

March 26, 2020

Update on COVID-19: President/Head Coach Meetings; Insurance Updates for Clubs conducting activities during this period and Coaching Resources Launch

Dear Club Presidents and Head Coaches,

Please make sure these updates are shared with all coaching staff in your club.

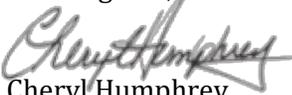
Club Meetings with Swim Alberta: Swim Alberta will be hosting meetings with Club Presidents and Head Coaches in the coming days. This is an opportunity to provide clubs with an overview and update from Swim Alberta and address any questions from clubs. An invitation will be sent out shortly to one of three meetings being set up by geographic regions in the province. Both the President and Head Coach from each club are encouraged to join Swim Alberta on this call. Dean Schultz, President of Swim Alberta and Cheryl Humphrey, Executive Director will host each meeting. The opportunity to connect, share and hear from our clubs is an important step, as the swimming community plans for the future, both in the short term and as we look to the longer term with recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Insurance Updates and Clarification: Attached and uploaded onto the Swim Alberta website: [COVID-19 INFO](#) is important information regarding insurance coverage during this period of time. ***It is imperative that any club that is offering on-line/group training programs or individualized training programs to athletes read this important information.*** This information should also be shared with all coaches in the club.

Coaching Resources Launch: Swim Alberta has begun to compile information and resources that coaches may utilize with athletes through on-line training sessions or individualized training plans. These resources can be found on the Swim Alberta website: [COVID-19 INFO](#). As resources become available, they will be added to the website. ***These resources are ideas for coaches to implement into their program based on the age, stage, needs and experience of the swimmers. Careful consideration by coaches as what is appropriate for athletes is important.*** This section is not intended for parents or athletes to use without the guidance or supervision of a registered coach. Attached and also uploaded onto the Swim Alberta website is a message from Stephen Norris, Swim Alberta Performance Director.

As always, I remain committed to providing you with updates and information as I have it available to me. Please reach out with any questions you may have to me at chumphrey@swimalberta.ca or by phone at 1-780-415-1780.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Humphrey".

Cheryl Humphrey
Executive Director

Attachments: #1. – Insurance Update
#2. – Coaching Resources Launch Message

Insurance Update – March 26, 2020 – COVID-19

Swim Alberta provides Commercial General Liability and Accident Insurance, as well as Director's and Officers Liability coverage to all affiliated clubs and registered members. The full insurance program remains in place for Swim Alberta and all affiliated club programs.

Commercial General Liability and Accident Insurance provides coverage for any registered participant/member while under the supervision of proper authority of the team/club or Swim Alberta, while those who are supervising (clubs/coaches) are acting within the scope of their assigned duties.

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance provides for defense costs and damages on behalf of covered parties (members in good standing) in the event they are sued in relation to the performance of their duties for the corporation (club), subject to the policy terms and conditions.

For a full summary of Swim Alberta Insurance Programs please visit the website: <https://swimalberta.ca/clubs/insurance/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DURING COVID-19

Q. Our club wants to ensure that we are able to create a connection to our registered athletes during this uncertain period, as the mental and physical health of our athletes is important. The club has set up programs to be delivered by video conference so athletes can connect with their coach and other teammates in their squad on a regular basis to deliver programs on strength and fitness. Is this activity covered through the Swim Alberta insurance Program?

A. The simplest way to look at this, is similar to where pool activities required the supervision of a registered coach, any activities clubs are doing with athletes/members through virtual conferences/programs also requires the supervision of a coach. This means activities are guided by the coach and the coach would be online with the group of swimmers. The type of exercise activities MUST be geared toward the level of the athlete and any equipment that is used, must be for its intended purpose. (ie – no using a sack of potatoes for weights or step stools to simulate stairs).

Q. I coach a group of athletes, and provide some individualized training based on the needs of the athlete. Can I provide additional customized workouts or activities my athlete should be doing to maintain their fitness level outside of any online group led activity?

A. Again, the type of activity MUST be geared toward the level of the athlete and any equipment that is used, is used with its intended purpose. Athletes should have regular check-ins with their coaches to monitor and evaluate the fitness program.

Q. I want to post a workout on our Club Facebook Page for the members in our club. Would this type of activity be considered appropriate?

A. This type of activity would not be considered appropriate or within the assigned scope of duties of a coach. There is no way to ensure that the activity is either supervised by a registered coach or that the activity is appropriately geared toward the level of individual athletes.

Q. Over the last couple of years, there has been a focus on Safe Sport. What steps should the Club put in place to make sure that any virtual training program follows the principles of Safe Sport?

