

2015 USA-Swimming Convention

Kansas City, Missouri

Submitted by Donald P. Spellman (Senior Vice Chair & Diversity Chair)

Day 1 – Wednesday (9/30/15)

8AM to 10:30AM – Senior Development Meeting

1. Futures Meets = A fourth Futures meet will be added in 2016.
2. Anyone with a National cut time or faster can not race that event at Futures.
2. US Open 2017 (8/2 to 8/6)
3. JNATS 2017 (8/8 to 8/12)

10:30 to 11:30AM – Diversity and Inclusion (Meet & Greet)

1. Caught up with a lot of fellow participants from the Diversity Summit and past Conventions.

2 to 2:50PM – Diversity and Inclusion – Hot Topics (Roundtable Discussion)

1. Pool access and funding were main concerns in most urban settings.
2. Focus on water safety (“drownproofing” kids) should then lead to competitive programming.

3 to 4:50PM – Russell Mark: “What’s New In Technique”

1. Video from racing and training of National Team members was reviewed (Meets included Pan-Am, FINA World Championships, and USA-S Nationals this past year)
2. Most injuries at the elite level are directly related to flawed mechanics.
3. Looked at the “catch” phase and timing of the breathing on various freestyle swimmers (including Nathan Adrian and Katie Ladecky).
4. Backstroke (Missy Franklin and Matt Grevers) = both used a shallow hook (catch phase) and entered in a straight line above the shoulder.
5. Breaststroke = all swimmers had fast heels and triangle to shoot the body through. Most also had a “rounded” stroke.
6. Butterfly (Phelps and Cammille Adams) = Focus on kicking the chest forward and kicking the hands forward.

8 to 9PM – Central Zone Preview / Discussion Meeting

Day 2 – Thursday (10/1/15)

9 to 10AM – Steering Committee (Club Coaches Open Forum)

1. Sectionals and Futures meets were discussed. Focus being on the development in each Zone of the 18 & Under segments.
2. Details about the next Quad plan for our National and Junior National Team was presented by Frank Busch.
3. Oct. 13th = Olympic Trials 4 day ticket packages would be available.

10AM to 12PM – Central Zone Coaches Meeting

1. Zones Meets (Bids & Locations) were discussed.
2. Sectionals Bids were reviewed through 2017.
3. Relay Only swimmers and / or Relay qualifying times being adjusted were discussed (along with time trial criteria).

2 to 5PM – Olympic / International Operations Committee

1. Planning for Olympic Trails, Olympic Training Camp, and Rio (travel and pre-meet training) was presented by Frank Busch and USA-Swimming staff.
2. Sochi results and travel was discussed as well as the next Quad plan. Duel in the pool plans / selection was reviewed from last year.

3 to 5PM – Cities Need Swimming Workshop (presented by Diversity & Inclusion Committee)

1. This included presentations on what some clubs and LSC's have done to grow the sport and save pools in urban areas. Many tied the pools to local grants to keep lessons and water safety programs running.
2. Broke into small groups towards the end of the meeting.

7 to 9PM – Central Zone (Part 1)

1. I spoke on behalf of Coach John Bradley (Rochester Orcas – MN) for the position of Central Zone Coach Director.
2. Listened to presentations on upcoming Zone Championship meets and clinics.

Day 3 – Friday (10/2/15)

8 to 9:50AM—Coaches Meeting

1. National Team funding was discussed (including stipends based off FINA world rankings).
2. Results from Kazan were reviewed.

10AM to 12PM – Diversity & Inclusion: Policies and Enforcement Workshop

1. Rules and situations of concern were discussed. These included cases of discrimination by Board of Directors and cases of harassment.

1:30 to 3:20PM – Diversity & Inclusion Workshop: Now, New, Next

1. National Team member Tom Luchsinger the 200 Fly 2013 National Champion (on Twitter @TomLuchsinger) shared his experience about being an out athlete / gay male at the elite level in the sport of swimming.

3:30 to 5:30PM – Central Zone (Part 2)

1. Voted on location of Zone Meets (and which LSC's would attend each site).
2. Elected John Bradley as Central Zone Director (Coach).
3. Sectional and Zone meet dates approved: 2016 will feature Team Iowa heading to IUPUI for Mega-Zones. The CZ Multi-Cultural Camp will be in Omaha (June 16 to 19, 2016). CZ Open Water Championships will be in Pleasant Prairie, WI. (June 23-24, 2016), and the "Omaha Cup" test event at the OT pool in Omaha (June 17 & 18).
4. Future Zone meets: Rochester, MN and Pleasant Prairie, WI. (Aug 4 to 6, 2016).
5. Ohio State Univ. will host the 2017 MultiCultural Meet (June 6 to 10)
6. 2017 CZ Open Water Championship will be in Pleasant Prairie, WI (June 22-23).
7. A complete list of upcoming CZ meets can be found on the CZ website.

7 to 9PM – House of Delegates (Part 1)

1. Honored those who we have lost (Coaches, Officials, Athletes) the past year.
2. Awarded LSC Lifetime Memberships
3. USA-Swimming Awards & Honors given for various positions (list can be found at the USA-Swimming website).

Day 4 – Saturday (10/3/15)

9AM to 12:30PM – House of Delegates (Part 2)

1. Passed new legislation to strengthen Safe Sport by making the Safe Sport Chair in each LSC a voting member of the Board of Directors.
2. Passed new rules addressing doping violations for both coaches and athletes.
3. Allow approved video devices to be used for reviewing stroke and turn infractions (if equipment is approved by Vice President of Program Operations).
4. Deny access to the pool deck at meets or workouts for those suspended for violating USA-S Code of Conduct rules.
5. Full list of rule changes can be found at USA-Swimming website.

7 to 9PM – Aquatic Sports Awards Banquet

1. Rowdy Gaines was honored for his contributions to the sport as a color commentator at USA-Swimming, FINA, and Olympic events.
2. Full list of awards can be found on the USA-Swimming website.

Summary

1. While I believe a lot of good legislation was passed and some great things are being done on the inclusion of new athletes my concerns over the bloated Board of Directors for USA-Swimming (which includes 14 Ex-Officio members) was not directly addressed this year (again). We have a “top heavy” organization that is limited to make changes and is most likely less dynamic by having former members hang around too long and have influence over those who actually hold voting power.
2. I am concerned with the fact we are watching USSIC being mismanaged and used to settle lawsuits until it will not exist in 3 to 6 years. When the topic does come up the message from our leadership is muddy at best. These problems will eventually have a negative effect on the overall budget.
3. I remain a critic of using IMX scores as a tool to see who is qualified for USA-S sponsored camps. In fact, I am a critic of how useful the IMX concept is in developing swimmers to the elite level and our national teams. I do not see how an IMX score at age 12 or 13 has anything to do the criteria for placing an athlete on the Junior National team.
4. We have a very good pool of Coaching and Athlete representation at this point on a national basis. It is good to see a larger and more diverse group of athletes taking on more active roles on national committees. We have always had great representation by our Officials across the country.
5. Coach John Bradley will do an excellent job on the USA-Swimming Board of Directors. He will put the athletes first and make decisions based on his knowledge in the sport after being an athlete and coach in 3 different LSC's (and 2 different Zones).