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TO: USA Swimming Board of Directors

FROM: Chuck Wielgus, Executive Director

DATE: January 21, 2014

COPY: USA Swimming Staff

 LSC General Chairs

 Committee Chairs & Others

It is with great enthusiasm, optimism and high expectation that we begin the New Year. The business affairs of our NGB are in as strong a position as they have ever been, and our overall ability to continue advancing our mission to *BUILD, PROMOTE* and *ACHIEVE* makes this an historic and exciting time for our sport.

This memo is intended to provide you with a brief summary of activities that currently have our attention at the National Office. Please review this memo prior to the January 25th board meeting as there is information here that is important and relevant to some of the discussions that we will be having. There is also information here that directly relates to a proposed amendment to the 2014 operating budget.

**MEMBERSHIP**

At the end of October we were looking at a decline in excess of 4% in the number of year-round athlete members. However, a strong rally in November and December turned the tide and we ended December up 0.3% in year-round athlete membership; 262,934 this year compared to 262,089 at the same point last year. Additionally, non-athlete membership continues to be very strong, up 9% to 25,832. Following are the LSCs with the largest year-round athlete members to date:

 Southern California 16,578

 Illinois 16,407

 Pacific 11,562

 Potomac Valley 10,465

 Middle Atlantic 10,078

**CLUB DEVELOPMENT – *BUILD***

New Club Portal Reports: Our priorities for the Club Development Division this Quad include adding some coach-requested reports to the *Club Portal Reports* section of the website. These new reports are:

1. **IMX Statistics by Age Group** - This report shows the number of swimmers in each age group who have an IM Xtreme or IM Ready score over the past 6 swim years.
2. **Virtual Club Championship (VCC) Statistics by Age Group Report** – This report shows the total number of points scored by gender/age/event of the past four SC and LC VCC seasons.
3. **Splashes by Event Report** - This report shows the total number of splashes swum for the team age group/gender/course/event over the past seven swim years.
4. **Time Standard Achievement Report** – This report shows a break-down of time standards achieved for the club during the past seven swim years (gender/course).
5. **Top Times Report** – This function allows a club to create a top times report showing the top 10, 20, 25, 50 or 100 times by age group and event; can also be run for relays.

***Note:*** *The last three reports can be run for the individual Club, LSC, Zone or Nationals.*

Video Review at SC Nationals and Junior Nationals: One of the many services provided by Club Development is Video Review at the National Championships, the Junior National Championships, and the SC YMCA Nationals. Using the video feed from Take It Live (the online meet broadcast), we place video monitors on deck that provide race review opportunities for all athletes and coaches at the meet. As the following statistics indicate, utilization of this service grew significantly this past year.

Year Meet Total Views # of Athletes at Meet

**Senior Nationals**

2013 Summer Nationals 383 457

2013 U.S. Open 427 960

2013 Winter Nationals 434 597

**Junior Nationals**

2012 Summer Nationals 335 825

2012 Winter Nationals 493 878

2013 Summer Nationals 1,200 1,382

2013 Winter 1,038 1,200

**YMCA Nationals**

2012 Winter Nationals 764 1,800

2013 Winter Nationals 1,060 1,585

2014 Build-a-Pool Clinics: Here are the dates and sites for the 2014 Build-a-Pool Conferences:

January 18-19 Lyndhurst, NJ USA Swimming only

February 22-23 Austin, TX Association of Aquatic Professionals

May 1-4 Chicago, IL Aquatic Therapy Rehab Institute

September 6-7 Jacksonville, FL ASCA World Clinic

October 8-10 Portland, OR World Aquatic Health Conference

Oct. 31-Nov. 1 Las Vegas, NV Nevada USA Swimming only

2014 Spring Regional Coaches Clinics: Following are the dates and sites for our four Regional Coaches Clinics this Spring:

March 28-30 **Albuquerque, NM**

April 11-13 **Columbus, OH**

April 25-27 **Washington, DC**

May 9-11 **Baton Rouge, LA**

**Registrations for all 2014 Spring Regional Clinics will open Monday, January 31, 2014.**

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT – *PROMOTE***

Website Redesign:We are currently in the preliminary stages of redesigning the front page of the USA Swimming website. The scope of this project is to redesign the home page to make it more user-friendly and create easier access to the most popular content items on the site. A full site redesign is budgeted for later in the quad. We are working with Infront Webworks, based in Colorado Springs on the analytics to make design recommendations. They have installed code on our site to track traffic and analyze what users are actually doing when visiting our site. This will help improve user experience when moving forward to the design stage of the project. This stage of the project will carry through to the beginning of February.

