



# MPUMALANGA

Province Swimming / Provinsie Swem  
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 2021/2022 SEASON

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to everyone who made the time to attend the Mpumalanga Province Swimming (MPS) AGM.

We experienced the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the general health of people and after we as a swimming federation successfully managed the first year of unbelievable restrictions on our way of life, we entered into the second year of gradual lifting of the disaster management regulations. Sport was opened gradually with dire financial and other impacts on all involved in sport. Swimming however managed to create a participation and competition environment, while most other sport codes were really struggling to come to terms with the new adjusted regulations.

Today we can meet again as a General Council and look back at another very challenging year, but we survived and if I can say – **we excelled as a federation**. Well done to SSA, MPS management, our clubs, our parents, coaches, schools and clubs. We pulled together like never before in the best interest of our swimmers.

As we stand here today at the start of yet another new season, we can only trust life and sport will return to full normality.

During the challenging 2021/2022 season MPS was able to still rely on our loyal corporate sponsors, with specific reference to **Xerox Copiers** and **Chippo's**. Swimming South Africa fully funded our first **Grass Root Swimmer Development Program** and we are pleased to confirm the success of our first year encouraged SSA to fund our development program again this year. We trust the grass root development program will continue with the same success and assist our federation with our transformation and swimmer development objectives.

The development program also gave some of our new coaches the opportunity to develop themselves, improve their competence and gain valuable experience. As a result, three (3) of our new coaches used the exposure offered to them and secured full time employment at clubs or schools.

2022 will be the year MPS venture into the unknown world of **Water Polo**. Eleven (11) of our coaches have already signed up for a "Water Polo Splash Training Program" as first phase of introducing water polo as an official aquatics code in Mpumalanga. Our

objective is to start rolling out Water Polo Splash as soon as possible and proceed with training programs for formal water polo before the end of the season. We can also confirm interest has been shown by Mozambique and Swaziland to help develop water polo in our region.

Swimming South Africa is committed to the continued hosting of the annual January national training camp and one of the Grand Prix Series events in Mbombela.

South African Master Swimming approached MPS to assist them with the hosting of the 2023 SA Masters Swimming and Open Water Championships in Nelspruit at the end of the season. It will be a first opportunity for Mpumalanga to host the annual national masters events and we trust all members will assist to ensure we host a very successful and pleasant event.

## 2. CHALLENGES

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

- The development of our **schools program** and/or leagues is imperative for the growth of swimming in Mpumalanga. Due to the lack of especially swimming pool facilities in Mpumalanga, it is of critical importance to have all available school swimming pools in full use and with proper swimmer development programs.
- We need to further encourage our swimmers to participate and encourage new swimmers to take the next step to organized swimming, especially swimmers participating in the MPS Grass Root Swimmer Development Program. We need 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. Lack of facilities remains the main challenge for swimming as a priority sport code in South Africa. Adequate, accessible and well-maintained facilities are the main stumbling block preventing development, transformation and participation throughout South Africa. Despite this significant challenge, swimming is still South Africa's most successful Olympic sport code. We therefore need to ensure each and every available facility has a swimming program and all indications are that National Government has finally acknowledged our challenge and more focus might be placed on facility development in future.

## 3. REFLECTION ON PAST SEASON

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

- With the closure of three (3) swimming clubs due to the impact Covid-19 had on sport, we are pleased to confirm at least two (2) new swimming clubs have since opened.

