



**Illinois Swimming Mission-** *To promote and achieve excellence in performance through education, innovation, service and committed leadership*

**Illinois Swimming Vision-** *The vision of Illinois Swimming is to inspire excellence through innovation and leadership.*

This year has been unlike any other year in my years of involvement in Illinois Swimming (ISI). We have faced many challenges during the last seven months. I want to thank all of those who have served on the board through this unprecedented time. It has not been easy and was definitely not what you signed up for. You all have displayed professionalism in the face of adversity and uncertainty and I appreciate all of your efforts. I would also like to thank club leaders for their ideas, support and participation throughout the last year.

The 2019-2020 swim year started off with a lot of promise going into an exciting Olympic year. However, our world took an unexpected turn when COVID-19 put an abrupt end to the Short Course Season, cancelled our Long Course Season, postponed Olympic Trials and Olympic games. As an LSC we were faced with a lot of unanswered questions. When will we get back in the pool? When will competitions begin? When will the Olympics be held? Will our team survive?

One of the special things about the swimming community is its' ability to rally and pull together for the betterment of all during tough times. During the shutdown I watched and listened to coaches sharing their thoughts, concerns and ideas on how to make the most of the situation. Teams and coaches came up with creative ways to connect with their athletes and provide opportunities for learning, training and personal growth. Coaches and board members joined town hall meetings where these ideas were openly shared amongst those participating on the calls. I was inspired by our coaches and their willingness to share ideas and the care and compassion they showed for each other which is sometimes lost in the competitive sports world.

Some areas of life have begun to open up (with restrictions), including the sport of swimming. While many of our teams and swimmers have started to practice, we still have a lot of questions in front of us. Teams are trying to adjust to this new way of life in the most safe and effective way possible. It is different, it is scary, it will take time to adjust and most importantly it can and will be successful. We have a tremendous amount of talent in our LSC and I have no doubt that clubs and swimmers will continue to thrive in



the new environment. In swimming, we teach our athletes about working through setbacks and adversity. As adults we know this is part of life and we will be faced with challenges our entire life. This is no different. The pandemic provided a difficult situation that we all had to face and work through. Many of our clubs have done a wonderful job working through the challenge of the shutdown and will now work on persevering on the other side of it.

The 2020-2021 year has the potential for a lot of excitement. The start of a new quad, which usually culminates in the Olympic Games, will now start and end with the Olympics. We will see innovative alternatives to traditional swim meets emerge and hopefully spark new excitement within our sport. We will slowly see the return to our Championship Meets and all of the excitement that comes with those events. We will see continued growth and development in areas such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as we work to provide more access to our great sport. We will continue to advocate for our clubs at the state level for the opening and access to pools. We will also be the leaders in creating an Amateur Sports Commission, a one of a kind group that will have access to leaders within the State of Illinois Legislature.

The Illinois Swimming Board of Directors will face some tough challenges in the upcoming year, especially on the budget side. Financially we have prioritized the fiscal health of our member clubs. ISI has provided three rounds and soon a fourth round of club support funding. We are anticipating a significant dip in revenue for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, however, we will do our best be good stewards with our finances of the LSC.

Convention was held this past week virtually and this was a different experience to say the least. I attended House of Delegates, Central Zone Meeting, LSC Development Meetings and Rules and Regulation Meetings. USA Swimming continues to face challenges pertaining to the pandemic. I would like to congratulate Jayne Spittler for being awarded the Pettigrew award, and Pam Lowenthal for her re-election as Central Zone Non-Coach Director.

I thank all members of Illinois Swimming for their patience and understanding through the past several months. I would especially like to thank Pam and the rest of the office staff for their work throughout this trying time.



Sport provides many opportunities for personal growth and to push your physical and mental limits. This will no doubt be the case for all this year. We will face tough situations and overcome them. We will be innovative and creative. We will be stronger and better in the new Quad.

Respectfully Submitted  
Jeff Arce  
General Chair  
Jeff@cats-aquatics.com