

HALIFAX TROJAN AQUATIC CLUB

Squad Placement Criteria (2026-2027)

Squad Placement Philosophy

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear, consistent, and transparent framework for squad placements within Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club (HTAC). While objective performance measures serve as the primary basis for placement, coaching assessment remains an essential part of the process. Final placements also consider an athlete's training readiness, attendance, commitment, coachability, long-term development, and overall suitability for the training environment. The goal is to place every swimmer in an environment where they are appropriately challenged and have the greatest opportunity for long-term success.

Age Determination

Athlete age is determined by the age they will be for the majority of the training season. Intended age ranges are provided as guidelines only. The Head Coach may place an athlete approximately one year above or below the intended age range when it is determined to be in the swimmer's best long-term developmental interest.

Elite

The Elite Squad is designed for athletes demonstrating national-level potential and a commitment to a high-performance training environment.

Squad Capacity:

- Maximum of 24 swimmers.
- The Head Coach may leave positions vacant if it is in the best interest of the athlete, squad, or Program.
- Previous placement does not guarantee placement the following season.

Pathway 1 - National Performance Standards

Two National Performance Standards = Automatic Selection.

- Under-age athletes require three National Performance Standards.
- Standards are reviewed annually and are based approximately on the 75th-ranked Canadian performance for Girls 15–18 and Boys 16–18 (season 2024-25)
- +2% adjustment for most events and a +1% adjustment for the 800m and 1500m Freestyle events.
- Please refer to Appendix A for the performance standards.

Pathway 2 - Performance & Training Readiness

Athletes achieving a combined total of 2,400 WA Points (season 2025-26) across their top five events are eligible for Elite Squad consideration.

- For Female 14 & Under and Male 15 & Under athletes, 50 m events are excluded.
- Athletes must also demonstrate the training readiness expected within the Elite Squad.
- Placements remain subject to available squad positions.

Pathway 3 - Coach Evaluation

Athletes achieving a combined total of 2,300 WA Points (season 2025-26) across their top five events form the coach evaluation pool.

- Selection is based on overall training readiness, demonstrated behaviours expected within the Elite Squad, and the athlete's suitability for the Elite training environment.
- Meeting the 2,300 WA Point benchmark does not guarantee placement.

Under-Age Athlete Considerations

Athletes younger than the intended Elite age range may receive Elite training opportunities where appropriate. To be considered for full-time Elite placement, under-age athletes must achieve three National Performance Standards. Under-age athletes who meet the Pathway 2 performance benchmark may be invited to participate in regular Elite training opportunities at the discretion of the Head Coach.

Senior Atlantic & Senior Provincial

Athletes are initially grouped using the combined WA Point total (season 2025-26) from their top five events. This provides an objective and consistent measure of ability while recognizing developing event specialization.

Final placements also consider attendance, commitment, training habits, practice performance, coach recommendations, and balanced training groups.

Junior Elite

Junior Elite emphasizes the development of well-rounded swimmers with strong aerobic foundations and versatility. Evaluation is based on the combined World Aquatics (WA) Point total (season 2025-26) from the 400 Freestyle, 200 Individual Medley, and the athlete's highest-scoring additional event (excluding 50 m events).

This approach recognizes aerobic development, medley proficiency, and emerging event strengths while discouraging early specialization.

Selection Benchmarks:

- Girls: 1,100 WA Points
- Boys: 900 WA Points

Separate benchmarks are used to reflect typical differences in physical maturation and performance progression between female and male athletes at this stage of development.

The selection benchmarks provide the primary basis for placement. In exceptional circumstances, the Head Coach may recommend placement for athletes who do not meet the benchmark where there is clear evidence of training readiness, coachability, and suitability for the Junior Elite training environment.

Achieving the benchmark makes an athlete eligible for consideration but does not guarantee placement. Final placement also considers training readiness, coach evaluation, and available squad positions.

Junior Atlantic & Junior Provincial

Junior Atlantic and Junior Provincial focus on developing technically sound, well-rounded swimmers while building strong fundamentals across all four strokes and the Individual Medley.

Evaluation is based on an athlete's strongest performances across the five stroke categories (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Individual Medley), using their best four World Aquatics (WA) Point scores (season 2025-26). At this stage of development, placements place equal importance on the athlete's demonstrated performance and the professional assessment of the coaching staff. Final placement considers WA Point performance, training readiness, stroke technique, practice performance, coachability, and recommendations from the athlete's Lead Coach.

