**USAS Convention**

**Kansas City, MO**

**September 27 – October 4, 2015**

**Convention Report**

George Geanon, Member USA Swimming Safe Sport Committee

Meetings Attended: LSC Safe Sport Workshop Program Overview, LSC Safe Sport Workshop, Registration/Membership Committee Business Mg, LSC Development Committee Business Mg, Safe Sport Committee Business Mg, Central Zone Preview Discussion Mg, Officials Committee Meeting/Workshop, Governance Committee – Business Mg and Open Forum, LGBTQ Athletes: Promoting Equal Access, Safety & Support, LSC Governance: Moving your Board from So-So to Here we GO, Operational Risk Committee – Business Mg, Central Zone Mg, Burning Issues for Officials, LSC Leadership Workshop: Structural Excellence – A Toolbox, Handling a Safe Sport Complaint: Choose your own Adventure, Central Zone Meeting, House of Delegates Friday/Saturday.

Link to the 2015 Convention Handouts: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2756&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

1. Safe Sport Summary
   1. Credo: “Leadership drive, locally rooted”
   2. Case Review
      1. 327 Cases closed since 2010
      2. 171 (52%) through informal resolution
      3. 156 (48%) through investigation and/or Board of Review
      4. 122/156 (78%) involved allegations of misconduct against athletes (remainder – fraud, drugs, theft, etc.)
      5. Areas of highest risk:
         1. Travel (28%) – maintain a Team Travel Policy
         2. Locker Rooms (11%) – maintain a Locker Room Monitoring Policy
      6. Most common violation:
         1. Electronic Communication (37%) – Maintain Electronic Communication Policy
         2. If contacting/texting an individual athlete (and not the team), include a parent in the communication string.
   3. Meet Marshal Task Force
      1. Membership to include Safe Sport, Officials and Operation Risk Committees
      2. Tasks:
         1. Review existing Meet Marshal policies/procedures
         2. Considering certification of a Head Meet Marshal
         3. No thought to re-instate non-athlete membership at this time.
   4. 2015-2016 Program Goals: Increase Local Level Engagement
      1. Increase in number and empower existing Safe Sport Champions
         1. Create an LSC Safe Sport Chairs Support Sub-committee
            1. design and execute training opportunities and communication with local volunteers
            2. name and activate Zone Safe Sport Chairs
            3. program to train new LSC Safe Sport Chairs
            4. job descriptions for Safe Sport volunteers
      2. Encourage and support club leadership
         1. Create/promote tools for clubs to create a positive sport culture and support their implementation
         2. Launch Safe Sport Self-Assessment for a club to gauge its existing efforts and areas for increased engagement
         3. Launch the Safe Sport Certified Club Program
         4. Train LSC Safe Sport Chairs to assist clubs achieve Certified Club status.
      3. Activate swim meets as parent engagement opportunities
         1. Capitalize on swim meets to communicate Safe Sport with the swimming community
         2. Develop and distribute promotional materials
            1. Meet Announcer scripts
            2. Branded posters
            3. Heat sheet adds
            4. Parent tip cards
            5. Safe Sport table cover
            6. Safe Sport Tabling Kit

Parent cards, stickers, tablecloth, sample donation letter.

Club can print, or purchase a kit from USA Swimming Safe Sport

* 1. Safe Sport Fellowship Program
     1. A 13 month leadership development program for high school and college – aged athletes (min. age 15)
     2. Four fellows, January 2016 to January 2017
     3. Three Leadership Institutes: two days each, intensive workshop for growth and development of leadership skills. Must attend all three
     4. Develop and implement a Safe Sport project for their LSC
     5. Monthly communication by phone/Skype
     6. There are no financial rewards, however, the following will be provided by USA Swimming:
        1. Travel, room and board for all Leadership Institutes
        2. Supplies needed for Safe Sport projects
        3. Opportunity to network with USA Swimming leadership and gain professional connections and experience.
  2. Safe Sport Legislation passed at Convention
     1. Deny deck access at a USA Swimming or LSC sanctioned event to any individual whose membership has been suspended or denied for violating the organization’s Code of Conduct
     2. Require the Safe Sport Chair (coordinator) be a voting member of every LSC Board of Directors
     3. Prohibit Individual Member and Group Members from privately coaching or providing services to any swimmer suspended for doping.

