

FAQ for Board Members and Others

"Frequently Asked Questions"

October 2012

At the USA Swimming Board of Directors meeting in Greensboro, a number of comments were made about questions being asked of board members relating to various aspects of USA Swimming's programs and services. Following are questions and answers that we hope will empower you to provide accurate and truthful information. We hope you will find this "FAQ" helpful and encourage you to share this information as you see appropriate.

1. Do any members of the Board of Directors for USA Swimming, USA Swimming Foundation, or the United States Sports Insurance Company, Inc. ("USSIC") receive any form of compensation?

No. The board members for each of these entities are all volunteers and no compensation is paid.

2. Do volunteers and staff fly first-class and stay in luxury hotels?

No. USA Swimming only pays for coach-class tickets, and whenever possible staff and volunteers stay at the designated headquarters hotel for events and functions.

3. What is USA Swimming doing about various websites that continue to distribute negative information about USA Swimming and some of its volunteer and staff leaders?

USA Swimming recognizes that there are a few websites that seem to exist expressly for the purpose of trying to undermine and embarrass USA Swimming and some of its volunteer and staff leaders. These websites frequently publish inaccurate and intentionally misleading information and we believe most people see these websites for what they are. As such, with few exceptions, USA Swimming has elected not to engage them with any comments or public debate. In the case of news sites that traditionally cover the sport, we have begun to aggressively correct information that is wrong or misleading with the appropriate editors.

4. When a website or blogger distributes incorrect or misleading information about USA Swimming or any of its volunteer or staff leaders, how are we responding?

There are no requirements that bloggers “fact check” their postings, and we have found that attempts to set the record straight are usually ineffective. This has only served to reinforce our decision not to engage in a dialogue with these websites or bloggers. Although we do not publicly respond to these website or bloggers, USA Swimming President Bruce Stratton and senior staff will always be happy to respond to any individual member’s questions about the content of these sites.

5. How should we respond when coaches, officials or others talk negatively or express concerns about USA Swimming or its volunteer and staff leaders?

At a minimum, a reasonable response is to tell people not to believe everything they read, and to understand that especially with sensitive issues and legal matters, that USA Swimming’s leaders are frequently unable to make public statements. We should also be encouraging people look at the Safe Sport report card that was released during the recent USAS Convention. This report provides positive examples of the effectiveness of the Safe Sport program. Also, please take some time to familiarize yourself with the Safe Sport section of the website at: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1955&Alias+Rainbow&Lang=en>. We are always willing to listen to concerns and constructive criticism from our members and we encourage you to do the same. When you can correct false information you are empowered to do so. Additionally, USA Swimming President Bruce Stratton has continually expressed his willingness to listen to and talk with members who have concerns. Likewise, members of the senior staff team in Colorado Springs are also available and are happy to listen to and talk with members about their concerns.

6. How does USA Swimming respond when a parent or someone else complains about a member’s behavior?

All complaints are taken seriously, and when the complaint warrants, it is turned over to third-party investigators who conduct an investigation to determine if the complaint has merit. When a complaint against a member is found to have merit, USA Swimming convenes a National Board of Review (NBOR) panel to hear the case. The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act entitles members to the opportunity for a due process hearing prior to any action being taken against their membership or participation in the sport. The highest sanction that can be imposed by the NBOR is the permanent expulsion of an individual from our membership. It is important for people to understand that USA Swimming is not a police agency and that anytime someone suspects that criminal activity has taken place they should immediately report it to their local police department. If USA Swimming is made

aware of activity that is believed to be criminal in nature, we will also immediately notify the appropriate authorities. It is also important to understand that when complaints are submitted to both police authorities and USA Swimming, we are likely to defer to the police authorities who have investigative resources and subpoena powers that USA Swimming does not. After law enforcement has completed its investigation and taken action, USA Swimming will proceed with any appropriate NBOR action.