Appendix A - National Performance Standards

Girls (LCM)	Girls (SCM)	Event	Boys (SCM)	Boys (LCM)
27.77	27.33	50 FR	24.42	25.03
1:00.26	59.34	100 FR	53.43	54.80
2:11.23	2:08.73	200 FR	1:56.95	2:01.01
4:37.64	4:33.56	400 FR	4:11.42	4:19.77
9:35.11	9:25.29	800 FR	8:48.00	8:58.74
18:30.56	18:22.75	1500 FR	17:12.29	17:35.35
31.69	30.59	50 BK	27.58	28.97
1:07.95	1:05.58	100 BK	59.43	1:02.21
2:27.40	2:22.36	200 BK	2:10.87	2:16.54
35.37	34.80	50 BR	30.59	31.26
1:17.69	1:15.36	100 BR	1:06.44	1:09.02
2:49.12	2:44.28	200 BR	2:26.94	2:32.02
29.58	29.48	50 FL	26.37	26.81
1:05.79	1:05.07	100 FL	58.46	59.58
2:29.66	2:26.71	200 FL	2:12.27	2:15.93
2:28.54	2:25.65	200 IM	2:12.51	2:16.35
5:19.83	5:10.77	400 IM	4:46.82	4:54.88

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- +2% adjustment for most events and a +1% adjustment for the 800m and 1500m Freestyle events.
- Please refer to Appendix A for the performance standards.

Appendix B - Frequently Asked Questions

Who makes the final placement decision?

The Head Coach has final authority on all squad placements. While input from the coaching staff may be considered, all placement decisions are made in accordance with the published Squad Placement Criteria and what is believed to be in the best long-term interest of both the swimmer and the club.

Why isn't placement based solely on fastest times?

Performance is the primary factor in squad placement. However, training readiness, attendance, coachability, commitment, long-term development, and the ability to thrive within a group's training environment are also important considerations. Our goal is to place each swimmer in the environment that best supports both their current performance and future development.

Can exceptions be made to the placement criteria?

The Squad Placement Criteria are intended to provide a fair and consistent framework for all swimmers. While every athlete's development is unique, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Head Coach when it is determined to be in the best long-term interest of the swimmer and the club.

Can a swimmer move during the season?

Yes. Squad placements are continuously evaluated throughout the season to ensure swimmers remain in the most appropriate training environment as they continue to develop. While formal placements occur before each season, adjustments may be made throughout the year based on performance, attendance, coachability, commitment, overall readiness, and available space within a squad.

Can my child move down a squad during the season?

Yes. While many in-season changes involve swimmers progressing to a more advanced training environment, placements may also be adjusted if a different squad is determined to better support the swimmer's development, commitment, well-being, or long-term success. The goal is always to place swimmers where they have the greatest opportunity for long-term success.

How often are squad placements reviewed?

While squad placements are formally reviewed before each season, swimmers are continually evaluated throughout the year. Placement changes may occur at any time when it is determined that a different training environment would better support the swimmer's development. In-season changes are most common during the first two months of the season as swimmers settle into their new training environments.

Can my child request a different squad?

Swimmers and families are welcome to discuss squad placements with the Head Coach. While all requests will be considered, placements are ultimately determined using the published criteria and what is believed to be the best training environment for the swimmer's long-term development.

Can my child train with another squad without changing squads?

In some cases, swimmers may be invited to participate in selected training sessions with another squad to support their development. These opportunities are at the discretion of the Head Coach and do not constitute a permanent squad change or guarantee future placement in that squad.

Why wasn't my child placed in Elite after meeting the WA Point requirement?

Meeting the WA Point benchmark makes a swimmer eligible for consideration, but it does not guarantee placement. Elite squad selections are made using the complete placement criteria outlined in this document, which considers factors beyond performance alone.

Can an under-age athlete make the Elite Squad?

Yes. Under-age athletes who achieve three National Performance Standards may be considered for full-time Elite placement. As with all Elite selections, meeting this benchmark does not guarantee placement, as training readiness, attendance, coachability, commitment, and long-term development are also considered.

How are WA Points calculated?

WA Points are an internationally recognized scoring system developed by World Aquatics that compares performances across all swimming events. Points are awarded based on how closely a swimmer's time matches the World Aquatics Base Times, allowing performances in different events to be compared on a consistent scale.

Does qualifying for a championship automatically change a swimmer's squad?

No. Qualification for a championship meet is only one factor considered during the placement process. Squad placements are based on the complete criteria outlined in this document, not a single performance or competition result.

What if my child is injured or returning after time away?

Injury, illness, or extended time away from training may be considered during the placement process. Our priority is placing swimmers in an environment that supports a safe and successful return to training.

Can siblings or friends be placed together?

Squad placements are based solely on the published criteria and the training environment that best supports each swimmer's development. Requests based on friendships or family relationships cannot determine placement.

Will every squad be filled to its maximum capacity?

No. Maximum squad sizes represent the upper limit, not a target. A squad may operate below its maximum capacity if it is determined that additional placements would not be in the best interest of the swimmers or the overall training environment.