A. Some things to consider while delivering programs/services virtually while still adhering to [Swim Alberta's Safe Sport Guiding Principle](#) are:

- During video streaming sessions such as Zoom, Google Hangout or Teams, make sure these sessions are taking place with a full group and not one on one with an athlete and a coach.
- For those under 18, parents should be aware of this type of programming and have given their consent for their child to participate.
- Encourage athletes to set up the online sessions in areas of their home which is also open and observable to others. An example of a room that is open and observable might be a family room whereas, a closed bedroom would not be seen as open and observable.
- All activities should be done at home, following requirements established by [Alberta Health Services](#) as it relates to COVID-19 Pandemic with regards to social isolation, where needed; and social/physical distancing. Athletes should not be working out with others at this time nor should they be sharing equipment.
- All activities should adhere to the [Swim Alberta Code of Conduct and Ethics](#) and [Social Media Policies](#) and [Social Media Guidelines](#), as well as any policies established by the club.

ACTIVITIES THAT WILL NOT BE SUPPORTED:

- Any activity that contravenes any requirements issued by Alberta Health Services or your local municipality around social distancing, gatherings etc.
- Equipment should not be shared between athletes.
- Athletes should not be meeting in-person in groups, but rather exercising or conducting activities alone in either a home setting or a public park, where permitted following all requirements of Alberta Health Services.
- Any activity that would be considered high-risk or is not permitted, as per the [Swim Alberta Event Sanctioning Policy](#).

FINAL THOUGHTS:

The creativity of clubs during this period to create social connections and interactions with their membership, as well as creating opportunities to follow and maintain a fitness program are both encouraging to see and support the messages being heard around the importance of mental health and physical fitness at this time.

Please remember that any and all activities should adhere to any regulations and guidelines as established by your local municipality as well as by Alberta Health Services during this period of COVID-19. To keep up to date on these requirements, please visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

CHALLENGING TIMES: HOW CAN WE NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT THRIVE?

Message from Stephen Norris, Performance Technical Director

Swim Alberta understands the very real challenges that clubs face across a varied landscape of business models and processes. The following points are made to provide coaches with an understanding of various mechanisms and possible solutions around the circumstances faced at the swimmer, coach, parent, and club level.

Swim Alberta technical staff are available to work with coaches to support athletes in areas concerning physical, technical, mental (psychological), health & well-being aspects, together with commentary and suggestions around swimmer, coach, and club technical knowledge.

It should be realized that for all swimmers, no matter how many sessions or hours they would typically train in a week, the sudden removal of this training and competition load is, and will have, profound effects and consequences.

1. Swimmers will lose their SPECIFIC physical conditioning relatively quickly. Strength, strength-endurance, and endurance of the upper body (arms, shoulders, etc.) will decay with a dramatic decline in sustainable and peak power. The concept of the Anaerobic Threshold (AnT) and the Aerobic Threshold (AeT) will be dramatically and negatively affected. This will also be true for the lower body (the legs). One might consider these aspects to be the 'PERIPHERAL' elements.
2. A slower decay in GENERAL physical conditioning will gradually occur. This aspect may be thought of as the 'CENTRAL' elements and involves the cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary components (such as the heart and lungs).
3. Although virtually all age groups will be continuing to grow and develop due to their biological ages and the underlying drivers of growth and development, the sudden decrease in training and competition workload has implications for diet and caloric intake. It will be important for swimmers to understand that their overall food intake will need to be adjusted to reflect this reduced load, yet still continue to eat healthily and adequately.
4. Unless a routine of continued activity is implemented, the daily and weekly routine of the swimmers (and the coaches) will also be disrupted, which is likely to cause further disruption to the athlete's established life rhythms. This may affect factors such as sleep, diet, and mental state.
5. Aside from the disruptions already mentioned, the current situation may well affect the specific and overall mindset of the swimmers. Obviously, a lack of exercise and perhaps an increase in the occurrence of boredom, swimmers, coaches, and parents must be aware of possible negative and de-motivational psychological conditions caused by anxiety & uncertainty over the virus itself, as well as the sudden disappearance of the goals, targets, and objectives that swimmers had of themselves.
6. For most of the swimmers, their academic schooling will also have been disrupted, further adding to an unusual timetable, further uncertainty and anxiety.
7. In many instances, swimmers may well be very aware of the disruptions and hardship the pandemic is causing for their parents and family situation. This will almost certainly add to their anxiety, fear, and tension.

