

# Mighty Mac Swim on Hiatus for 2021

## Official Statement from the Executive Director

December 28, 2020

**This is a sad day in Finhead Nation. I deeply regret that the Mighty Mac Swim (MMS) will not open registration and will be on hiatus for 2021 due to the pandemic. This was a painstaking decision which was ultimately mine. I will end this message on positive note regarding the future, so please stick around.**

A 2021 cancelation is not likely a message you will be getting from many other Event Directors before the start of the new year (especially with the release of the vaccines). For reasons I will explain, this decision on the status of the MMS had to be made at this time, based on today's pandemic-related facts while weighing future projections.

This is both a business decision and ethical decision.

### The Business Decision

- **First, please understand the scale of the MMS. The MMS is logistically very involved and expensive to produce.** Among many other logistical details, please consider the following.
  - We must work with 13 government entities to carry out our permit requirements.
  - We must halt commercial freighter traffic in the Straits of Mackinac, effecting international commerce (previously unprecedented before the MMS and a lengthy, involved procedure).
  - We must charter a support fleet which includes a 500-passenger ferry, 15 powered watercrafts with U.S Coast Guard licensed Captains & First Mates, and a team of EMS and water rescue professionals.
- **We are allowed a limited number of entries (400).** If pandemic restrictions do not allow us to operate at full or near-full capacity, the MMS is **not financially viable**. Many events can open registration, then scale back participation at a later date if they must, and still survive. We do not have that luxury.
- **We need a lot of lead time to produce this event.** As I stated when we did not open registration on October 1<sup>st</sup>, we cannot be in holding pattern past January 1st and pull off the MMS in 2021.

- **The approval of the vaccines** is certainly good news, but the fact is that today no Event Director can guarantee outdoor gatherings above 25 people in Michigan. We know the end to this pandemic is coming, but indications are that a vaccine will not be available to the general public at least until spring ... and we have a rough winter ahead of us. **My assessment is that it will be months before we are able to get reasonable clarification on whether the 500+ swimmers, staff, volunteers, and vendors we need could legally gather by our August 8<sup>th</sup> event date.** That is far too late for the 2021 MMS to wait. The only way to go forward for 2021 would be to roll the dice today. That is not a good business decision for all the reasons stated.

## The Ethical Decision

Rolling the dice is more importantly not a good ethical decision. I am not going to gamble with your money. **Once we accept your money, we must immediately begin spending it. We will not be able to get it all back if the event is canceled or significantly scaled back in participation.**

We were all blindsided by the pandemic leading up to the canceled 2020 event. We, at the MMS, will be **forever grateful** for your 2020 generosity. You accepted partial refunds and many donated entire entry fees to keep us afloat and support Northern Michigan pandemic relief efforts. **Now our eyes are wide open for 2021.** I will not knowingly put your money at risk with the level of uncertainty that remains.

## Thank You to Katrina Murphy

I want to sincerely thank Katrina Murphy, our Swimmer Liaison & Volunteer Coordinator, who has put a lot of blood, sweat & tears into the MMS ... and most of all her heart. I especially want to thank her for taking such good care of you, our loyal Finheads ... especially while I was buried in so many expected and unexpected logistics.

## The Future

I greatly value the Finhead community we have built through the MMS!

**I am excited about plans I am working on to engage our swimming community in a new event project for 2021!** The business model for this new project is designed to be pandemic-proof, will be well worth doing regardless of whether there is a pandemic, and could work well side-by-side with the MMS in the future. My 2021 plans will also work well side-by-side with other live swimming events which are able to take place in 2021.

The new event format will emphasize shared passions and experiences which further unite our swimming community and enhance our interaction. I am looking forward to taking engagement with and within our community to the next level!

There is another announcement forthcoming with full details on these future plans. I will reach out to you ASAP to keep you apprised of exciting new developments. Please stay tuned in to your email inbox and our Facebook pages! If you do not receive our emails, you may [sign up for E-blasts](#) on our RunSignUp site (pop up form appears after 30 seconds).

Until then ... Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Best wishes for 2021. Keep your fin up!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Dreyer". The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Jim "The Shark" Dreyer**  
**Mighty Mac Swim, Executive Director**

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