in the second grade
 - Jack 1: second or third grade
 - Jack 2: fourth or fifth grade
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of two (2) times weekly
- In addition to all SeaStar requirements:
 - Ability to demonstrate legal freestyle and backstroke
 - Ability to demonstrate progress toward rhythmic side breathing in freestyle
 - Ability to demonstrate progress toward freestyle and backstroke flipturns
 - Ability to demonstrate a standing dive from the starting block
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is recommended.

To Wahoo: annual commitment

- Age: 9 to 11 years old (or turning 9 in 2-3 months)
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of four to five (4-5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of one (1) weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Dolphin group
- In addition to all Dolphin requirements:
 - Four (4) legal strokes
 - Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
 - Ability to read a pace clock
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: three (3) 9-10 'B' cuts in the 50 Free, 50 Back, 50 Breast, 50 Fly, 100 Free, 100 Back, 100 Breast, and/or 100 IM
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

To Barracuda: annual commitment

- Age: 11 to 13 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of five (5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of one (1) practice weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Wahoo group or minimum requirements met in another group
- In addition to all Wahoo requirements:
 - Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
 - Ability to read a pace clock
 - Ability to demonstrate a desire to learn more complex goal-setting and communication skills
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: two (2) 11-12 'BB' cuts and/or the athlete participated as a qualifier in at least one (1) event at the previous NCS Age Group Championship Meet
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

Middle School:

To Mackerel: annual commitment

- Age: 11 to 13 years old; in middle school
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of four to five (4-5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of one (1) practice weekly
- Four (4) legal strokes
- Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
- Ability to read a pace clock
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is expected.

To Mako: monthly commitment

- Age: middle school student
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three (3) practices weekly
- Legal freestyle and legal backstroke
- Ability to demonstrate breaststroke and/or butterfly
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is recommended.

To Cobia: annual commitment

- Age: 13 to 15 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of four to five (4-5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of two (2) practices weekly
- Four (4) legal strokes
- Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
- Ability to read a pace clock
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

Middle School and/or High School:

To PreSenior: annual commitment

- Age: 13 to 15 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of five to six (5-6) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of two (2) practices weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Barracuda group or minimum requirements met in another group
- In addition to all Barracuda requirements:
 - Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex practice and training habits
 - Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex race strategies
 - Desire to set goals and communicate with coaches about goals
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting

- Time standards: three (3) 13-14 'A' cuts or six (6) 13-14 'BB' cuts
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

High School:

To Blackfin: monthly commitment

- Age: high school student
- Legal freestyle and legal backstroke
- Ability to demonstrate breaststroke and/or butterfly
- Ability to demonstrate consistent and legal freestyle and backstroke flip turns
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is recommended.

To Senior Silver: annual commitment

- Age: 15 years old and a high school sophomore
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of seven (7) practices weekly, including at least one (1) double weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of three (3) practices weekly
- Four (4) legal strokes
- Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
- Ability to read a pace clock
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex practice and training habits
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex race strategies
- Desire to set goals and communicate with coaches about goals
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

To Senior Gold: annual commitment

- Age: 15 years old and/or second semester of freshman year
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of seven to eight (7-8) practices per week, including one (1) double weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of three (3) practices weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the PreSenior group or minimum requirements met in another group
- Desire to set goals and communicate with coaches about goals
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: four (4) NCS Senior Championship cuts
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

Move-Up Criteria: Sunset Facility Practice Groups

Introductory:

To Minnow (to move up from a Sonner group): monthly commitment

- Age: 7 to 8 years old
- Commitment to attend (2) practices weekly
- Ability to swim 25 yards of freestyle
- Ability to swim 25 yards of backstroke
- Ability to demonstrate rhythmic side breathing in freestyle
- Ability to demonstrate a breaststroke kick
- Ability to demonstrate breaststroke arms in coordination with breaststroke kick
- Ability to demonstrate a butterfly kick
- Ability to demonstrate a seated, kneeling or standing dive from the side of the pool
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is optional.

Elementary:

To Sunfish: monthly commitment

- Age: 8 to 10 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three (3) practices weekly
- In addition to all Minnow requirements:
 - Ability to demonstrate freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly legally for 25 yards
 - Ability to demonstrate the four stroke kicks legally using a kickboard or on their back
 - Ability to demonstrate progress toward freestyle and backstroke flip turns
 - Ability to demonstrate a standing dive from the starting block
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is recommended.

To Bluegill: monthly commitment

- Age: 9 to 11 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three to four (3-4) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of one (1) practice weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Sunfish group
- In addition to all Sunfish requirements:
 - Four (4) legal strokes
 - Ability to perform legal flip turns, open turns and IM transition turns
 - Ability to read a pace clock
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

Middle School:

To Bowfin: annual commitment

- Age: 11 to 14 years old and typically in middle school
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of four to five (4-5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland attendance of a minimum of one (1) practice weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Bluegill group
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: three (3) 10 and Under 'BB' cuts and a legal 200 IM
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

To Swordtail: monthly commitment

- Age: middle school student
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three (3) practices weekly
- Legal freestyle and legal backstroke
- Ability to demonstrate breaststroke and/or butterfly
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: none
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is recommended.

Middle School and/or High School:

To Redtail: annual commitment

- Age: 13 to 15 years old
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of five (5) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of a minimum of one (1) weekly
- Tenure of one to two swim years in the Bowfin group or minimum requirements met in another group
- In addition to all requirements of the Bowfin group:
 - Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex practice and training habits
 - Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex race strategies
 - Desire to set goals and communicate with coaches about goals
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: At least two (2) 11-12 'BB' cuts and an 11-12 'BB' cut in the 200IM
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.

High School:

To Bass: monthly commitment

- Age: high school student
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of three (3) practices weekly
- Legal freestyle and backstroke
- Ability to demonstrate consistent and legal freestyle and backstroke flip turns
- Ability to demonstrate listening skills and follow directions in a group setting
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Ability to demonstrate good practice habits and a good work ethic

- Time standards: none
- Meet participation is recommended.

To Senior Onyx: annual commitment

- Age: 15 years old and a high school student
- Commitment to consistent practice attendance of a minimum of six (6) practices weekly
- Commitment to consistent dryland practice attendance of two (2) practices weekly
- Tenure of one to two years in the Redtail group or minimum requirements met in another group
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex practice and training habits
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of more complex race strategies
- Desire to set goals and communicate with coaches about goals
- Ability to work with teammates in a group setting
- Time standards: one (1) 13-14 'A' cut or four (4) 13-14 'BB' cuts
- Meet participation in USA Swimming meets is required.