

# SAINT JOHN'S MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

450-106 STATE ROAD 13 NORTH SAINT JOHN'S, FL 32259



03/30/2020

Dear valued Members, Commissioners, Athletic Directors, and Coaches,

I hope this email finds you and your families in good health. As promised, I am sending an association update today March 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. SJMSAA's next official update will be April 18<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The dates for these updates coincide with information we are receiving from the CDC, as well as our local health officials on the next steps for businesses affected by COVID-19. At this time, ALL County parks and recreation facilities are CLOSED to the public, to partner organizations, and any group activities. The next County update is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> 2020. Until such time SJMSAA is preparing for two possible scenarios.

- A. **On April 17<sup>th</sup> the County reopens the park system.** In response SJMSAA will resubmit our field leases and restore operations as soon as possible.
- B. **On April 17<sup>th</sup> the County announces further restrictions or closures.** This will prevent SJMSAA from getting back to business as usual and we need to look for alternate solutions for our 2020 spring sports program.

As of today, it is SJMSAA's goal to continue the spring sports that have already begun and where we have already incurred significant costs including purchased uniforms and equipment. If we cannot continue those spring sports, we are looking at all available options for our membership, but as you know, we are a not-for-profit association, and our ability to provide refunds is limited to the dollars not yet spent on behalf of our members. Please also know that we are also evaluating short term loans, insurance claims, or other necessary actions should we need to take such drastic measures. Your board is working very hard over this time, and as previously mentioned, we will provide another update on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

Outlined below is a list of **spring sports** and where they currently stand in relation to their season.

**Golf** – Uniforms printed, matches not yet played

**Tennis** – Uniforms printed, matches not yet played, tennis pros paid

**Softball** – Uniforms Delivered, two weeks of season played, County Parks paid

**Baseball** – Uniforms Delivered, no games played

As of now, sports commissioners have been directed to look at the latest possible start time that will still get their season finished before the 2021 school semester begins in August. If we can return to action safely, we will do so to complete the season (even if over the summer months). We will not make any final decisions on closing these sports down for the year until after our April 18<sup>th</sup> update.

Our **fall sports** offerings of Football, Soccer, and Cheerleading are currently looking at their options should this event continue into their seasons. As of today, SJMSAA has taken two measures to mitigate any possible issues for fall.

First, SJMSAA **Football** will forgo a spring season for 2020. Our goal is to focus on our fall season, and we will be incorporating a “Fall Jamboree” in lieu of a “Spring Showcase”. With this said, registration for football will remain open until mid-July. At that time, should we be back to operational status, we will contact all registered members with information regarding tryouts, and the fall season. Should this scenario play out, we will be able to offer the same football experience we always have, we will just move our spring session to early fall.

Registration for **Cheerleading** will remain open until April 1<sup>st</sup>. At this time the plan for Cheerleading is to hold virtual tryouts. With our partners in the cheer world we were able to utilize a format for tryouts that has been utilized in the collegiate level for some time with great success. Our cheer commissioner and coaches have been hard at work designing a virtual cheer tryout that will allow our members to tryout from the safety and comfort of home. Student Athletes will receive a tryout email if they are registered for Cheer on or about April 3<sup>rd</sup>. In this welcome email it will have directions on how to create, perform, and prepare for their upcoming cheer tryout. Student Athletes will submit their completed tryout to their coaches for review and team selection. The purpose for moving to a virtual format for tryouts for cheer is because we are up against some deadlines for deciding on our annual cheer camp. Should we decide to hold our annual cheer camp, we need to put down a sizeable deposit ASAP. This requires us to continue forward with collecting registration funds for cheer.

**Soccer** is still several months away and is not an immediate concern.

**Commissioners**, between now and our next update on April 18<sup>th</sup> we need you to prepare a plan "A" to return to play immediately after April 18<sup>th</sup>, and a Plan "B" that focuses on the latest possible return to play date along with the associated course of action. Many of you have already reached out to me about this, and I appreciate your forward and actionable responses. I suspect after our April 18<sup>th</sup> update, it would be beneficial for all of our commissioners to get on a conference call and discuss the landscape. Please plan to attend one of these calls.

**Athletic Directors**, now more than ever we could use your help getting creative with spreading the word to your school's student athletes and teachers. As of today, Cheerleading, and football registration is still open and going strong. Please help us convey this message to your students in any way possible. Also, sharing the important and pertinent information contained in this letter. Additionally, SJMSAA also has been actively working on a great program that we rolled out two weeks ago called "SJMSAA FIT FOR 5 MOVEMENT" and I will explain it and its success below. Please help spread the word on this as it is a great opportunity for our student athletes to stay fit, as well as have a chance to win one of 10 \$50 Amazon Gift Cards. See the "Fit for 5" details below.

SJMSAA **stipend** program for coaches, commissioners, athletic directors, and board members will continue in place for the month of April. SJMSAA has paid stipends for the upcoming month of April. On April 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 SJMSAA Executive Board will hold a virtual meeting/conference call to discuss next steps. If we look to be in a continued shutdown it is the boards' determination that we will not continue to pay stipends starting May 1<sup>st</sup>. We understand that many of you rely on these stipends as a source of added income, and it's never an easy decision to make.

### **SJMSAA FIT FOR 5 MOVEMENT**

Our board and volunteers helped create a great program for keeping kids active while stuck at home. Dubbed the "Fit for 5 Movement" we challenged kids to send us videos of them completing their "Fit for 5" activity and sharing it to our Instagram/Facebook page for a chance to win a \$50 digital gift card from Amazon. Last week we saw an increase in our social media presence as people started joining our pages to compete in the "Fit for 5 Movement" As of Friday I have had the pleasure of awarding 2 \$50 Amazon Digital Gift Cards per day for the past 5 days. Our original intention was for this to be a one week program, but we soon had requests from Athletic Directors that asked if we could expand our program for another week to allow for the schools to spread the word about the "Fit for 5 Movement" in hopes that physical education teachers could implement it into their virtual lessons for the upcoming week. I am proud to announce that the SJMSAA board has approved this program for another week, and we have since sent out a flyer to all of our commissioners, athletic directors, and ALL physical education teachers in St. Johns County.

Check out the flyer we sent you, go to our Facebook and Instagram pages, and get on board! Last week we thought we were doing good by having over a hundred new and unique users join our movement. I hope with all of your efforts we can eclipse this mark and really show the community that we are actively still working to provide fun and exciting ways for their student athletes to stay fit and active during these tough times.

In closing, I want to thank all of our wonderful members for their continued support; and understanding as we navigate these new waters with an abundance of caution and optimism. SJMSAA as mentioned earlier will provide the next update on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2020. Until such time, please stay safe, stay well, and stay fit!

Best regards,

Justin Palesotti  
Executive Board – President  
Saint Johns Middle School Athletic Association