

## **Stay With Developing Clubs**

Concern: Our club is a young club, only three years old. My child, who is now 12, started with the program three years ago and is now one of the best swimmers on the team. (There are only a few older swimmers.) I think my child has out grown the team and we need to start looking for another club where my child will be challenged by better swimmers.

Response: Consider these questions:

1. Has your present club been making steady growth progress in the past and does it appear to be growing into the future?
2. Has the same coach been with the program for the past three years and has this coach continued his/her coaching education through American Swimming Coaches Membership, Clinics and the Certification program? Is the coach growing?
3. How did your child make such good progress to this point?
4. How does one balance the value of loyalty with the desire to move on?

Answers: If the coach and program are making good progress toward the future we believe you should stay with the club for three basic reasons:

First, a young team needs leadership beyond what the coach offers. As a parent you can provide important leadership to your Board of Directors and to other parents. Your swimmer represents the current peak of the program and is an important leader to all other younger swimmers. When leaders leave, the peak of the program is disrupted and the program loses direction.

Secondly, your child became a good swimmer with the present coach. There is every reason to believe that your child will continue to improve. Good coaches find ways to provide workout and competitive situations for their top swimmers so that they are continually challenged.

Consider this: many of America's top swimmers have come from programs where they are far and away the fastest person in the pool. Who do they compete with on a daily basis? They compete against the clock and they are motivated from within and by the coach. They are also motivated by their position of leadership to the rest of the team. The coach also arranges the best competitive situations in swim meets. There is always going to be a "best swimmer" in a workout -- let it be your child!

Third, in today's world, people are too quick to jump ship when things don't go perfectly. Loyalty and perseverance are important qualities to pass on

to children. Be an exception. Stay with the club. Be a leader. Help it grow.

If the program and coach are not growing AND your child is not happy, then it is time to either effect changes in the program and/or coach, or look for another program. The important factor here is your child's happiness. Your child's swimming ambitions and needs may be very different than what you perceive them to be. Do not let your ego make a decision to switch clubs thus removing your child from friends, coach, and environment he is happy with.

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