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NJ Swimming Junior Athlete Representative

September 2012 Report

This past week I was fortunate enough to have the chance to attend the United States Aquatic Sports Convention, held at the Convention Center in Greensboro, North Carolina. I attended various meetings that educated me in the current progress of the sport, and new programs and ideas that would be implemented in the sport soon to come.

The first day that meetings were scheduled was Thursday, and the meetings started off with two Athlete Meetings. The Athlete Executive committee was extremely helpful in explaining what the convention was going to be like, and for me being a first-timer, this was very important. We also voted on whom to give the athlete's award to. Michael Phelps was chosen because of the philanthropy and popularization swimming has received because of him. After the Athlete's meetings, the majority of athletes (myself included) attended the Safe-Sport Seminar. The Safe Sport Seminar was given by Britt Darwin-Looney, a dynamic speaker and a representative of Praesidium, a company that works and intercedes with various abuse cases all around the country, Darwin-Looney's presentation outlined the problems with abuse, and also the new USA Swimming Athlete Protection Program that is going to be implemented in the near future. This plan seems very beneficial and I think it will make a huge difference in affecting the environment in our sport, and making it a safe one as well. The plan included a new training program for parents which is also a crucial and highly beneficial addition to the Safe-Sport Program. Following the Safe-Sport Seminar, I had the pleasure of being able to attend the AEC Outreach program and work with kids and give swim lessons. This was such a great experience for me; I loved being able to help out these kids and foster a new love for the sport. Who knows? Maybe I'll be seeing them in ten years at the Olympics... one of them did have a killer backstroke.

The Eastern Zone meeting was held later that night, and it began with presentations from Chuck Wiegus, Bruce Stratton, and Frank Busch, about the Summer Olympic Games. The Tech Planning portion determined that, after a few bids, Summer Age Group Zones were to be held in Ithaca, New York, and Summer Sectionals in Buffalo, New York. After that the elections took place, and Ed Dellert became the Zone Director and Nick Smagula was elected the Eastern Zone Athlete Representative to the AEC.

Friday began with the Athlete's Meeting, where the National Team Director, Frank Busch, stopped by and accounted his experience at the London Games. It was so interesting to hear his perspective on the Olympic Team and the Games, and hearing his first hand account. Following Frank Busch, the Safe-Sport Committee talked to us again about the program, this time asking for our opinion on how to best get this information out to athletes. The last part of the meeting included USA Swimming's Marketing Team wanted to work with the athletes' and come up with ideas of how to spread awareness and promote the sport. Later, I got the chance to sit-in on two meetings, the nutrition seminar and the open water meeting. Both talks were extremely helpful and informative, and as a swimmer who has swam open water, I am glad to see the development that area of the sport is receiving. Later that evening was the first meeting for the House of

Delegates. During the meetings, the awards were given out. For example, the Athlete's award for Michael Phelps and all he's done to help improve and promote the sport, and the Philips 66 award to Katie Ledecky for her amazing 800 free.

Saturday included a second session of House of Delegates. The items being discussed during the meeting were: USA Swimming's Anti-Bullying policy, emotional and verbal abuse, and prohibiting vs. allowing deck changing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NJ board for allowing me to attend the convention, even as a new representative. It was a fantastic opportunity to increase my involvement in the sport, and it was personally an amazing experience meeting swimmers from all around the country. I am eager to come home and share what I learned at this convention with as many swimmers as possible, and continue to increase involvement in the sport to my peers. I would love to answer any questions; feel free to contact me.