



Canadian Forces Base Kingston
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5590-1 (Sr Mgr PSP)

25 May 2023

Dear Parents,

First, we would like to acknowledge the kids, parents and coaches that wrote us letters and came to the Question and Answer session on Wed 17 May 2023. Your shared testimonials about what the Shark's Swim Club means to each of you resonated with us. I would also like to acknowledge those that reached out by email and phone with thoughts and comments. There has, understandably, been a range of opinions on the decision with differing levels of understanding. Most importantly, the information gained from these testimonials and discussions are helpful to Personnel Support Programs (PSP) as they look to incorporate those aspects of Sharks that have had the greatest positive impact on your children in their interim programming. As the Community Recreation Manager stated in her address that evening, you can expect a survey in the upcoming month to allow for more feedback on how to help shape PSP's programs this fall.

Unfortunately, we remain firm in our decision to pause the Shark's Swim Club for one year. Simply put, the Club is not supportable in its current format. The pause (not closure!) is intended to provide the appropriate time to review, re-evaluate, realign, reorganize and hopefully relaunch a youth recreational aquatics club at CFB Kingston.

In the interim, PSP will establish similar recreational swim programs to accommodate as many swimmers as possible. We are aware that kids want to swim, the benefits swimming provides, and PSP will do its very best to provide them with varying opportunities. Sharks Swim Club kids will have priority placement. We hope to have these recreational aquatics programs explained and scheduled by end-July so that families can plan for their fall. During the pause, the Club's finances will remain separate and frozen in preparation for the Club's return.

Based on feedback received, it is clear that the reasons for the decision to pause the Sharks Swim Club are not well understood. The reasons are many and largely related to unconstrained Club growth and supportability by PSP, adherence to PSP recreation and Non-Public Funds (NPF) policy, changing priorities and ongoing interpersonal conflict between adult Club members and PSP Recreation staff. Please understand that PSP staff and Base Commanders have been trying to deal with Sharks Swim Club issues for at least the past two years, yet many of the issues remain.

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The Shark's Swim Club has grown to be too resource intensive in its current structure. Neither the Executive, PSP staff, nor the facility are able to effectively support the Club in its current format.

The Club has struggled over the past couple of years with compliance issues in almost all areas including its Constitution and Budget submissions, NPF expenditures, NPF human resources processes, NPP Travel, volunteer management, use of unapproved information technology, and banking outside of NPP. This has been monitored and communicated to the Executive with each issue and expectation. Rectifying these issues has often been slow and not without conflict, placing added stress and pressure on both PSP and the Executive.

Over the past several years, and because of points 1. and 2. above, there has been, and continues to be, interpersonal conflict between adult members of the Club and the PSP Recreation and Aquatics staff, which has had an adverse effect on the mental health of the PSP staff affected. It has also consumed an abundance of PSP and Base leadership time and energy to the detriment of other programs. This cannot be allowed to continue.

There is a strong demand for Base Gym Pool usage by military personnel, who are the designated primary user group. They are currently under-served and must be prioritized as the pool is a publicly funded facility for CAF personnel. Additionally, in the absence of swim programming during the pandemic, there is a growing and very high demand amongst CFB Kingston military families for swim safety programming (i.e. swim lessons), which must also be prioritized over recreational swimming. Simply put, the pool cannot support the club in its current format.

Neither the Base Comd, nor PSP are mandated to allocate public facilities or PSP staff resources to Clubs which run outside of the PSP recreational mandate. We understand there are nuances related to recreational sport, competitive sport, and high performance sport within Canada Sport Policy. Understanding of what this means for the Sharks, and the appropriate resources and mechanisms required to support the Sharks Swim Club, requires a fulsome review and expectation management by a Club Executive and members of the Club.

CFB Kingston is considered an urban base. By policy, PSP Recreation programs must avoid duplication of service within our urban community. Competitive swimming is offered in the community and as such should not consume Base or PSP resources if provided in the community.

The pause is necessary to re-evaluate and re-imagine the Club and its relationship with PSP. It will also allow a holistic review and rebalancing of all PSP aquatics programming in order to allow PSP to support the greatest number of military members and families. In the interim, PSP will offer comparable swim programming for those families still interested in recreational swimming outside of lessons.

Over the next year, the co-chairs of the Recreation Assembly, led by the Deputy Base Commander and the PSP Recreation Manager, will be seeking out a group of interested volunteers who feel that they can work with PSP to restart of the Club for the 2024/25 season and beyond. Volunteers need to be willing to fully embrace NPP and NPF policies, procedures and structure and be able to take on the task for at least two years (pause year and 2024/25). They must be supportive of a positive cultural change, and work within the public and non-public resources being made available to establish a youth recreational swim program that best meets the mandated needs of our military families. If this is of interest to you and you would like to put your name forward for consideration, please email psp.kingston@cfmws.com. Nominations will be accepted until the 31st of August, 2023. Early in September 2023, those that apply will be contacted for interviews by the Recreation Assembly co-chairs.

While this decision is not easy, we hope you better understand the reasons why it has been taken, and the measures being put in place to mitigate the impact on those kids affected, with a goal to restart the Club in the fall of 2024.

Sonny. T Hatton
Colonel
Base Commander

Kelly Lupton
Senior Manager
Personnel Support Programs