

April 22, 2021

To: Currently registered Age Group, Masters and Varsity swimmers, coaches and officials:

Over a year ago, we were stopped in our tracks to prepare for the COVID-19 global health pandemic. Thirteen months into responding to and adapting to government restrictions and regulations, we are thankful for each and every club, swimmer, coach, official and volunteer that continues to be a part of our swim family.

Currently, with a rise in Variants of Concern (VOC) restrictions are once again tightening. We ask our clubs to review their return to plans (RTS) and revise accordingly to ensure they are operating as safely as possible and move training and conditioning to outdoor settings if available.

As per the [April 20th news release the Government of Saskatchewan](#) "**all residents are urged to adhere to best personal protective measures: avoid all unnecessary travel throughout the province at this time.**"

As important as sport is for mental and physical well-being, we must also do our part to reduce transmission of the virus, which in turn helps reduce the strain on our healthcare system and healthcare workers.

Therefore, we ask swimmers to train **within their home community** and support local and stay close to home!

Swim Saskatchewan continues to advocate for and support our members each and every day. Over the past months we have worked diligently with the Government of Saskatchewan's Business Response Team (BRT), Sask Sport, Swimming Canada, municipalities, facilities, SPRA as well as our members clubs, we have:

- Ensured that swimming was recognised as a sport within the Re-Open Sask Plan which will mean that when we can have competitions, swimming will be able to do so as well (Nov 2020). In the initial versions of the Re-Open plan swimming was restricted under the Recreation/Aquatic guidelines and could not operate as other sports and compete.
- Secured access to training and competition for Sport Canada Carded athletes, as they prepare for Olympic and Paralympic Trials for their potential selection to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games (Feb 2021)
- Ensured that the Re-Open plan clarified and provided access to use additional safe space for clubs who train in large facilities (Feb 2021, April 2021)
- Provided financial assistance to year-round and master clubs via Government of Canada, Sask Lotteries and Swim Sask COVID-19 specific funding.
- Held a regular (weekly or bi-weekly) Head Coach virtual meeting.

Swimming Canada and all provincial swimming sections across the country made a conscious decision last year, for the sport of swimming to return very safely and to be the premier sport in the country; showing that sport can return and operate safely and with no transmission. Everything that we have done here at Swim Saskatchewan is with that in mind and to date we have had no known transmission in our sport.

While we are thankful that pools have been open for most of the time since (July 2020) with user and physical distancing restrictions, our master's swimmers have not been able to swim as part of organized team practices since November 2020 (as per government restriction for sports for those over 18). This is very challenging for those swimmers and clubs. Swim Sask continues to advocate to re-open adult sport, for those clubs, teams, leagues that are a member of a provincial sport governing body such as Swim Saskatchewan.

We continue to plan ahead for when we can compete and are in the final stages of the development of our Return to Competition plan, to be prepared when competition restrictions lift.



Swimmer Survey

As part of planning ahead, we want to hear from all our swimmers currently registered to better understand your situation swimming through covid (why you continue to swim and why you may have stopped). This information will assist us in our advocacy and in recognizing any areas we may have not been aware of.

We emailed a survey directly to all registered Age Group, Masters and Varsity swimmers on April 9 & 10. Thank you to those that have already responded. We sent out 971 surveys and have already received 208 responses. A survey for summer club swimmers will be circulated at a later date.

If you have not yet completed this survey to share your experience swimming through COVID-19. Complete the survey here: <https://form.jotform.com/210695705313251>.

Registration Statistics

Since Sept 2020, twelve of the thirteen Age Group, Master and Varsity clubs affiliated and operated, and fifteen out of eighteen Summer clubs have initiated the club affiliation process for their season that begins May 1.

Our competitive swimmer registration numbers have remained fairly consistent with previous years however, we have experienced a substantial decrease in learn to swim and masters registration and as such a decrease in coaches. As there have been no competitions since March 2020 our official's registration is also very low. Below is a registration summary for the current Sept 1, 2020 to Aug 31, 2021 season as of April 15, 2021:

	Current Season 2020-09-1 to 2021-04-15	Last Season 2020-09-1 to 2021-04-15
Age Group Club Competitive swimmers	527	603
Age Group Pre-Competitive swimmers	319	71
University/Varsity Swimmers	22	16
Masters Swimmers	116	184
Coaches	75	136
Officials	133	394 ** (**as at Aug 31, 2020)
Summer Swimmers	To be reported at a later date	Season runs May 1 – Aug 31
Summer Coaches	To be reported at a later date	Season runs May 1 – Aug 31

We wish to offer our sympathies and thoughts to those members of our swim community who have been directly impacted by COVID-19. This has been a very challenging year.

Five swim clubs have reported to Swim Sask that a coach, swimmer, or staff person test positive for COVID-19. There have also been numerous cases of someone identified as a close contact and has had to self isolate, with no further transmission. There is no known transmission of COVID-19 in any Swim Saskatchewan affiliated club. Thank you to all involved on your due diligence. Our clubs continue to update and revise their RTS plans to respond to the constantly changing situation. We are most thankful for the countless hours those clubs and volunteers have put into ensuring their members and our sport remains safe.

You can access and read the updated Sports and Activities Guidelines in the [updated Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) (April 20, 2021) and [Public Health Order](#) (April 20, 2021).

We look forward to continuing to work to ensure that we stay safe and stay swimming.

Yours in Swimming; stay healthy and safe and continue to be adaptable.

Marj Walton
Executive Director