

Striving for Excellence in Swimming

Iowa Swimming, Inc. 2016 Fall House of Delegates

Hi everyone,

I'd like to provide a summary of the last year (September 1st through August 31st) along with my goals and thoughts for the LSC over the next couple of years. Note – most charts are from the LSC portal on the USA Swimming website with information extracted from the SWIMS database. It's not my intention to preempt reports from the Athletes, Coaches, Officials and other Board members so this reports provides a high level summary of a few areas and my thoughts and goals. I'd like to thank all the committee and board members for their work and assistance over the past year. I'm looking forward to this coming year and the opportunities it presents to us.

Athletes

Last year we saw a slight decline in athlete membership compared with the previous year (0.7%). This was slightly worse than the national declim (0.3%). The good news is that retention improved in the 13& over age group and performance in terms of time standard achievement improved (see charts 1 through 3 below). We, as an LSC, have to look to ways to continue to increase accessibility to all athletes regardless of capability and find ways to not only maintain interest for the older swimmers, but also the 12 and unders.

MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

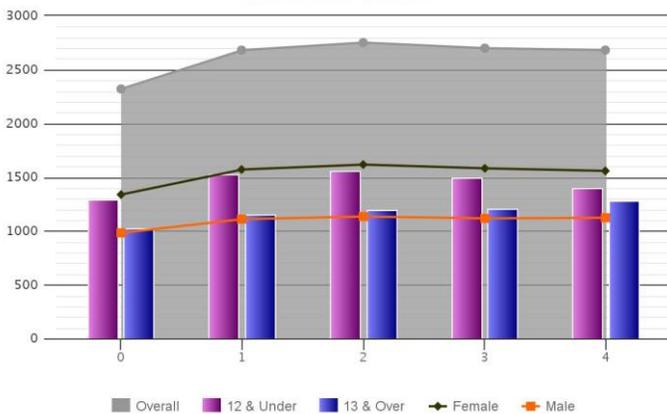


Chart 2. Iowa LSC Athlete Membership

RETENTION

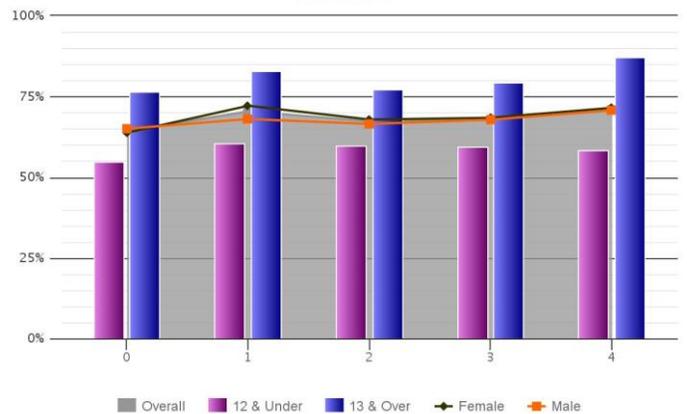
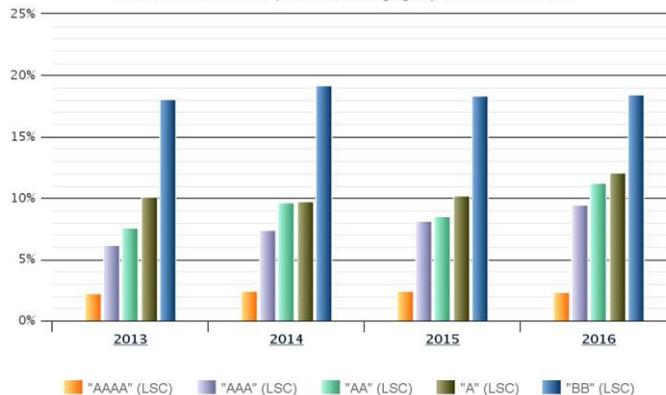


Chart 1 Iowa LSC Athlete Retention

TIME STANDARD ACHIEVEMENTS

Click on a column or line point to see the age group counts for that value



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Chart 3 Iowa LSC Athlete Time Standard Achievement

As part of our goal to improve the LSC for athletes, we've increased the athlete membership of the board to six – 3 senior and 3 junior representatives. Thanks to the budget approved at the last HOD, all six athletes were able to attend the USA Swimming Convention in Atlanta last September and participate in workshops, discussion groups and the HoD. They came back with lots of ideas and enthusiasm for both self-improvement and things they want to do to improve the LSC for all current and future members. I believe we will see more innovation and growth with increased athlete participation in governance and strategic development.

Clubs, Coaches and Officials

We've been fortunate in our LSC to enjoy higher coach-to-athlete and official-to-athlete ratios than the rest of USA Swimming in General. We also enjoy a high retention rate in both categories as well. Chart 4 shows the numbers of registered coaches and officials over the past 4 years. One area of slight concern is the decline in nationally certified officials over the past year (down 5 positions) due to retirement of "senior" officials. We have budgeted for increased coach and official activities to help improve recruitment, expertise and engagement.

