

# KIRK FRANCIS EVERIST

11 February, 2021

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJ: LET THEM PLAY WATER POLO YOUTH MOVEMENT**

Dear Governor Newsom:

California is the epicenter of the sport of Water Polo for the United States. More water polo players hail from our state than any other state in the country.

Each summer, California hosts the world's largest youth water polo tournament, the National Junior Olympics, which showcases our sport, and gives thousands of athletes a chance to compete against the best of the best at the youth level.

The Men's and Women's NCAA Championships have been hosted in California almost exclusively for the past 40 years.

The Men's and Women's National / Olympic Teams are based in Southern California.

The *Let Them Play California* is a grassroots movement that advocates for the safe return of all sports. They have been joined by a football coaches association, which provided you excellent sport-specific data. In response to a recent question about California's current youth sports policy debate, you were quoted as saying, "I'll be honest with you, a lot of this is driven by football with folks wanting to get a football season in."

As a collegiate coach, a youth club director and a parent of a 12 and under water polo player I want to ensure that you are aware that our youth sports organization is firmly supporting *Let Them Play California*.

**Let Them Play Water Polo**, founded by youth athletes and their parents, has presented a compelling case for the safe return of our youth water polo athletes to the pools of California. We are impressed with the evidence they have cited. We encourage your staff to study their position paper. It will prove highly informative and additive to your decision-making process.

At the collegiate level, we have honed a set of best practices to avoid COVID-19 transmission during practices and games. The broad national and international evidence—and our own experience—demonstrates that COVID-19 is very rarely, if ever, transmitted in the pool. By emplacing operational and social protocols around the practices and games, we have safeguarded the collegiate athletes in our charge and returned to competition.

Youth athletes deserve a similar opportunity. We hope the findings and recommendations of **Let Them Play Water Polo** are carefully considered as you provide a pathway for the broadest number of youth sports to return to California.

Thank you for your consideration,



Kirk Everist  
Head Coach Men's Water Polo - The University of California, Berkeley  
Chief Technical Director - 680 Water Polo Foundation  
Olympian - 1992 & 1996  
NCAA Champion - 1987, 1988, 2006, 2007, 2016