

USAS National Convention Notes

By Nicholas Potter, Wisconsin Athlete Delegate

I was invited to be a Wisconsin athlete delegate at the United States Aquatic Sports Convention in Anaheim, California held September 11-14. Over this four-day period, I learned how USA Swimming works hard to make the sport stronger, faster and safer for all. I attended workshops with excellent guest speakers about topics such as race preparation and college recruitment. I also had a voice in future legislation, rules and procedures brought forth by the organization.

My days began at 4:45 a.m, when I would board a bus with the other athlete delegates to the Los Caballeros Racquet Club for morning swim practice from 5:30 – 7:00 a.m. After breakfast, I would attend athlete meetings, workshops, Zone meetings and House of Delegates (HOD) meetings. In the evenings, I enjoyed getting to know many athletes from other states at the welcome reception, bowling social night, and the USAS banquet. In addition, I volunteered with the Community Service project, Feeding Children Everywhere, where we packaged 10,000 meals for local needy children.

To help prepare us for the HOD meetings at the end of the conference, the AEC (Athlete Executive Committee) informed us of the new bills and amendments. We had group discussions among the Zones and all legislation was explained. Any items that were controversial or difficult to understand were explained further. At a later meeting, we were given a “Parliamentary Procedures” booklet which taught us how to properly voice our thoughts at a HOD meeting.

Although I did not feel this way, many athlete representatives expressed that they thought the AEC was telling us which way to vote. The AEC did present suggestions for approval or denial of a law, but representatives were encouraged to vote as they felt, or in other cases, believed other members in their LSC would vote. Overall, I felt we were well-prepared to vote with informed decisions. My only critique in the future would be that the schedule should inform us when we would learn Parliamentary Procedure and the HOD rules. This would prevent the athlete representatives from wondering throughout the convention when, or if, they would be prepared for the HOD meeting.

I really appreciated the experience of representing USA Swimming on both the LSC and National levels. Attending the USAS Convention was one of the most exciting things I've ever done. It was amazing how 3-hour meetings could be so much fun. I have learned a great deal and met so many new friends, and I would jump at the chance to attend again.

Here are my conference notes about preparation for a meet.

Preparation for a Meet

Week before big meet: really important

- Keep familiar foods
- Travel with probiotics, vitamin C, zinc
- Improving glycogen storage, type II fiber benefits
- Increase of mitochondria, blood volume, red blood cells
- Train “parasympathetic” system to take over
- More sensitive to occurrences, psychological myelin sheath is reduced, inability to sleep, concerns over training if swimmer doesn’t “glide effortlessly” first day of meet
- Keep mind on next race, not previous or race next day
- Adaptations require nutrients
- Taper depends on swimmer, should have long relationships with coach
- Taper effectiveness depends on work done prior
- Don’t necessarily change diet during taper
- Heart rates should decrease during tapers
- Track hydration plan
- Tart cherry juice, herbal tea, avoid spicy and high saturated fat foods to sleep easier
- High intensity sets in less time increases stress, don’t add ≈ 8000 yds
- Don’t stretch cold muscle, dynamic stretching before workout, static after
- Deep breathing before race to decrease anxiety, (2 sec in, 4 sec out) or (4 sec in, 10 sec out), keep good posture, keep emotions centered, (not too sad or glad)
- Carbs digested quickest, then protein, then fats
- Caffeine can stimulate but depends on person, can have side-effects
- Do things that will take mind off swim
- “shallow-water blackout”? deep breaths before, don’t hyper ventilate
- More emotional coaches affect swimmers more
- Long warm-downs, ice for 20 minutes on to reduce injuries, ibuprofen may interfere with healing process
- Young children need 10-12 hrs sleep, teens need at least 9 hrs of sleep, cell phones may impede sleeping
- 1 month – 6 weeks of off-season but stay active to promote growth