



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**2011 National YMCA Short Course Swimming Championships
A Message to Parents & Families from YMCA of the USA
February 12, 2011**

Dear Parents,

Now that a plan has been announced and implementation underway to conduct this year's National Swim Championships in Fort Lauderdale, may I share my thoughts as we approach this year's experience. In advance, I wish to thank you for your time in reading on.

Clearly, we all share the disappointment from the unfortunate closure of the stadium seating at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex. Because of its timing, we have had to react very quickly to a less than ideal and complex situation in order to conduct a championship meet worthy of our YMCA athletes. As you begin to understand what happened and how the meet will operate this year, please be assured that we assembled the best minds that have tenure in leading these competitive championships to help craft our current plan. I am grateful for the many hours that they gave these past two plus weeks to deliver the plan.

We have and always will place a top priority upon the safety of all participants, parents, coaches, volunteers and spectators attending YMCA sponsored activities. With that in the forefront of our minds, it became very clear after our emergency site inspection that changes had to be made to accommodate this year's meet schedule. This included a series of meetings with representatives from the Fort Lauderdale Aquatics Complex, the City of Fort Lauderdale Engineering and Architectural Services and the Fire Department.

During these meetings, we were provided with a briefing and the opportunity to review the Grandstand Engineering Inspection Report, alternative seating configurations and event scheduling options. Although we realize that any alternative plan is not what we were anticipating having to prepare, the final schedule meets the safety requirements established by Y-USA legal counsel, architects and insurance providers.

Please know that I am sensitive to and recognize the challenges forthcoming for coaches, parents, families and team volunteers with the restructured format of the meet. Meal plans, travel, chaperoning, facility seating and logistical flow are several that come to mind. I wish it could be different. I am, however, pleased that we have protected the interests of the athlete while preparing for and participating in their swims. They have not lost out on any opportunity to achieve their goal as in any other year. And that is a big part of what this meet is about.

A final thought I share is in regards to our future championships. Please let me assure you that the 2011 meet schedule is a ONE-YEAR FIX. Our decision makers are unanimous in knowing that, unless the current venue site can be redone to meet total facility accommodation specifications required of our Championship, a new site will be selected. Subsequently, 2012 contractual obligations will be re-negotiated and/or go unsigned until this is resolved. In addition, alternate sites are being explored and discussed as we speak.

I will promise that, until the meet begins, I and our national task group will continue to work, address and communicate information that we hope will help prepare all for a positive experience ahead. We know we won't have all the answers, but are committed to working tirelessly in an effort to accommodate all as best we can. I am confident we will be able to present a high quality championship meet for our athletes and their families.

In closing, I have been impacted and inspired these last three weeks by a dedicated and passionate group of YMCA athletes, parents, coaches, officials, and volunteers that want to help us make the best of the 2011 National YMCA Swimming Championships. I hope I may count on your support as well. And I look forward to the opportunity to personally meet and thank you while we are all together in Fort Lauderdale. In the meantime, have a blessed rest of your day.

Warm Regards,

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