- Most number of qualifiers ever for the 2022 SA National Open Water Championships, with 30 qualifiers and 22 participants.
- Since we had to compete in the strongest swimming province during our SSA regional events, we are extremely pleased with a much improved overall performance compared to 2021, totaling 72 medals compared to 38 medals in 2021.
  - SSA Regional Level 2: 29 medals (7 gold, 12 silver, 10 bronze)
  - SSA Regional Level 3: 21 medals (6 gold, 5 silver, 10 bronze)
  - SSA Junior Nationals: 3 medals (3 gold)
  - SSA Snr. Nationals: 9 medals (5 gold, 4 silver)
  - SSA Open Water: 5 medals (4 gold, 1 bronze)
  - SA Masters: 5 medals (3 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze)
  - SA Schools: 33 medals (5 gold, 13 silver, 15 bronze)
- SA Schools Championships was surprisingly successful, although many of our top swimmers were not available for selection. Our swimmers achieved 33 medals in total and finished the team competition in overall 5<sup>th</sup> place. Our boys team finished in overall 3<sup>rd</sup> position, which is the best performance from our boys team to date.
- MPS successfully continued with its online officials training platform during the past season and continued to host technical officials training – 12 judges and 103 timekeepers completed the training courses. MPS is also currently busy developing a similar online training course for Open Water technical officials.
- During the past season, MPS Education and Training also assisted CANA in presenting a very successful technical officials training course in Lesotho for 51 delegates of the Lesotho Swimming Federation in preparation for the AUSC Region 5 Games during November 2021. The result was a full contingent of qualified, competent and eager Lesotho poolside officials on pooldeck during the swimming championships.
- MPS hosted a LTS training courses and is busy finalizing the practical assessments of the candidates.
- Constance Mbuyane, was invited by SSA as a team manager to the SSA High Performance Training Camp in Durban, where she received valuable mentorship under some of South Africa's top swimming coaches.
- Despite Covid-19 restrictions MPS was able to host a very successful SSA Level 1 Championships with 139 participants and a MPS Level 0 gala where entries had to be restricted when maximum capacity (350 swimmers) were reached for the venue. Some exiting young talent were on display at both events and clear signs of much improved transformation evident.
- Timara Froneman was selected to represent the South African Age Group Team at the CANA Zone 4 Swimming Championships in Lusaka, Zambia. Timara

Froneman performed exceptionally well and won 5 gold medals, 2 silver medals and 1 bronze medal for Team South Africa.

- Two members of the MPS Executive has been elected onto SSA Committees for the next Olympic Cycle to also serve the greater SSA swimming fraternity. Congratulations to Emily Khumalo who will serve on the SSA Transformation Committee and Ronel Bekker who will serve on the SSA Open Water Committee, as well as Chair of the SSA Technical Officials Committee.

#### **4. GALAS**

MPS managed to host all of its annual Age Group galas, including a very successful Mpumalanga Sprint Gala, Mpumalanga Open Championships, Mpumalanga Winter Championships, Top Schools, SSA Level 1 and MPS Level 0 gala. With the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, gala attendance also improved significantly.

##### **SSA Level Galas, Junior Nationals & Senior Nationals**

Due to the impact of Covid-19 on competition formats and venue restrictions, MPS swimmer participation at SSA events hasn't fully recovered yet.

SSA Level 2:	26 swimmers
SSA Level 3:	42 swimmers
SSA Regional Juniors:	19 swimmers
SSA Regional Seniors:	1 swimmer
SSA Junior Nationals:	3 swimmers
SSA Senior Nationals:	1 swimmer
SA Open Water:	22 swimmers
SA Schools:	50 swimmers ( <i>full team, despite several top swimmers not available</i> )
SA masters:	2 swimmers

##### **S.A. Open Water Championships**

The Jeffreys Bay Open Water event was again a huge success with 22 swimmers from Mpumalanga participating, improving from last year's 18 swimmers. Unfortunately our swimmer participation in the 5km event decreased significantly and no swimmer participated in the 10km event. The MPS Swimming Technical Committee will be revising the selection criteria for SA Open Water team selection.

##### **Small Province Inter Provincial**

All Inter-provincial events were still cancelled due to the Covid-10 pandemic.

##### **Maputo Sprint Gala**

Maputo Sprint Gala was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **SA Schools Swimming Championships**

The SA Schools Swimming Championships took place at the most inappropriate time of the season, just before SSA Level and national competitions. As a result, several top swimmers decided not to participate and rather focus on preparation for the SSA events.

Despite the aforementioned, MPS was able to select a full team and all the swimmers performed exceptionally well. As mentioned, Mpumalanga finished in overall 5<sup>th</sup> place, with the Mpumalanga boys team achieving an exceptional 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

SRSA is reviewing the Schools National Competition Calendar and all indications are that Schools Swimming will move back to the Summer Sports category, with the SA National Schools Swimming Championships earmarked to take place in December 2022.

## **5. WAY FORWARD & CONCLUSION**

After a long and challenging season, it is only appropriate to properly acknowledge all the efforts behind the scenes from all the executive members and the continued support MPS has received from SSA. The current MPS Executive Committee has again shown tremendous commitment in serving the Mpumalanga swimming fraternity and we trust the 2022 season will finally allow us to return to normality after two (2) years of Covid-19 disruptions. I therefore appreciate the personal time all the executive members invested in swimming during a very hectic past season.

On behalf of the 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 Veenhuyzen**  
President