1. Study on LSC and Zone Structure and Operation
   1. Joint project between Governance Committee and LSC Development Committee
   2. Task Force has 2-3 members from each zone
   3. Current structure has not changed significantly in over 30 years: is this the right structure moving forward? “Role, Purpose, and Function”
   4. Goals
      1. Strengthen the LSCs and Zones
      2. Remain Athlete centric
      3. “How do we make an athlete go faster by improvements in LSC/Zone function?”
   5. Consultant: DGI – Design Group International
   6. Project specifics
      1. Survey as many members of USA Swimming as possible
      2. LSC site visits: representative LSCs (large, small, regional, etc.)
      3. Estimated length of project: 18 months, or more.
   7. Survey
      1. 9-10 questions
      2. Looking for “themes” not data points
      3. Designed for written responses
      4. “What is USA Swimming saying about itself?”
      5. If you receive a survey, forward it to your constituents
      6. Unique identifiers so you cannot respond more than once
      7. Survey link will be sent to LSC’s in multiple ways
2. LSC Governance Committees
   1. Works year round to help the BOD institutionalize effective governance
   2. Tasks
      1. Recruiting and BOD succession planning
         1. Identify skills and areas of expertise needed by the board
         2. Actively seek out, cultivate and recruit board prospects
         3. Recommend individuals for election or prepare a slate of candidates, as mandated by the bylaws (can serve as the Nominating Committee if you change your bylaws, per John Morse).
      2. Board of Director Education and Training
         1. Provide orientation and training for new BOD members, including an up to date board member handbook
         2. Conduct a transition meeting with outgoing and incoming BOD members to facilitate a smooth handoff
         3. Promote ongoing learning and growth for all board members, actively encouraging development of leadership skills (outside speakers, consultants or facilitators for the board)
         4. Plan semi-annual retreat and strategic planning
         5. Promote a “governance moment” at each board meeting on a specific governance education topic
      3. Board of Director Strategic Planning
         1. Act as “keepers” of the strategic plan
         2. Insure accountability in deadlines and assist board members in task completion
         3. Update BOD at each meeting about Strategic Plan progress
      4. Board of Director Assessments
         1. Conduct nonpartisan assessment of BOD member participation and commitment (consider suitability for re-election)
         2. Lead BOD self-assessment on a regularly scheduled basis
         3. Evaluate and recommend necessary changes to the BOD (assess structure and processes)
         4. Assess board guiding documents, including policies/procedures and bylaws
         5. Survey membership on topics of interest to the board
      5. Board of Director Assessment
         1. Evaluate and recommend necessary changes to BOD guiding documents including policies/procedures and bylaws
         2. Provide up to date BOD member handbook to new BOD members
         3. Act as guardians of all BOD documents
      6. Resources for the BOD
         1. USA Swimming LSC Leadership Course: <http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewNewsArticle.aspx?TabId=0&itemid=10148&mid=14491>
         2. USA Swimming LSC Portal Reports: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1522&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>
         3. LEAP Library, which includes a sample handbook: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1527&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>
3. LSC Structural Excellence Workshop
   1. Types of LSC Meetings
      1. House of Delegates
      2. Board of Directors
      3. Committees and Task Forces
      4. Executive Sessions
   2. To ensure effective meetings: Preparation 30% -- Meeting Conduct 40% -- Follow up 30%
   3. Pre-meeting tasks
      1. Send agenda and materials in advance
      2. Members to review materials in advance
      3. Avoid negative surprises
      4. Consent Agenda
         1. Packages routine items together (reports) for board approval but not discussion unless pulled
         2. Require all BOD members submit reports and agenda items in advance of the meeting (10 days or more) to the General Chair
         3. Materials sent out at least one week prior to meeting for review by all BOD members
         4. All BOD members to be well prepared in advance of the meeting (better meeting flow)
      5. At the Meeting
         1. Agree on ground rules and code of conduct
         2. Establish a friendly atmosphere
         3. Communicate the purpose and desired outcome of the meeting
         4. Review mission and vision
         5. Don’t wander off agenda
         6. Focus on results and a plan to complete actions
         7. Respect people’s time
         8. Individuals at meetings
            1. Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies
            2. Do your homework before and after meetings
            3. Wear your Board hat
            4. Speak up and stay on the subject
            5. Be informed about the LSC
            6. Be open to others’ ideas and listen
            7. Don’t have side conversations
            8. Avoid texting and cell phone usage
         9. Ending the meeting
            1. End on a positive note
            2. Review actions and assignments
            3. Announce date, time and location of next meeting
            4. Evaluate the meeting – use a meeting scorecard
      6. After the Meeting
         1. Make notes and action lists
         2. Follow up with participants who made a commitment
         3. Send out correspondences summarizing progress on action steps
         4. Thank your BOD members
      7. What is Trending in LSC Meetings?
         1. Annual LSC calendars with designated dates for BOD and HOD meetings
         2. Consent Agenda
         3. Making strategic planning a part of every meeting
         4. Return of more frequent face-to-face meetings
         5. Have a meal or snacks
         6. Face-to-face transitional meetings for outgoing/incoming board members, includes new BOD member orientation
         7. Add a fun component to the meeting
         8. Avoid meetings between sessions of championship meets
         9. Annual HOD meetings with educational components
4. Miscellaneous Convention Items
   1. Registration/Membership
      1. Family membership category has been eliminated. Need to implement this at the LSC level.
      2. Coach owned club: if such a club has a Booster Club, the club has to register the Booster Club as an organization member for it to be insured.
      3. Proposed creation of a “European Forces Swim League” (closed competition)
      4. There will be a meeting regarding Online Member Registration in April, 2016 (Denver).
   2. Operational Risk
      1. Working on “return to play” guidelines for swimming
      2. Considering backstroke start certification
      3. Do not let athletes use diving boards during practices or meets (sitting, jumping, etc.)
      4. Do not use fins in warm up sessions for meets