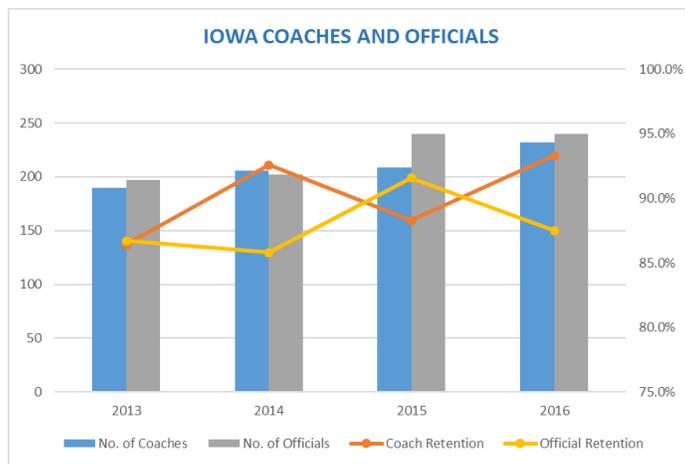


Chart 4 Iowa Coach and Official Numbers and Retention

LSC Finances, Administration and Governance

As our financial statements show, the LSC has strong balance sheet and cash flows to support operations. We have moved to a four year strategic budget plan format. We are currently in a negative cash flow situation and plan to be for the next three years as we shift some of our reserves into membership development activities. We all know this is not sustainable in the longer term without additional fund sources. We don't foresee a tremendous increase in membership nor do we want to increase the burden on our current members. In order to sustain the level of development activities, we need to find additional sources of funding – namely sponsorships and endowments. One initiative we will be undertaking in the next twelve months is to develop a sponsorship program. We need support and volunteers from our membership to plan and implement this.

We (finally) added a staff member to our permanent office to assist Elaine with the increasing administrative activities as the LSC has grown. Hopefully you have already seen the impact of this in

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communications and responsiveness to queries. We are continuing to develop our administrative policies and procedures to provide improved services to the LSC.

The LSC achieved LEAP 2 status within USA Swimming this past year. LEAP (LSC Evaluation and Achievement Program) is a compulsory evaluation program for all LSCs. There are 3 levels (1 through 3) with Level 1 being a requirement for all LSCs – this sets the minimum standard for governance, policies and operations. The incentives to develop to the higher levels (2 and 3) are improved governance and operations plus an annual award to the LSC. There are six LSCs (from the total of 59) that are at LEAP 3 status and an additional 26 (including Iowa) at LEAP 2 level. This year, our LSC was awarded a check for \$1,349.50 which was presented to the six Iowa athletes attending the convention. This is 50c for every registered athlete with the LSC in the previous year – we will continue to receive this “stipend” every year we retain LEAP 2 status. The amount increases to \$1 per athlete with LEAP 3.

As part of the LEAP 2 initiative, we held a couple of strategic planning and development sessions. (Thank you to all of you who participated.) We have defined some initiatives for improvements within our LSC around athlete development, coach development, facilities development and governance. We are looking for help with these – we need participation from everyone interested in improving the LSC for our members (both current and future). One area I’d like to see us move quickly on is increasing the accessibility of our sport to all potential athletes – including those with special needs. To that end, I will be proposing to the Board that we appoint chairs for Diversity and Adaptive Swimmers to manage committees with the objectives to improve communication and access to USA Swimming and LSC activities for these groups.

Last, but not least, is improving governance of the LSC. The current structure and practices have been built upon those put in place with the inception of the LSC when membership was a lot smaller. We need to be looking for improvements to the way we govern the LSC. I envision our governance processes to move towards processes where administration and day to day policy development is in the hands of committees and task forces, with oversight provided by the Board of Directors. The Board then being responsible to the House (membership) for overall LSC performance. A governance committee would be responsible to the House for oversight of the Board and recommendations for changes to improve performance. What does this mean in practice?

- Direct participation by membership in the governance and administration of the LSC;
- Improved communication on day to day activities within the LSC;
- HoD meetings focused on reviews, elections and approval of “packets” of legislation that guide policies for the Board
- Board meetings that focus on committee reviews, approvals and guidance rather than administration
- Committees providing administration of activities resulting in more responsive operations

I think we’ve seen improvements in our services to athletes and members over the past 12 months but I believe we can do more, faster. We need your ideas, support and help in achieving our mission - supporting Swimmers, Clubs, Coaches, Officials, Parents, and Volunteers by providing resources for excellence. Please contact me with suggestions and to volunteer to help continue to build our LSC.

Geoffrey (Phil) Barnes

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