



MPUMALANGA

Province Swimming / Provinsie Swem
Non-Profit Organization No. 031-811-NPO



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 2018/2019 SEASON

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to everyone who made the time to attend the Mpumalanga Province Swimming (MPS) AGM. We really appreciate the efforts, commitment and contributions of every member.

Annually we reflect on a season gone by, which always seems to have been more challenging, more hectic and also more rewarding. This past season was no different.

The new organizational structure of MPS, supported by newly established committees, worked well to a certain extent. Unfortunately, some grass root level governance and especially implementation of decisions remained with the MPS Executive Committee. To further empower our district structures, we will request General Council approval today to:

- Reduce the number of executive members on the provincial executive;
- To introduce a governance system with a 1st Vice-President & 2nd Vice President;
- Abolish dedicated executive portfolios; and
- Delegate implementation orientated executive portfolios to district level.

Within the greater scheme of things, it is not the individuals but the collective that must pave the way forward and ensure MPS continues to grow, develop and properly guide the swimming fraternity into the future. It is therefore imperative that our district structures be given to opportunity and support to properly govern our sport at district level.

During the 2018/2019 season Mpumalanga Province Swimming and the other provincial sport codes unfortunately again did not receive any sport development funding from the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport & Recreation or the Mpumalanga Academy of Sport. Mbombela Local Municipality made its annual financial contribution towards our Mpumalanga Open Swimming Championship, which we are very grateful for. In these difficult times where most corporate sponsors have reduced or withdrawn funding towards major sport codes, we are extremely fortunate to still have the unconditional support from one of our local sponsors – **Xerox Copiers**.

The schools league program entered its third year with reasonable success and we trust most of the growing pains in general have been resolved. A strong, growing and representative schools league structure is paramount for the future success of MPS and we trust all members or structures involved in schools swimming will take the challenge to heart. A lot more focus will in future be placed on schools sport by national federations and government.

Some of our newly established swimming clubs showed continued steady growth during the past season, while membership numbers of some long standing clubs seem to have dwindled.

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Needless to say, provincial membership numbers overall has decreased by 11% and schools swimmer registrations decreased by 19% from last season.

Open Water Swimming, as an official new aquatic discipline in Mpumalanga showed steady growth and improvement. Discussions are still underway to introduce Water Polo in due course for the first time since the establishment of MPS as an official aquatics discipline.

Swimming South Africa is still committed to the continued hosting of one of the Grand Prix Series events in Mbombela and has also included Open Water Swimming as part of the MPS event since last season. Although the timing of the event in early January poses certain challenges, SSA still intends to develop the current two (2) Grand Prix events into international standard events to attract foreign participants. Our local and provincial governments unfortunately don't understand the value of proper investment in sport events of national & international status or the potential return on investment in the local economy through tourism, despite the fact that SSA and the national coach also want to use Mbombela as the official venue for national training camps throughout the year.

2. CHALLENGES

In reflecting on the past season, it is imperative that we acknowledge some of the challenges swimming is facing in Mpumalanga:

- **Schools Swimming.** Reduction in school swimmer registrations and the registration process.
- **Marketing & Sponsorship.** Transformation and development doesn't pay and the need of critical funding is therefore always problematic.
- **Development & Participation.** We need to further encourage our swimmers to participate and encourage new swimmers to take the next step to organized swimming. A challenge for the new season will be to actively increase membership, especially in respect of transformation targets.
- **Facilities.** Will always be a challenge in Mpumalanga with the limited number of facilities available and poor maintenance of especially our municipal facilities. We need to ensure each available facility has a swimming program.
- **Officials.** In recent years we experienced a significant decline in technical officials willing to assist at galas, although on record we had significant growth in the number of trained officials. The foundation of participation and fair play is having competent officials on pool deck to support our swimmers. Clubs are requested (again) to encourage parents to participate in training programs this coming season. *(BTW – Mpumalanga annually offer the most officials training courses of all affiliates and to date we are the only affiliate to provide proper officials training at no cost)*
- **LTS Membership.** Attracting and accommodating the number of “unofficial” LTS Schools to ensure integration of all swimming activities under MPS. Large volumes of potential swimmers are lost annually due to their non-involvement in organized swimming.
- **Transformation.** Swimming in general is receiving a lot of negative political attention due to the lack of black representation – **at all levels.** It is imperative that everyone accepts the challenge and actively supports transformation or we could soon find ourselves excluded from government support.

