

USAS National Convention Notes

By: Alexia Monty

Thank you to the Wisconsin LSC for inviting me to represent our state as an athlete delegate at the 2013 USAS Convention in Anaheim, California, September 11-14. It was a wonderful learning experience where the athletes were invited to participate in meetings, learn about USA Swimming rules and legislation and meet and become friends with athletes from LSC's across the country.

Each day started with the athletes boarding a bus at 4:45 AM and heading off site to practice at the Los Caballeros Racquet Club. Following the practice we had to hurry back to the hotel to change so that we could eat breakfast and head to meetings and workshops for the day. The typical athlete meeting and workshop would last about 2 hours. Each one had a different focus. There were presentations by guest speakers about race preparation, college recruitment and the AEC (athlete executive committee) spent a lot of time educating the athletes about the rules being presented and the procedures that would be used at the House of Delegates (HOD) meeting.

One of the most impactful presentations of the week was the Safe Sport- Athlete presentation. The focus of this is to help protect athletes from all types of harassment. USA swimming is seeing more reports of peer to peer related issues and inappropriate behavior between athletes. They discussed locations and opportunities where abuse happens, how to cut down on potential situations and that USA Swimming is suggesting that all clubs use zero tolerance policies. If clubs abide by zero tolerance the policies can assist in catching all poor behaviors.

They also discussed bullying rule. Bullying can happen electronically, verbally, and physically. USA Swimming's primary goal is to keep the athletes safe and how to teach athletes to watch for potential warning signs and what athletes can do to prevent all forms of abuse. There is training for parents, non-athletes, and athletes located online.

As an athlete representative, I had the opportunity to participate in a service project. I volunteered for the Feeding Children Everywhere project. The athletes packaged 10,000 meals for local children in need.

At the Central Zone meeting coaches and athletes presented and voted on items such as CZ board positions, when and where zone level and speedo championship meets will be hosted, diversity event locations and open water championship meets. Each of the LSC's in the Central zones had representation there to make sure that they had a vote.

The final meeting we attended was a 6 hour long House of Delegates meeting. In this meeting, all of the coaches and athletes were present and USA Swimming Executive Director, Chuck Wielgus, presented the 2013 State of the Sport Address, representatives talked about budgets and there were over 30 different rules presented as amendments or additions to the current USA Swimming rule book. Some of the rules were approved without any discussion while others had significant amounts of discussion on the floor. Many of the rules will be adopted within the next year. Before attending this meeting the Athlete executive committee prepared all of the participating athletes on rules, parliamentary procedures, what the proposed rules changes and amendments were and what they meant to the athletes and their LSC's. They also provided a list of suggestions on how to vote in a manner that would best serve the interests of the athletes and why it would benefit the athletes to vote in that manner. It was our decision on how we wanted to vote and many of the athletes voted in a way that supported their LSC.

To end the convention I attended the USAS banquet. They honored all of the aquatic sports represented at the convention. The highlight of the evening was that Olympic and World Champion Katie Ledecky was selected as the USA Swimming athlete of the year.

Thank you again to the Wisconsin LSC for allowing me to go. I learned a lot about USA Swimming and really enjoyed my experience.