

TO: Local Media Sports Departments
FROM: Jefferson Swim League
RE: Canceling of the Jefferson Swim League Championship
DATE: April 10, 2020

***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

It is with great sadness that the Jefferson Swim League Board unanimously voted on April 8th to cancel its annual end-of-season Championship Meet because of COVID-19 virus concerns. JSL Champs has been held every year since 1966 and is the culmination of the summer swim season when all 17 teams and more than 2,000 swimmers compete over two days in one of the largest and most exciting youth sports events in the area. This year's event was to be held on July 24th and 25th at UVA's Aquatics and Fitness Center, the home of JSL Champs since 1996.

This decision was extremely difficult for every member of the JSL Board, especially for those who have children swimming in the League as well as those who have spent the better part of their lives ensuring that there is a summer swim program in the Central Virginia area. The JSL Championship is, by far, the most expensive part of the season and requires months of advanced planning which normally begins in March. Given the many unknowns of the course of the COVID-19 virus, the financial impact to the many local sponsors who support JSL, and the potential safety risks to the thousands of volunteers and swimmers at the event, the Board felt it was best to cancel.

At the same April 8th meeting, the Board declined to cancel the regular dual meet season, but will reconsider at its May 3rd meeting when, hopefully, more information is known. The dual meet season was set to begin on June 10th, coincidentally the current end of Governor Northam's "Stay at Home" order. There was a lot of discussion from all of the team representatives concerning the health and safety of the swimmers, officials, and parent volunteers who take part in meets. While this is of paramount importance to the Board, some teams felt it was more prudent to wait on a decision to cancel, in order to see what direction and guidance will be issued in the coming month. It is hoped that at least a portion of the dual meet season can be salvaged.

"The decision to cancel Champs was a difficult one for all involved - but it was the right decision. Whatever future decisions the Board makes concerning the scheduled season will keep the health and safety of everyone involved in the swim league the top priority."

Christina Meyer, JSL Vice President

The JSL recognizes how important JSL Champs is to the swimmers, especially those who will be graduating and will not have an opportunity to take part in this special event at the end of their senior year. We hope everyone will understand the difficulty of this decision. Champs will be missed by everyone.