

Greetings!

I know how busy you all are, but hope you will take a few minutes to see what is going on in USA Swimming beyond your LSC borders. We (Eric and Julie) just returned from a Board meeting in Colorado Springs and want to share some of the highlights:

- **Club Development Division** - We are so fortunate that Pat Hogan is heading up this division. His background, his vision, and his organizational skills are extraordinary. The LSCs and clubs are now truly represented at Headquarters by someone who really understands what goes on at the grass roots. Attached is a copy of Pat's presentation to the Board. Please take a look at it. It will hearten you. If you haven't much time, skip the rest of this report and read Pat's.
- **Financially**, things are looking better. Revenue is tracking closely with the budget and program expenses are experiencing savings over the budget. On the marketing side, we have several new sponsors for 2004, including VISA, AT&T Wireless, Argent, and Bic shavers. The new revenues will exceed the current projections in the approved 2004 operating budget.
- **Swim-a-thon** awards structure will be changing for 2004 to recognize more athletes. In the past, only 71 swimmers per year received recognition; under the new structure, up to 1000 swimmers will have their efforts awarded.
- **FINA list** - USA Swimming has nominated Referees Don Hart, Ron Van Pool, and Carol Zaleski and Starters Jeannine Dennis and John Wilson for inclusion on the 2005-2009 FINA Officials list. Helen Brown was nominated to the Oceania Championships in Fiji.
- **USSIC** hopes to have the Counsilman Study results by May. This is a comprehensive look at water depth as it relates to dive starts according to an athlete's level of proficiency.
- **U.S. Masters** is bidding to host the 2006 FINA Masters Worlds Championship at Stanford, August 2-19, 2006.
- **2004 World Championships** - Plans are on track for the 2004 World Swimming Championships at Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, October 7-11, 2004. See www.worldswim2004.com.
- **Olympic Games** - If you are planning to attend the Games in Athens, make your plans now. Visit www.cartan.com and www.cosport.com.
- **USA Swimming Foundation** - USA Swimming is establishing the USA Swimming Foundation, Inc. in an effort to attract serious donors who want the safeguards provided through a foundation structure. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were approved by the Board.
- **USAS** - Sites for the USAS annual meeting have been set through 2008. 2004 - Lake Buena Vista, FL; 2005 - Greensboro, NC; 2006 - Dearborn, MI; 2007 - Anaheim, CA; 2008 - Atlanta, GA. Visit the new website www.USAquatic.org. Plans to make the banquet at next year's convention a memorable event include getting a professional MC who has a strong swimming background, limiting awards to be presented at the banquet to two per sport, and eliminating the entertainment traditionally furnished by our friends at Masters. Since this is an Olympic year, every effort is being made to focus on the accomplishments of the athletes. USAS also called attention to the need for the sports and LSCs to study the area of liability and responsibility for minor athletes. The AEC is helping in this regard in terms of developing organized athlete activities every night. It may be appropriate to develop a code of conduct for convention athletes similar to that used by the National Team.
- **Right to Participate** - High school and NCAA restrictions continue to plague many athletes and coaches within USA Swimming. It was hoped that this would be addressed in the rewrite of the Amateur Sports Act and the restructuring of the USOC, but it was not. USA Swimming will be developing its own position paper, studying what it is allowed to do without jeopardizing its nonprofit status, identifying what it can do (along with the financial impact), and developing a strategy. More on this after the January Board meeting.
- **Background Checks** - The Background Checks Task Force recommended making background checks for members 18 years of age and older a condition of membership. More on this after the January Board meeting.
- **Zero Tolerance Policy Against Sexual Abuse and Harassment** - USA Swimming adopted the following statement of policy: USA Swimming is committed to maintaining its highly regarded tradition of excellence of building and maintaining supportive environments in which children and young adults may grow, learn and prosper, not only as athletes but as citizens of our communities. It is therefore the policy of USA Swimming that all of its members, including

athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers, have the right to participate and compete in an environment that is safe and free from sexual abuse and harassment.

- **Privacy Policy** - The issue as to whether we have a duty to maintain as confidential information about USA Swimming members, particularly information regarding minors had been referred to the Counselors Committee. The Counselors Committee recommended that USA Swimming adopt a policy consistent with the need to function in an efficient and prudent manner. First, unless there is a definable need to publish specific information, the information should not be published. Second, certain information should never be published. Third, the policy should be implemented nationally and should be applicable to the LSCs and member clubs. Guidelines that help clubs and LSCs identify what is appropriate for publication and posting on web sites will be made available.
- **Personnel Decision-Makers** - A recommendation came to the Board asking that it adopt a policy statement that would require every officer and director of a USA Swimming club who has the authority to carry out, recommend, or influence personnel decisions regarding coaches of that club to be a member of USA Swimming. The term "personnel decisions" includes but is not limited to decisions regarding hiring, termination, discipline, compensation, fringe benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. The proposal was referred to the Rules and Regulations Committee.
- **Recruiting** - The Counselors Committee presented its first draft of guidelines for interpreting 304.3.13 in Rules and Regulations as it relates to advertising.
- **Males in Swimming** - A task force has been created to address the decline of males in the sport and to suggest solutions for recruiting and retaining boys. Ohio Swimming's Al Kurth is heading this task force and will be working closely with Pat Hogan.
- **Doping** - FINA will be retesting samples from Barcelona for the newly discovered designer steroid. USA Swimming will be asking the USOC to take a stronger leadership role in working to establish unity with all American sports federations in regard to the listing of banned substances and the adoption of testing procedures.
- **Site Recommendations** - August 2-6, 2005 ConocoPhillips National Championships - Irvine, CA; December 1-3, 2005 U.S. Open - Auburn, AL.
- **AEC** - USA Swimming will again seek a waiver from the USOC Bylaws for the purpose of a broader definition of "athlete" as it relates to athlete representation within our own NGB. The AEC is heading up an effort to distribute Speedo swimsuits that have accumulated as excessive inventory. National Team athletes will be distributing these in a charitable fashion through USA Swimming's Summer Club Tour and the FINA solidarity clinics. The AEC presented its proposal for medal money, record money, athlete assistance, and other initiatives going into the next quad. More after January.

If you have any thoughts or concerns relating to any of these issues or have additional items you would like to have addressed by the Board, please contact us.

Central Zone General Chairs Meeting - We are concerned that there may not be a date that allows for sufficient participation from the LSCs. Currently, we are planning on holding this meeting on May 15, 2004. We would appreciate your thoughts as to whether your LSC will be able to send a representative and whether we should cancel the meeting if there are too few able to attend.

Happy Holidays to all.

Julie Bare and Eric Nelson