3. REFLECTION ON PAST SEASON

The past season has been another very successful season for MP Swimming. Some highlights and concerns include the following:

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- Reduction in membership registrations should be a concern to all involved in swimming.
- Significantly less participants at SSA level 2 & SSA Level 3 competitions (45% less at SSA Level 2 and 40% less at SSA Level 3).
- Most number of qualifiers for SSA Junior Nationals, SA Senior Nationals and SA National Open Water Championships, with 40 swimmers qualifying in total – an increase of 33%.
- Most ever participants at SA National Open Water Championships, including 4 individual medalists and our very first Open Water Relay medal.
- Significant decrease in medals won at SSA Competitions, totaling only 110 medals, compared to 200 medals in 2018.
 - SSA Regional Level 2: 55 medals
 - SSA Regional Level 3: 35 medals
 - SSA Junior Nationals: 2 medals
 - SSA Youth/Snr. Nationals: 5 medals
 - SSA Open Water: 5 medals
 - Masters: 7 medals
- Mpumalanga Schools achieved a well deserved 5th place overall at the 2018 SA Schools Swimming Championships and increased its medal count from 42 medals to an impressive 65 medals. It is imperative to note that Mpumalanga outperformed some of the much bigger provincial federations, i.e North West, Limpopo and Eastern Cape. Only Northern Cape is a smaller provincial federation.
- MPS again hosted a very successful and well attended Mpumalanga Top Schools Gala, as well as the annual Mpumalanga Open Swimming Championships.
- MPS successfully hosted two (2) LTS training courses, one (1) SSA Level 1 training course, eight (8) timekeeper's courses, six (6) judges training courses and one (1) CPD points workshop. MPS also subsidized 5 coaches to attend the annual Speedo Conference at TUKS HPC and funded the expenses of two (2) coaches to attend the national high performance seminar in Stellenbosh. In addition, eight (8) MPS officials attended a FINA Open Water Training Course in Nelspruit during the past season.
- Mpumalanga Province Swimming hosted a very successful SSA Level 1 Championships, with 167 participants. Representing entry level participation and our up and coming new talent pool of swimmers, we need to encourage significantly more swimmers to participate.
- Four (4) swimmers from Mpumalanga were included in the SSA Junior Open Water Development Squad. Congratulation to **Megan de Wet, Reece Zowitsky, Thelise Saunders & Matthew Andrews**.
- Three (3) swimmers from Mpumalanga were included in the SSA National Swimming Squads, based on the overall performance at end of season SSA events. Congratulations to **Brooklyn Croxon, Erica Sibande & Ingrid Banza**.
- For the first time ever, a swimmer from Mpumalanga Province Swimming has been selected to participate at the Special Olympic Games (Abu Dhabi). Congratulation to **Okuhle Mke**

(*Killer Whales Swimming Club*), who also brought home a silver medal and bronze medal from the Special Olympic Games.

- Also for the first time, two of our swimmers were selected to represent South African Age Group Teams at the CANA Zone 3 and CANA Zone 4 Swimming Championships.

Erica Sibande (*Uniswim Nelspruit*) represented South Africa at the CANA Zone 3 in Sudan and brought home no less than 11 gold medals, including the trophy for the best female swimmer in her age group.

Jacobus Terblanche (*Guppy Tigers*) represented South Africa at the CANA Zone 4 in Namibia and brought home 4 individual medals (1 gold, 2 silver & 1 bronze medal).

