

**2017 USAS Convention  
Dallas, TX  
September 12-16<sup>th</sup>  
Coach Representative Report**

On September 12<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup> I had the honor to represent Iowa Swimming at the 2017 USAS Convention in Dallas, Texas as the Coach Representative-Alternate. This was my first year I have had the opportunity to attend and was amazed at how much they pack into each day.

I attended a variety of meets which I felt were relevant to the coaching and improving our LSC.

**Safe Sport at Meets:**

USA Swimming is trying to create a “Safe Sport: Meet in a Box” tool kit for meets to ensure that everyone knows what to do in situations. Discussion included how everyone has a role to play even though the specific roles are not clearly defined. The Safe Sport staff will put together the final product of the “Safe Sport: Meet in a Box” and will distribute out to every LSC Officials Chair and General Chair and also post on the USA Swimming Website.

**Introducing Children into Competitive Swimming for Long-Term Success:**

Dynamo Swim Club and North Kentucky Clippers gave a presentation about how they’ve grown their teams and improved upon their retention rate. They provided the following statistics on swimmers being ranked in the top 16 & still being ranked in the top 16 as a 17-18 year-old:

10 & Under –	11%
11-12 -	21%
13-14 -	36%
15-16 -	48%

Dynamo Swim Club discussed their “Juniors” program which is their bridge from swim lessons to their non-competitive side of their team. This is also becomes a feeder into their competitive program. Since the Flex Membership was not yet passed, they used an outside insurance to cover those swimmers.

North Kentucky Clippers splits their groups up into six stages: exploring, learning, dreaming, planning, achieving and performing.

**SwimBiz: Marketing Tips to Grow Your Team**

At this meeting they provided tips on how to help grow your team. One of the most interested details given was that 80% of parents don’t continue their swimmers in the sport after swim lessons. Some of the most deterrent factors are that parents don’t see “TEAM” and view it as “too expensive.”

## **An Open Forum on Technical Suits in Age Group Swimming**

This discussion was focused on tech in age group swimming divided up into six main questions.

1. At what age should tech suits be used?  
There were many variations but almost all opposed 10 & under swimmers wearing them. 11-12 swimmers were divided with most saying 13 & older (or Sectionals) being the starting point. Points brought up were how allowing them as a 10 & under could hurt long term development as the special/mental effect would wear off when they are older and are more in need of that boost.
2. Do teams have policies? How is it communicated?  
Some teams do and communicate through constant reminders and education.
3. Approximately what percentage of your swimmers use tech suits?  
No many 10 & unders wear them. Some allow them for 11-12 with a few of those limiting the use to just aquablades.
4. Is there a need to provide any regulations concerning restriction of use by age-groupers? Should this be done at the club, LSC or national level?  
The majority of those in attendance agreed that it would be beneficial to have something at the National level that would create a consistent rule across all LSC's. However, a few club representatives disliked the idea of being told what to do in regards to suits.
5. What do you think defines a technical suit?  
Coverage, woven micro-fiber fabric versus knit lycra and bonded versus sewn seams.
6. What LSCs have restrictions in place? How has this been received so far?  
There were several LSCs with rules in place. The first two months seemed a little rocky but nothing too major. They have had no issues since and have many parents thanking them for implementing the rule. One LSC hosted a Zone Championship meet and there was little-to-no argument against the tech-suit ban.

## **Mind/Body Connection: Let's Talk about Mental Health**

This was a presentation on Mental Health which primarily focused on the struggle athletes have when transitioning. The expert panel, including Olympian Allison Schmidt, covered issues on transitioning from club to college, college to pro, dealing with injuries and eliminating the "tough it out" approach. Discussion also included using USA Swimming's American Development Model (ADM) for long term development.

I was also able to attend several other meetings including the Coaches Meeting, Central Zone Meeting, SwimJitsu 101, Roberts Rule of Order and the House of Delegates. I believe that the re-organization of the Board, the new Flex Membership and the inclusion of Junior Coaches are great steps forward for our sport.

Thank you again for the opportunity to represent Iowa Swimming.

Eric Crawford  
ISI Coaching Representative - Alternate