

Progression Policy

This policy explains the process of progression through RTSC squads.

It's natural for individuals who consistently participate in a structured exercise program to see improvements in their swimming times and skills. This progression typically aligns with both mental and physical development. However, it's important to remember that everyone develops at their own pace, particularly during adolescence.

The RTSC Squad Structure has been designed to provide a growth pathway for all swimmers within the club, aligned with the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework ([The Long-Term Athletic Development \(LTAD\) Model – Sport Science Insider](#)) and Swim England's Athlete Development Support Pathway (ADSP) model ([athlete-development-support-pathway-for-swimming_063678.pdf \(teamunify.com\)](#))

Sport is not an exact science, and many factors influence the progression of athletes. Everyone develops at their own pace, exhibiting unique strengths and weaknesses. These differences guide coaches in selecting the most appropriate methods for advancing each athlete.

The establishment of criteria for any squad within a swimming club inevitably presents challenges and cannot be rigidly fixed; there must be flexibility for both swimmers and coaching staff. The key benefit of having squad criteria is that it provides clear expectations for progression. It is essential that parents and swimmers fully understand the squad criteria. If they are unable to meet all the requirements, they should discuss this with the Squad Coach before accepting an offer to train with the squad.

The coaches will evaluate swimmers by considering both past and present knowledge of everyone in relation to:

Commitment: This becomes increasingly important as an athlete progresses through the squad structure. Senior groups require a higher level of commitment, making it a significant factor in determining whether a swimmer should advance. Attendance is an objective and straightforward way to measure this commitment.

Coachability: This refers to how well a swimmer follows directions when instructed, shows up on time, and positively influences the group. It also includes their ability to take feedback and act on it effectively. Regardless of ability, behaviour plays a major part within the club and poor behaviour will not be tolerated.

Athletes' attitudes are also a key indicator of their potential for advancement. While many can perform well when tasks are easy, true motivation is tested when facing obstacles. Coaches are more likely to promote swimmers who embrace instruction and positively contribute to the training environment. It's important to recognise that moving up to the

next group will demand more from the athlete, and those who resist coaching may be on a path to struggle and potential failure.

Compatibility With the Squad: Can the swimmer keep pace with the new squad? It's crucial to evaluate whether they can match the speed and skill level of their potential new teammates.

Does the swimmer share the same vision and goals as the squad? Alignment in objectives and commitment enhances group cohesion and effectiveness.

Coaches are most effective when working with swimmers who have similar abilities and speeds. When there is a significant gap in skill or conditioning, the swimmer who is behind may require specialised training, which can reduce the instruction time available for the rest of the squad.

Fitness Level and Mental Maturity: A swimmer's physical conditioning and psychological readiness are essential for handling the increased demands of a higher squad.

Knowledge and Execution: Properly executing training sets, understanding how to use a pace clock, and familiarity with various drills are crucial. Mastery of these elements often takes years, and a swimmer's proficiency in these areas is an important factor in determining their fit for a new squad.

Age: Each squad has designated age brackets. However, coaches have the flexibility to create alternative programs within the squad structure for swimmers who demonstrate exceptional commitment and performance. This approach ensures that a swimmer's development is not hindered by rigid age limitations.

Additionally, mental maturity is a crucial factor in this decision-making process. A swimmer's readiness to handle increased responsibilities and challenges is carefully assessed to ensure they are well-suited for advanced training opportunities.

Space Availability: There must be space in the squad. The maximum number of swimmers is determined by health and safety regulations and the limitations of pool space.

Swimmers progress at different rates and exhibit a range of strengths and weaknesses, which influence the coach's choice of the most appropriate development method. It's important to move away from viewing development as a simple ladder to climb, where the only goal is rapid advancement. Instead, focus on the fact that each squad offers unique benefits, and consistent commitment and attendance throughout the journey are essential for achieving long-term success.

Please remember that it should not be the parent's ambition to be the best athlete; it is the swimmer who puts in the hard work and dedication to achieve success.

For detailed information on the specific criteria for each of our squads, as well as the essential equipment required at each stage, please refer to the following link: [Romford Town Swimming Club](#).

Overall, ensuring a swimmer's compatibility with a squad involves evaluating their ability to meet the squad's demands, both physically and in terms of shared goals and knowledge.

Movement Policy

Please be aware that meeting specific criteria does not automatically guarantee a place in a squad. All decisions are at the discretion of the Coaching Team and depend on various factors as previously outlined.

Squad placements are reviewed twice a year. When a spot in a new squad is offered, it should be considered a trial period. This allows both the swimmer and coach to determine if the placement is in the best interest of the swimmer and the club.

The trial period lasts for three months, during which swimmers will receive feedback regarding their suitability for the squad. After this period, swimmers will be evaluated against "maintenance criteria" to ensure that the squad maintains its high standards.

Parents and swimmers will be informed of any changes as they occur. If a coach determines that a squad change is appropriate, they will discuss this with both the swimmer and their parents.

The Head Coach retains the right to move swimmers between squads at any time, and movement between squads is not an automatic entitlement.