

## Convention Report 2019 Jr Athlete Rep Gavin Formon:

From September 10-16<sup>th</sup>, I traveled to St. Louis, Missouri for USAS Convention along with my fellow athlete representatives Jack Foley, Emma Sahl, and Wesley Tseng. Throughout the five days in which I was in meetings and other events, I learned many valuable things which will help me improve as a person and as an athlete representative. Each day of the trip started off with a nice 530-7AM swim practice which was a nice way to wake up for a day full of meetings.

From the athlete meetings, I learned about ways other LSCs had improved and things in which they thought may help other LSCs including New Jersey which we did in small clusters of about 5 or so LSCs from all over the USA. From these other LSCs I took away that, we could do a better job at promoting athlete representation in the form of social media as well informing the sophomore age swimmers in a presentation.

The athlete meetings featured many important speakers like Andrew Gemmell from USADA. The purpose of USADA is to preserve integrity of competition, inspiring true sports, and protecting the rights of all athletes. From his presentation, I took away how important it is to educate the athletes on what's allowed and what's not. USADA emphasizing educating the athletes for these six reasons which are protect the value of True Sport, teach healthy habits, create a clean sport culture, prepare youths for their future, helps coaches, parents, and support staff have answers, and encourages ethical decision making. GlobalDRO is a website run by USADA which allows athletes and parents to check whether a substance or even a single ingredient in that substance is prohibited.

Also a representative from Safe Sport explained the importance of keeping the athletes safe in order to create a safer and healthier environment for everyone. We talked about the newly enacted MAAPP, which further limits out of swimming interaction between coach and athlete in order to best protect the athletes from potential harm. I also learned Safe Sports basic principles which are Recognize, Respond, and Report. So see the problem, tell a parent and/or other trusted person and report the incident. It was emphasized that it is so important that athletes know that if they are feeling like they are in an uncomfortable situation that they can speak up.

On the first night, a motivational speaker named Trevor Moawad who has worked with many other professionals in various sports about mental conditioning came into to talk to everyone attending USAS Convention. He emphasized the importance that the best way of thinking is neutral thinking. Negative thinking will have negative effects and negative speaking has an even bigger negative effect on you and those who hear it. Negative words are 40-70 times stronger times positive words meaning everything negative thing one says will have a much bigger effect than a positive thing.

House of Delegates highlighted many amendments to existing rules which mostly were approved unanimously with a few going through discussion and a vote. That evening on Saturday was the USAS Banquet which included many award ceremonies for all aquatic sports, swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, and Masters swimming.

Last, I was fortunate enough to attend the Foundation Lunch along with the other representatives where I got to meet Chase Kalisz and Elizabeth Beisel.

Overall, USAS convention provided me with a lot of important information which I hope to use to better improve New Jersey Swimming for the athletes.