



General Chair Report

2019 Fall House of Delegates Meeting

September 17th, 2019

Prepared by Jim Stromski

State of the Niagara LSC

I am happy to report that the state of the Niagara LSC is strong and it is an exciting time for our LSC. I will defer the details to others on the Board of Directors, but some highlights are:

- Niagara budgeted an \$8,000 loss for the 2018 – 2019 fiscal year and our actual loss was slightly less than \$6,900, even though we funded a lot more athlete travel to USA Swimming Leadership Summits and Conferences than originally planned. It was difficult to plan a budget last year due to the introduction of the Flex Membership category, so there was a lot of guesswork as we didn't really know what to expect. Given that, we're satisfied with the way that the financials worked out for 2018 – 2019.
- Although overall registration numbers remained relatively flat last year, the retention rate for 12 & Unders ticked upwards this past year, which is a testament to our clubs and coaches trying new and different things to keep these athletes in the sport.
- Three Under-18 Niagara athletes (so far!), Paige Hetrick (BRAD), Megan Deuel (PACK) and Aidan Kreiley (MERC), have Olympic Trials cut times and several others are really close.
- Three new committees have been formed that are potentially impactful to our LSC:
- Age Group Development Committee – This committee's mission statement is "To provide a place for all young swimmers to develop a foundation that allows them to accomplish their dreams and goals in and out of the pool" and they are focusing on, both, the entry level experience for young athletes as well as coach education in working with and developing this population.
- Performance Committee – This committee is focused on implementing coach and athlete training to increase performance among senior athletes.
- Governance Committee – One of this committee's main responsibilities is to 'To lead periodic assessment of the Board's performance (as a whole and of individual members) and make recommendations to enhance Board effectiveness'. In essence, the Governance Committee provides accountability to the Board of Directors as a whole and to its individual members. We are actively seeking members outside of swimming to be members of this committee to provide unbiased oversight.
- Niagara's Athlete Wellness Initiative (AWI) is coming together and we're starting to roll out parts of it. We are happy to announce that the AWI won USA Swimming's 'Bright Ideas' contest at the US Aquatics Convention this year and Niagara will be receiving \$1,000 from USA Swimming. We will, of course, be putting that right back into the project. I have already had contact from the New Jersey

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Our Vision: Inspiring swimming for generations.

LSC about our initiative and, interestingly, South Dakota Swimming 'liked' the first Wellness Wednesday Instagram post that went out.

- Niagara has engaged Eric Stimson as a part time salaried employee.
- The ASCA coach education proposal is being finalized and rolled out by the end of September 2019.
- Disability Chair Courtney Christ is looking into bringing in a trainer to begin the process of educating coaches on how to interact with developmentally challenged athletes.
- Niagara funded travel for five athletes to attend three different USA Swimming Athlete Leadership Summits.
- Eight different Niagara Officials attended National level meets during the past year, bringing back their experience and knowledge.

These are all very exciting things that are happening right now within our LSC and we should all feel proud of the progress that we've made over this past year. I would like to thank all of the members of the Niagara Board of Directors and all of our volunteers out there for their efforts over the past year!

Coming Challenges

Change, though it can be somewhat scary, should be embraced as change is, generally, for the better. That doesn't make it any easier though... The biggest challenge that we face right now is reengineering pretty much all of our internal processes to reflect the new role that the Board of Directors has as of September 1st, 2019 when the new By Laws went into effect. The Board of Directors is to fulfill a strategic, forward looking role, giving up the historical day-to-day operational duties it has had until now. Because of this, these operational duties, such as managing their respective budgets, will be pushed down to various Vice Chairs and Committee Chairs and that necessitates us looking at all of our procedures to make sure they reflect what will actually be happening. We ask for your patience as we evolve.

We need help!

In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy said 'Ask not what your LSC can do for you — ask what you can do for your LSC.' Well, not quite, but you get the drift. With all that is going on, we need your help in areas such as:

Athletes to participate in the Athlete Committee

Coaches to participate in the Coach Committee

Volunteers to assist the LSC in getting to LEAP3 (this is a lot easier than it sounds)

A Webmaster with mad skills!

A couple of volunteers with financial backgrounds for the Investment Review Task Force

A volunteer or volunteers with Marketing savvy.

Committees, committees, and more committees! See here:

<https://www.teamunify.com/team/eznslsc/page/governance/committees>

You do *not* have to be a member of USA Swimming to be a member of a committee or task force and there is a ton of real world talent out there in Niagara that we would love to tap in order to grow our sport.

Thank you for your support!

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