7. What is happening with USA Swimming's Safe Sport Program?

USA Swimming is firmly committed to providing a safe environment for all its members. The USA Swimming Safe Sport Program is a comprehensive abuse prevention initiative rooted in six core areas: Policies & Guidelines; Screening & Selection; Training & Education; Monitoring & Supervision; Recognizing, Reporting & Responding; and Grassroots Engagement & Feedback. USA Swimming is proud of its proactive approach to abuse prevention and continually strives to be and is the leader in Safe Sport in the Olympic Movement. At our 2012 Convention, we released a "Safe Sport status report" reviewing our efforts in this area. You can find it here: <http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/781eed16-fc58-4b37-a179-be0d26b3e2bd/USA%20Swimming%20Safe%20Sport%20Program%202012%20Status%20Report.pdf>

8. Why has USA Swimming tightened the time standards for the Grand Prix Series?

In 2012, all of the Grand Prix events reached their 800 swimmer entry cap very quickly. The popularity of these meets created some challenges for meet hosts as well as visiting teams. In some cases, teams that had planned for months to attend certain meets were shut out of those meets before the entry deadline. Many top level athletes were left out because other clubs and athletes entered faster and therefore filled the cap. The primary goal of the Grand Prix Series is to provide long course racing opportunities for our elite level swimmers. The 2013 time standards and entry process reflect that goal. There is an "A" and "B" standard for each event. USA Swimming members with one or more "A" qualifying standards have a full week to enter the meet prior to entries opening to "B" standard athletes. The "A" standard athlete can also enter any event for which they have at least a "B" standard during that first week. If cap space still remains the meet is then opened to "B" standard athletes until the entry deadline or until the cap is reached. Swimmers (U.S. and foreign) ranked in the top 50 in the world in one or more events are exempt from the entry cap and may enter any events in which they have at least a

“B” qualifying standard until the entry deadline. Additional information about the 2013 Grand Prix series is available at this link on USA Swimming’s website: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1420&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

9. The time standards for the Long Course Junior Nationals have become very fast. How are these cuts established?

The cuts for the 2013 Long Course Junior Nationals are the same as for 2012. The Senior Development Committee has determined that the LC Junior National meet should have approximately 1200 total swimmers, with 80–100 swimmers in each event. The 2013 time standards have been selected to achieve these target numbers. The Committee also looks at the total number of currently eligible swimmers as well as other factors such as date and location that might impact participation in the meet.

10. What are the selection procedures for our National Team and National Junior Team going forward?

The selection procedures can be found at this link to USA Swimming’s website: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1466&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

11. Will there be Post Graduate Training Centers (previously called “Centers of Excellence”) for the next Quad?

The funding provided by the USOC this past Quad for the Professional and Post Graduate Training Center Program will not continue. USA Swimming has proposed a new and broader program to the USOC for the 2016 Quad. Titled the “Club Investment Grant Program,” this program is designed to invest in clubs of athletes that win medals at the Operation Gold competition for that year (the Operation Gold competition for 2013 is the FINA World Championships in Barcelona). This program is dependent upon funding from the USOC and we will not know if the USOC will fund this program until sometime in November.

12. Why does coaches’ education certification channel through ASCA?

USA Swimming has established certain requirements for coach members. These requirements include maintaining current safety certifications, passing regular background checks and Safe Sport training, and meeting a minimum education requirement. The required “Foundations of Coaching” basic education course has been jointly developed by USA Swimming and ASCA. Similarly, we have partnered with outside experts like the American Red Cross and Praesidium to deliver appropriate safety certification and athlete protection programs. ASCA provides

numerous coach education opportunities and a voluntary coach's certification program which compliment USA Swimming resources. We encourage coaches to take advantage of multiple educational avenues.

13. Does ASCA receive any monetary benefits from USA Swimming?

There are a few education projects and coaches' clinics on which ASCA and USA Swimming partner together to develop and deliver. In those instances, the two organizations typically share revenues and expenses.

14. Does ASCA Executive Director John Leonard receive any compensation from USA Swimming?

No.

15. In general, how are things going at USA Swimming?

The state of USA Swimming is excellent and supported by important metrics. Membership has surpassed 360,000 and is at an all-time high; hours of television coverage and television ratings are also at all-time highs; our corporate partners are all renewing their relationships; donor contributions are increasing; our relationship with the USOC has never been better; support for our highest performing athletes and their coaches has never been higher; and there is a long list of support programs and services that are available to all member clubs. Additionally, USA Swimming's ongoing commitments to its multi-cultural marketing and programming efforts, and Safe Sport initiatives are continuing to move the sport forward in a very positive direction.