Possible Solutions & Suggestions

1. Establish activity programs that keep to a similar timetable as the swimmers previously had. Now this does not necessarily mean having to get up early as they would have done for swimming before school, but it does mean that perhaps holding to a similar frequency through the week. In fact, coaches should look at this as an opportunity to be able to establish some fundamental behaviours and capacities that tend to be neglected when there is pool-time available.
2. Programs could focus on flexibility, core stability & strength, overall strength, and basic movement control.
3. Also, please note, that although 'swimming specific conditioning and adaptation' will be lost (think, the specificity of swimming and, therefore, nothing truly replaces it), there are activities the swimmers can do to offset this.
 - a. Large muscle group, cardiovascular exercise at;
 - i. Low intensities for extended periods of time (think, long walks or hikes, easy running, or any large muscle group continual exercise); HRs typically below 140/150 for our swimmers.
 - ii. High intensity repeats (same exercises as above)(think, 8-12 x 1-3 minutes at HRmax or close too, with a 1:1 or 1:3 work/rest ratio ... longer for the shorter, more intense repeats ... and always use an easy active recovery).
 - iii. Circuits using body weight and minimal equipment (bars, mats, bands, surgical tubing, hand weights or dumbbells etc.). Aim for two types of circuits within your repertoire. Strength-Endurance focused ones (high reps/short rest; 8-12 exercise stations, multiple times through the circuit) and Strength-Power ones (lower number of reps/higher resistance/maximal recruitment/longer rest; 6-8 exercise stations, 1-3 times through). You will find many examples of such activities online.
 - iv. See point 4 below for 'Swimming Simulation'. Instead of using 'distance' use 'time of the repeat' to shape your sets.
4. Swimming simulation capabilities could be introduced using surgical tubing, Vasa trainers, pulley systems, and/or other specific devices such as the excellent swimming *Exer-genies*®. Coaches could devise training sets similar to those they would employ in the pool across a range of intensities.
5. By encouraging regular communication between swimmers, as well as hosting coach-led updates, using online resources and social media, coaches could introduce various challenges and goals for the swimmers at set points.
6. Devising these activities and introducing a coherent plan will support the notion that the swimming club has not simply folded and that there is a beneficial program that will impact positively the swimmers during this otherwise uncertain period.
7. For the coach and club, there are several activities that I would suggest could be undertaken and are, as often as not, relegated in importance. These would be projects such as:
 - a. Swimmer reviews and profiles (perhaps using the Swim Alberta-suggested 'Swimmer Review' template (aka 'Scouting Report')).
 - b. An examination of the club in question; a technical SWOT analysis involving a deep-dive review of activities and overall club performance (perhaps using some sensible ranking or points system).
 - c. Future planning of the club program, including alignment with Swimming Canada's suggested LTSD (LTAD) framework and yearly/multi-year plans.
 - d. Continued uplift of coaching knowledge and the swimming intellect of the club.

Swim Alberta are continuing with the three Working Groups launched in January: Performance Swimming - Alberta; Performance Development Working Group; and the Competition Calendar Working Group. These working groups will provide an opportunity to plan for the future and the overall uplift/knowledge improvement of the swimming community in Alberta. Staff have reached out to members of these working groups and dates for meetings have been set.

With support of the coaching community, Swim Alberta will look to facilitate informal networking groups via video conference as an avenue for coaches to continue to connect and share ideas during this period.

Swim Alberta is looking for the entire swimming community to help in setting up a 'Resources' for coaches and would welcome you sending us anything of relevance you come across that the larger coaching community would benefit from. We have already initiated this aspect with this document, and have begun to populate resources on the Swim Alberta website: [COVID-19 INFO](#).

We encourage you to look at ALL of the links ... and then 'invest' in the ones you feel are most applicable for your situation or that you can adapt the easiest and most effectively. A reminder that these are ideas for coaches to implement into their programs based on the age, stage, needs and experience of the swimmer, ensuring alignment also to the information provided in the insurance update.

In closing, despite the highly challenging environment that we are in and will face for a while, there is both the realization of a light at the end of the tunnel and very real opportunities to strengthen swimming in Alberta. At the very least, this period affords us time to review our programs (no matter how large or small and from 'learn to swim' through to 'performance swimming'), determine what aspects we should keep, discard, and/or introduce, and systematically plan the framework for the coming season. Finally, by keeping engaged with our swimmer and parent base, each coach and club can demonstrate the value of competitive swimming and being a member of club in Alberta.

"Per ardua ad astra".

Stephen Norris
Performance Technical Director
March 26, 2020

For a listing of resources for coaches: <https://swimalberta.ca/covid-19/>