Arena Grand Prix Series TV Schedule: Universal Sports Network is slated to broadcast extensive live coverage from the latest edition of the Arena Grand Prix Series. Universal Sports will air 10 programs, two per event.  Calling the action for all events will be three-time Olympic Gold medalist Rowdy Gaines. The complete live broadcast schedule for this year is as follows:

Dates                          Event                                                  Time (ET)

January 17-18            Arena Grand Prix at Austin              7 p.m. & 10 p.m.

February 13-14         Arena Grand Prix at Orlando           6 p.m.

April 25-26                Arena Grand Prix at Mesa                8 p.m.

May 16-17                  Arena Grand Prix at Charlotte         6 p.m.

June 21-22                 Arena Grand Prix at Santa Clara     8 p.m.

Universal Sports Network is now available on Time Warner Cable, Cox, Verizon FiOS, satellite providers DIRECTV and DISH and numerous regional cable and IPTV operators in markets across the country. In addition to the broadcast coverage on Universal Sports Network, USA Swimming will webcast prelims and finals from each meet online via usaswimming.org.

Sigma Gamma Rho Partnership: This year is going to be a big activation year for our partnership with Sigma Gamma Rho under the new tag line, *"Wet hair don't care."* The ladies of SGRho have rallied around the fun, and slightly defiant, motto and we're slated to have major presence at nine events with them this year, each one providing in-water clinics and informational presentations about USA Swimming programs. We will also be working on a joint fundraising program with the USA Swimming Foundation.

SwimToday:We will provide a *sneak peek* about the SwimToday advertising campaign at the board meeting. We have ten industry partners, including Arena, Speedo, TYR, ASCA, Swimming World, TeamUnify, National Swimming Pool Foundation, Playcore (parent company of Colorado Timing Systems) and U.S. Masters Swimming. We are using an ad agency based in Minneapolis that is working on a reduced-fee rate to develop the creative elements. Chief Marketing Officer, Matt Farrell will make the presentation at the board meeting, and I think this presentation will give you a much better idea about the plans and strategies for SwimToday.

**NATIONAL TEAM – *ACHIEVE***

OTC abuzz with activity: The Training Center has been full of activity over the holidays. More than 20 National Team athletes and their coaches came to the OTC to train. Things will continue to remain busy in the months ahead. In April, we will host the National Junior Team Camp in Colorado Springs, as well as the National Junior Team Coaches Conference. We are very excited about these programs, which will introduce many athletes and coaches for the first time to the resources that are available at USA Swimming headquarters.

A busy year for team selections: The selection for the IOC Youth Olympic Games is currently underway, and we should be ready to name the team and staff by mid-June. This summer we will be selecting teams for the 2014 Pan Pacific Championships, and for the 2015 World Championships, World University Games and Pan American Games. The summer National Championships will also serve as the selection meet for the Junior Pan Pacific Championship team. What is especially so exciting about all of these team selections is that in 2015 we will be providing an enormous number of international competition opportunities for more than 150 different athletes. As in the past, we have found that this strategy has been especially effective in readying the widest range of athletes for selection to the Olympic Team, with each athlete having a major international meet toward which to focus their training and preparation.

USA Swimming says goodbye to a very special staff member: Candi MacConaugha is retiring this week, following 21 years of service to USA Swimming. Candi will be greatly missed by athletes, coaches and staff members with whom she has worked so closely over the years. Replacing Candi is Margaux Jackson. Margaux comes to us from U.S. Rowing, where she worked in their international affairs office. She brings a wealth of international experience and logistical skills to the job. Candi will be greatly missed, but we should not miss a beat with Margaux already on the job.

**BUSINESS PLANNING**

2016 Quad Business Plan under review: We have begun the process to re-evaluate our Quad Business Plan, and we find ourselves in an extraordinarily unique position. Consistent with past practice, we work really hard to “beat” the first year of the four-year operating budget, thus giving us a head-start to be ready to take advantage of new opportunities that surface in the back half of the quad. Though the final numbers aren’t in yet, we are highly confident that we’ll “beat” the 2013 operating budget by somewhere between $500,000 and $750,000. On January 15, the Division Directors met with President Stratton and we discussed a number of new items that we’d like to put into the 2014 operating budget. These items total $400,000 and given our projected surplus from the 2013 budget we believe we can add these items to the budget with no negative impact. The items we propose adding to the 2014 operating budget are:

* Cameras for National Team – $75,000; the existing cameras are worn out and in constant need of repair. The new cameras would he used not only to film athletes, but also enhance some aspects of our video for televised events.
* SwimToday - $100,000; these additional funds would be used to enhance our advertising efforts, with a special emphasis on targeting multi-cultural population segments.
* World Cup Participation - $110,000; these funds would allow us to send up to six athletes and a coach to each of the three “clusters” of World Cup events. This has the dual purpose of providing new competition opportunities for some of our older, veteran athletes; and improving our relations with FINA as we have been criticized for not participating in the World Cup events.
* Deck Pass - $15,000; we started to establish ways to monetize Deck Pass by integrating with sponsorships, however, we need to find additional avenues beyond sponsors.. These funds would be used to hire an outside consultant to evaluate opportunities and make recommendations to us for how we can improve the program and grow revenue going forward.
* IT Analytics - $100,000; since 2003, USA Swimming has invested heavily in our database program. We record every time for every USA Swimming members, as well as the official times for the NCAA and FINA. Our SWIMS database now has over 72 million times. We’d like to put this proposed new money to work developing purposeful statistical information for athletes and coaches … think “Moneyball” for swimming! Items that we’d like to develop include the following:
* Average rate of improvement
* Club Dashboard to provide a statistical summary for every club
* Times progression – compare an athlete’s time to “Hero” swimmers, i.e. giving an athlete/coach the opportunity to look at a side-by-side comparison at different ages.
* Swimmers “On the Radar” – allowing our National Team staff to identify and track up and comers.

**PROPOSAL FOR BOARD APPROVAL: The Board of Directors is asked to approve the above $400,000 in additional expenses for the 2014 operating budget.**

Longer term evaluation of quad budget opportunities: As noted at the last board meeting, our new insurance program has the potential to give us savings in an amount of $5M. It is still too early to determine if this reality will materialize, but it is certainly not too early to begin developing plans for how these funds might be re-invested in 2015 and 2016. The senior staff team will continue with the review process that began on January 15, and President Stratton will also be included in all review sessions. Our goal will be to make a presentation at the next board meeting for how these funds might be put to use.

**SAFE SPORT REVIEW**

Safe Sport Review: Victor Vieth will be making the presentation of his final report at the board meeting. Plans are also underway to organize and conduct a press conference on Monday, January 27 at which time Mr. Vieth will share his report with the media.

**FOUNDATION**

* The USA Swimming Foundation exceeded all 2013 financial goals, including an outstanding and "best ever" end-of-year direct mail appeal to targeted donors and National Team Alumni. Thanks to Summer Sanders for her emotional personal appeal.
* We signed our first new Trustee in 2014, so we have a total of 7 trustees. The new Trustee is Jim and Miriam Mulva, former CEO for ConocoPhillips. The Foundation will host its inaugural Trustee Council meeting on February 7-8 in Colorado Springs, CO.
* Due to the success of the 2013 Fantasy Camp, we are hosting two in 2014. In addition to another adult-focused Fantasy Camp, we will be hosting a Youth Fantasy Camp which will be geared to the 12-17 age group. We had tremendous interest from this demographic in 2013, so we hope to see a successful first youth camp! The youth camp will be held from October 9-12, 2014 and the adult camp will be held from October 17-19.
* Competition Endowment: During 2013, USA Swimming athletes waived $260,205 of prize money to maintain their high school and/or collegiate eligibility.  USA Swimming has donated these funds to our Foundation to establish an endowment for the benefit of National Team athletes in future years.  This prize money was attributable to performances at the world championships in Istanbul ($36,001) and Barcelona ($195,004), Arena Grand Prix Series ($24,500), and open water events ($4,700).  A good portion of these funds were turned down by Katie Ledecky and Missy Franklin.  National Team staff are developing criteria for $30,000 in annual grants for competition travel that is not otherwise included in our budget (starting in 2014).  It is anticipated that the endowment will receive unclaimed prize money in future years with an initial goal of growing the endowment to $600,000.

**STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* Tami Bock has been promoted to Director of Accounting. Tami has worked in the Accounting Department since 1997, following the completion of her Bachelor of Science – Accounting degree from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.
* Stacy Michael-Miller has been promoted to Athlete Services Director in the National Team Division. Stacy joined USA Swimming in 2000 and has been responsible for establishing a leading NGB Doping Control program.
* Mariejo (MJ) Truex has been promoted to Programs & Services Manager with the Club Development Division, MJ had a previous assignment with the National Team Division, before transferring to the Club Development Division in 2008. She worked as a Sport Performance Consultant and then served as the Program Operations Manager. MJ is responsible for creating new educational opportunities for athletes, coaches and parents; as well as overseeing USA Swimming educational resources.
* Laura Yaciuk has been promoted to Human Resource Manager.  Laura joined USA Swimming in May 2012.  Laura came to USA Swimming from INTECON, where she was the Payroll Manager

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