

Why are we having no A-Champs this year?

The King County Aquatic Center was unable to host the A-Champs this season because they are hosting:

- 2009 Pacific Northwest Swimming Championships July 23rd – 26th @ KCAC
- 2009 US Open Swimming Championships August 4th – 8th @ KCAC
- 2009 USA Swimming Junior Nationals August 10th – 14th @ KCAC

This should be a one-time only occurrence because the likelihood of hosting both the US Open (an International Competition) and the Jr Nationals in the same pool on the same year is very low. Both require putting in bid that will compete with the top pools in the nation.

Both Newport Hills (a 6-lane pool) and Mercer Island Beach Club (an 8-lane pool) offered to host A-Champs this year. There was a long discussion during the spring meeting as well as a vote.

Here were the arguments for no A-Champs:

- 1) In the past, the top 16 swimmers in each event would score points at A-Champs. If we used this year's 8-lane pool with only the top 8 swimmers, then only the top 8 swimmers in each event would score points. If we used Newport Hills, only the top 12 swimmers would score points. I don't think that would impact Somerset very much, but it would impact some of the largest teams who score points just by the sheer volume of swimmers. That would impact the large teams that score more points just on their sheer volume of swimmers. We could have smaller teams that are heavier on the year-round swimmers finish at the top of the A-Champs.
- 2) One team said families had already planned their vacations based on the decision in the fall to have no A-Champs
- 3) One of the pools that was recommended as an A-Champs pool was 8-lanes wide, but the facility was too small to accommodate two heats of each event. So there would be only 1 heat of 8 in each event. People said that would mean only year-round swimmers would be competing in the A-Champs.
- 4) Newport Hills offered their facility on the Sunday after the prelims. Newport Hills could accommodate two heats of 6-lanes so the top 12 could go to the A-Champs. The only problem with that was the year-round swimmers championship meet is that same day at KCAC in Federal Way so all of the Stroke and Turn people would be down in Federal Way. Plus people didn't want the swimmers to have to decide between going to the year-round championships and the Midlakes championships. They thought that would be too hard of a decision for the kids.

- 5) Newport Hills also offered their facility on Friday, July 31st. But people said that would drag the season on too long and we would all have to increase our coach's salaries.

Here were the arguments for A-Champs:

- 1) I said, "If we asked all of our kids, I'm sure they would all say they want an A Champs. And we are doing this for the kids." There is so much energy at the A-Champs so we always get amazing swims from the kids and the kids think that is the best meet of the year.
- 2) In future years, there is a good chance that KCAC will be booked again so we will run into the same problem. So it would be good to work out an A-Champs solution now.

When we had the vote, no A-Champs vs. A-Champs, they started with the no A-Champs vote. They counted 23. Then they had those who were in favor of A-Champs raise their hand. They counted 13. So no A-champs won.

I went away from the meeting feeling not as bad as I felt last fall. I think it was because I felt like at least we got another vote and I realized this is a losing battle. The parent reps and board members biggest concern is having a season that runs smoothly and in a way they can predict. I can't fault them for that

It was really nice because after the meeting, people from Edgebrook assured us all that Edgebrook was going to do their best to make the A-Prelims have the look and feel of A-Champs. They said they would announce each swimmers name as they got on the block or as they are swimming in the water. They will do their best to make the meet seem special. The people from the Mercer Island Beach Club also said they are also going to try their best to make the prelims as exciting as they can be. I'm sure that the Mercer Island Country Club will also do the same.