

## Manitoba Swim Officials Association - MSOA

June 3, 2021

Report of the Manitoba Swim Officials Association (MSOA) to Swim Manitoba Annual Report.

To characterize the past fiscal period as frustrating would not be an understatement. For the MSOA and its' members, the uncertainty brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic resulted in many ups and down moments. Although, several times during the year it appeared that some type of sanction events may take place no sanction events were held in the Province of Manitoba since March of 2020. Absolutely a record which no one ever wants to see repeated.

The year started with the aftermath of the last-minute cancellation of ManSask 2020 (March). This cancellation was a difficult decision made by Swim Manitoba in consultation with Swim Saskatchewan, the MSOA, and representation from each of the teams scheduled to appear at the competition. In a unanimous decision, all parties expressed the belief that it was in the best interests of the athletes and other participants as well as the sport of swimming that the competition was cancelled. Little did anyone involved in the decision fathom that there would be no competitions in Manitoba for the next twelve months (and beyond).

At various times during the past year, it appeared that the opportunity to compete was drawing nearer. In each case, the Province would experience a negative turn of events in regards to the COVID 19 virus and sanction competitions were prohibited by the Province's Health Authority. Although there were no sanctioned events held during the year there was plenty to keep the MSOA busy. Most prominent was developing a plan of action for returning to competition. We needed to be ready with an operating plan in case sanction events returned to the Province of Manitoba. To that end, Swim Canada put together a Best Practices for Officials document which served as a basis for a similar document produced by the MSOA which is specific to the Manitoba landscape. This document was presented to the MSOA senior membership and further adjustments were made. As a result, the MSOA is confident that at least on the procedural aspect of running a sanctioned competition, the province's senior officials are prepared for a return to sanctioned competition.

A more difficult problem still lays before the MSOA and that is the fact that there has been little to no opportunity to develop new officials or keep existing officials engaged. As a result, there remains a large degree of uncertainty regarding the availability of trained officials once sanctioned events are allowed. To that end, the goal of the MSOA is to have in place by the beginning of the new season a plan of action to provide training and preparation for previously active officials and new parents joining our sport. Using a combination of existing online educational opportunities and in-person/virtual clinic presentations the MSOA is confident it can provide sufficient trained officials for any sanction competitions that materialize in the province in the coming season.

As we start the new fiscal year there is diminishing hope the MSOA membership will be officiating on a pool deck in Manitoba before the start of the next regular season. Although continuing efforts are being made by Swim Manitoba and the MSOA the impact of COVID 19 continues to stymie progress forward. As stated, preparation work continues with anticipation that sanction events will be allowed sooner rather than later. The MSOA membership will be ready to deliver officials to ensure that fair and equitable competitions can once again be held with confidence in the Province of Manitoba.

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