

Executive Director's Report

Brian Leier

Annual General Meeting – 2021



**SWIM
MANITOBA**



Introduction

There are not enough adjectives (and expletives) to describe the past year. It has been a difficult, surprising, challenging, disappointing, sad, etc., etc., time for everyone, in all walks of life. Looking back to where we were last year at this time, it is amazing to think about how little we knew then and how much we have learned since. While Manitoba is still in for some challenging times, the horizon is looking a little brighter and next year, more promising.

Return to Play-Back to Swimming

After our initial shutdown in March of 2020, some provincial aquatic facilities began to re-open by mid-July. In September, more pools opened until the next shut down at the end of October. Unfortunately, the Flin Flon pool did not re-open, nor did Brandon's pool open this year. The pool in Steinbach was not able to open until March 2021. All our clubs worked hard to create and follow their Return to Play plans to ensure their swimmers and coaches could return to training as safely as possible. It was challenging and difficult, however, we were able to prove swimming is a relatively safe activity. To the credit of everyone involved, we had no cases of COVID-19 transmissions within our training groups. Congratulations and thank you for your hard work and commitment to our sport. We are cautiously optimistic the opportunity for training will resume in July and will improve by September. However, as with all things over this past year, nothing is for sure.

Competition

Our sport is about improving, achieving personal bests, competition, and racing. The inability to hold any type of competition this year has been very hard on everyone- swimmers, coaches, parents, and our volunteers. Swimmers are prepared to train hard, but they train to see results through competition. Coaches do what they do to see their swimmers improve. Staying motivated without competition is incredibly challenging. Congratulations to all our swimmers and coaches who persevered, and continued to train in, and out of the pool this season. We are planning for a gradual return to competition in the 2021-22 season. How competitions will look, and how they will be run, and when we can expect to compete again is still to be determined, however, planning is underway with a variety of options and scenarios being considered.

For one brief period this past November, we had something "swimming" to cheer about. Congratulations to Kelsey Wog who had an outstanding series of competitions at the International Swimming League (ISL) as part of the Toronto Titans team in Budapest. She was instrumental in helping the Titans make it to the ISL Championship semi-final. She was unbeaten in the 200m breaststroke heading into the Semi-Final! Thanks Kelsey, and Vlastik, for giving us something to cheer about.

Swimming Canada

We have continued to work closely with Swimming Canada during the pandemic shutdown. All the provinces have faced similar, and different challenges, depending on each province's health authority approach to restrictions. Swimming Canada has been providing outstanding support and guidance, along with facilitating the exchange of information between the provinces through frequent Executive Director Council meetings, Technical Lead meetings and external communications. Selecting a team for the Tokyo Olympics has been very challenging for Swimming Canada. Hosting trials during the pandemic has proven difficult, to say the least. They have a solid plan in place to run a safe trials, scheduled for June 19-23. Best of luck to our Manitoba swimmers who have been selected to compete!



SWIM MANITOBA

Sport Manitoba

Sport Manitoba has been extremely helpful, and a strong advocate for our sport with various levels of government over this past year. Janet McMahon, President and CEO, has been personally involved in advocating for exemptions for our Olympic Trials athletes, along with addressing our numerous questions relating to health orders and facility access. We are incredibly grateful for the financial support our clubs received from the Federal Sport Emergency Fund. Sport Manitoba managed the grant program to ensure the money was directed to where it was needed most.

Pan Am Pool

We have been had regular and consistent communication with the city of Winnipeg and Pan Am pool staff during this past year. The facilities management and staff have been very helpful and supportive. They have done everything they can to accommodate our requests and provide access to the facility when it was possible. The city of Winnipeg and other municipalities faced real challenges retaining staff and keeping enough certified guards on staff when pools could open. The Pan Am pool management had to scramble to find enough certified guards to allow our Olympic Trials swimmers to train during the winter. A number of these staff people were pulled from other facilities to help out. We very much appreciate their help.

Summer Swim Program

We were unable to hold a summer swim program in 2020. We have tentative plans to run a limited program this summer, subject to health authority restrictions.

Thank you to our board of directors, coaches, and all our club volunteer leadership who provided support and guidance during this very challenging year. I would also like to thank our staff, Karen Williams and Pascal St-Pierre, for their hard work, and commitment to the success of our swimmers and the Manitoba swimming community.

We are looking with reserved optimism towards the 2021-22 season. We will need to re-energize our programs, generate excitement within our clubs and attract new swimmers. SNM will be working hard to take make the most of opportunities to revitalize our sport in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Leier
Executive Director