



How to Choose a Swim Team

Congratulations on starting your athlete's competitive swimming journey! This is an exciting and rewarding step to take, and we're thrilled to have you here. Joining a new team can be a mix of emotions, from excitement to nervousness, as you plan for the future.

When we invite new swimmers into our program, we are making a long term commitment to 10+ years of supporting your swimmer and your family along this journey, and to continuing to be a part of your child's life for many more years beyond their club swimming career. We are in it for the long haul and we want to make sure our team is where you picture your child growing, learning, and progressing for many years to come.

Here is what we recommend looking for when selecting a swim team:

Coaching Staff: Look for a team with experienced and certified coaches who prioritize the well-being and development of their athletes. A good coach should be knowledgeable, supportive, and able to communicate effectively with both athletes and parents. Look for a team that supports coaching professionals, invests the whole person (not just the in-water side of swimming), and where your child is encouraged to make friends and become a part of the team experience.

Team Culture: Consider the team's culture and values. Look for a team that promotes sportsmanship, teamwork, and respect among its athletes, coaches, and parents. The importance of a positive team culture cannot be overstated. This will be your swimmers "world," and the culture should strive to bring out the best in everyone. When your swimmer attends a tryout with their new group, look to see if the coach introduces them to teammates directly, gives them a buddy, and helps them connect with the team. It takes time to make deep friendships, but if you see positive social connections on day one, that is a good sign!

Competitive Level: Consider the competitive level of the team and whether it aligns with your athlete's goals and abilities. Teams with 2+ training groups for



each age will be best able to tailor workout plans to the needs of each swimmer, with differentiated workouts and schedules for beginning, intermediate, or advanced athletes at each age. Look for a program where the training, intensity, and commitment level build progressively as the athlete grows.

Communication: A good swim team should have clear communication channels between coaches, athletes, and parents. Basic communication about practice schedules, meets, and any changes or updates is a must, but swimmer and parent communication should go beyond scheduling and logistics. Look for a team that promotes ongoing learning for parents and swimmers through at-home discussion prompts, skills clinics, resources and articles, or in-person parent meetings.

Character Development: Over the course of your child's swimming career, they will spend hundreds (or thousands!) of hours with their coaches. Choose a team that takes the commitment to your child's development very seriously. Time spent with the team should enhance personal growth through learning skills like dependability, cooperation, commitment, embracing challenges and recovering from setbacks. Good coaching includes teaching and reinforcing positive life skills all along the way, from 8 and unders up to postgraduate swimmers.

Track Record: Research the team's track record and success in developing athletes. Look for testimonials from current and former swimmers and parents to get a sense of the team's reputation and effectiveness. Attend team tryouts and take the opportunity to speak with a few team parents.

While individual effort is crucial in swimming, great coaching and teamwork are the keys to winning championships and transforming a beginning swimmer into a seasoned competitor with a life-long love for the sport. It's helpful to understand a team's philosophy, structure, goals and requirements before committing. Your child will experience ups and downs in the sport, but being part of a knowledgeable and supportive team that helps them grow through every stage will create lasting memories and friendships, making the whole journey truly rewarding for you both.