

To all Missouri Valley athletes, coaches, and parents,

This summer has been an exciting return to semi-regular practice and competition. As we move into our championship weekends, however, it is important to remember that we still face external challenges in our quest to perform at our best.

Many parts of our LSC are experiencing a major spike in cases of COVID-19. A large percentage of our athletes are still ineligible to receive vaccinations at this time. In addition to welcoming our athletes from around the region to two championship meets this month, we have many athletes traveling out of state for postseason meets. It is important that we all take a vested interest in the health and well-being of all athletes and their families.

Over the past 17 months we all have worked very hard to convince health officials and facilities that our sport can take steps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at practices and competition. It has been difficult at times to convince these entities that we are serious about health and safety, but we have made significant progress throughout the year. Now, at a time when some teams are just getting back to practice, a new variant is threatening to create more problems for all of us.

Even though there are no mandates by local facilities or governmental bodies regarding the wearing of masks at this time, we ask you to be mindful of all the amazing athletes and their families as we gather for these championship meets. Our request is simple; If you are indoors when athletes under the age of 12 are in the building, please consider wearing a mask for the duration of your stay inside. And please avoid grouping together for long periods of time with persons outside your immediate circle.

The reason for this ask is two-fold. One, we absolutely must do everything we can to keep our youngest athletes safe and healthy. Many of them will also travel with families after their swim weekends for a much needed vacation and may need a negative test in order to do so. Additionally, an outbreak of any kind traced back to one of our championship meets can have a lasting effect on facility availability in the future.

With Olympic Swimming taking center stage in our country over the next week, this is an important time to help build the sport we all love. Nothing creates more interest in swimming in the minds of young would-be athletes than the Olympic Games. It is crucial that we all have the ability to accommodate our potential future stars of the sport. That begins with access to pools across the region.

Thank you,
Scott Bliss

Executive Director
Missouri Valley Swimming