

SEMINOLE AQUATICS

Dear Seminole Aquatics Family,

There is no shortage of opinion right now about the relative severity of the COVID-19 / Coronavirus, and what is the best course of action to pursue for schools, businesses, and individual families. Social media is alive with speculation, and is often the case with social media, these opinions shed quite a bit of heat, but not a whole lot of light.

Within a dizzying 72 hours, the following actions have occurred:

- The World Health Organization has officially designated COVID-19 as a global pandemic.
- USA Swimming immediately suspended all of their events and camps that require individuals to travel, and have recommended that all LSCs cancel competitions for the next 30 days.
- The Florida Swimming Senior Championships were cancelled just hours before the first event.
- Florida Gold Coast Swimming cancelled both their Junior Olympics and Senior Championships.
- The Florida Dept. of Education has closed all schools through March 30.
- Additionally, all public school extracurricular activities statewide are cancelled through March 30, in an attempt to contain the virus.
- Both in the U.S. and abroad, many collegiate and professional sports teams have either suspended, or completely cancelled their current seasons.

I can tell you that at Seminole Aquatics, my primary concern is always going to be the safety and well-being of both our members, as well as the community at large. Therefore, I have decided that we will follow the statewide recommendations for school athletic programs and will suspend all practices through March 28, resuming on Monday, March 30. This will apply to all Seminole Aquatics programs (swimming, water polo, and masters swimming).

Because of this interruption to our practice schedule, I have also decided that we will not take our annual one-week, team wide break at the end of May.

Our training pool at the Larry A. Dale Aquatic Center is a City-owned, school used, facility. As of this writing, there are no immediate plans to close the facility, but this is obviously a very fluid situation that can change at a moment's notice. If a temporary pool closure were to occur, I will let everyone know via Remind text, as well as via email.

The suspension of school extracurricular activities has affected high school water polo as well. As soon as FHSAA, the governing body of Florida high school sports, makes an announcement regarding the status of the current water polo season, I will let everyone on the team know.

This decision to suspend our team activities for two weeks was not made lightly, and will no doubt be met with skepticism by some, and will be derided as an overreaction by others. I strongly believe that this is the correct course of action, largely for the following reasons:

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the incubation period (the time from when you first contract the virus until the time that you begin to show symptoms) is between 2 and 14 days. The average incubation period, according to WHO, is five days. This means that you can become infected and continue to come into contact with others, spreading the virus and infecting people, for several more days before you even realize that you're sick.
2. One of the top U.S. health officials said three days ago that the coronavirus is 10 times more lethal than the seasonal flu. The elderly and infirm, including many of our parents, grandparents, older relatives and family friends that we come into contact with, are the hardest hit.

In short, it's not just about protecting just our own swimmers; it's about protecting everyone in our community—family, friends, and scores of people that we will never meet. At the end of the day, it's about being a good citizen and looking out for others. To put it simply, it's about doing the right thing.

In the next day or two, I will be sending out some recommendations and alternatives for our athletes that are concerned about losing fitness. But I can tell you that for years we have gone through scheduled team breaks as long as two weeks or more. Within a few days of returning, our kids invariably feel "normal" in the water again. In the big scheme of things, a short break has no effect on long-term results.

In the meantime, the importance of following the Center For Disease Control (CDC) and WHO guidelines on COVID-19 prevention (hand washing and sanitizing, staying home when sick, covering a cough or sneeze, avoiding large gatherings, etc) cannot be overstated. For more information on the virus, you can go to the CDC website at this address: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

In closing, I want to tell you that I appreciate your understanding in this difficult and unprecedented time. And I wish you and your family the very best in staying well.

Tony Ackerson
Head Coach
Seminole Aquatics