- Megan de Wet and Reece Zowitsky (*Uniswim Mid/Wit*) were also selected for the SSA Open Water Squad Teams and represented South Africa at the International Bled Open Water Challenge in Slovenia during July 2018. Three (3) of our Open Water swimmers might also participate in the 10km races in Spain and France at the end of June 2019.

4. GALAS

MPS hosted six (6) official age group galas, The Mpumalanga Sprint gala, Mpumalanga Open Championships, one (1) winter short course gala, the SSA Grand Prix & SSA Grand Prix Open Water, the annual Top Schools Primary & High Schools galas, the SSA Level 1 Swimming Championships and four (4) open water events. Congratulations to Nkangala District for hosting a very successful first Open Water event in Middelburg. MPS also provided technical assistance for the 2018 Inter-High Schools Gala to ensure its status as an additional SSA registered gala.

SSA Provincial Level 1

167 swimmers participated in Nelspruit. Since this event serves as a stepping stone for some new and very talented swimmers, we trust many new swimmers will register with MPS and clubs this coming season.

SSA Regional Level 2 & 3

Only 36 swimmers represented Mpumalanga at Level 2 (Sasolburg) and 23 swimmers at Level 3 (Bloemfontein). The swimmers did Mpumalanga proud and swam PB's in most of their events. From reports received, it seems the logistical arrangements and quality of both events improved significantly from last year's debacle.

SSA Junior Nationals

26 Swimmers qualified, although only 16 swimmers represented Mpumalanga at SSA Junior Nationals (Durban). Congratulations to Tamara Froneman from Uniswim Mid/Wit, who brought home 2 silver medals.

SSA Youth & Senior Nationals

15 Swimmers qualified, although only 7 participated at Youth & Senior Nationals.

Raymond de Freitas brought home 3 silver medals and 2 bronze medals from SSA Senior Nationals (Multi-Disability), while Reece Zowitsky brought home a bronze medal from the Youth Championships.

S.A. Open Water Championships

Thirteen (13) swimmers represented Mpumalanga at the SA Open Water Championships in Jeffrey's Bay. Jacey Bekker achieved a gold medal in the 3km age group event, Jetro Piso achieved a silver medal in the 3km age group event, Jordyn Minifie achieved a bronze medal in the 3km age group event and Michelle Esterhuizen brought home a silver medal in the 3km age group event as well. For the very first time, Mpumalanga achieved a bronze medal in the 4 x 1.25km Open Water Relay, which was a very exciting race from start to end. The Mpumalanga Relay Team, comprising of Jetro Piso, Reece Zowitsky, Thelise Saunders and Jordyn Minifie surprisingly outperformed some of South Africa's well established and much bigger swimming provinces.

Well done to the entire Open Water squad and management team.

S.A. Masters Swimming Championships

Mpumalanga Masters had two representatives at the 2019 SA Masters Championships. Geraldine Jansens (FINS Swimming Club) won 3 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze medal in the Woman 75-79 Age Group, including 3 new South African records. Emily Khumalo (FINS Swimming Club) also participated in the Woman 35-39 Age Group and brought home a bronze medal.

Small Province Inter Provincial

Mpumalanga and Limpopo competed in a very close contested first Interprovincial in Tzaneen, with Limpopo taking the honors at the end of the competition. We trust Mpumalanga will return the favour during 2019, when the Interprovincial will be hosted in Nelspruit and hopefully with the inclusion of Mozambique as a third team.

Maputo Sprint Gala

Mpumalanga again participated in the annual Maputo Sprint Gala with an official provincial team. MPS did exceptionally well and ended the Gala in overall 1st place.

5. WAY FORWARD & CONCLUSION

It is only appropriate to properly acknowledge all the efforts behind the scenes from all the executive members. The current MPS Executive Committee has shown tremendous commitment during the past three (3) seasons in serving the swimming fraternity. I therefore appreciate the personal time most executive members invested in swimming during the past season.

On behalf of the 2018/2019 MPS Executive Committee, I would like to thank all the members, coaches, clubs and parents who have supported us during the past season.

Good luck for the new season ahead.

Thank you



Emile van Veenhuizen
President

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