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Dear Coaches,

Quote of the week:

"Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine."

~Lord Byron (1788-1824) English Poet

2015 State of the Sport Report

October 3, 2015 - Kansas City, MO

Chuck Wielgus, Executive Director

Each year, in preparing the State of the Sport I reflect on the things we accomplished and I look ahead to the opportunities and challenges in the future. From this perspective it is clear to me that we have much to celebrate, some new opportunities to capitalize on, and some challenges to face; and we embrace all of it with confidence and enthusiasm.

We have constructed the business of USA Swimming around the three pillars of Building the base, Promoting the sport and Achieving sustained competitive success. Build, Promote and Achieve is the mantra that has set the course for the direction of our business.

It may be monotonous to hear about BUILD, PROMOTE and ACHIEVE every year, but let me assure you that it has been a disciplined commitment to these three core objectives that has forged the bedrock of our business success. We know precisely what our priorities are and we hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards.

Let me now share with you this past year's accomplishments.

[Read the rest:](#)

USA Swimming President's Report

By Jim Sheehan

Good evening everyone. It has been a very interesting and rewarding first year as USA Swimming President. There have been challenges, surprises, excitement and excellence in many areas of our sport and a lot of that is due to the work of the thousands of USA Swimming members represented by those here in this room. We are a vibrant organization and I'm very much looking forward to a successful future for USA Swimming.

This is a special year in the quadrennial. In 2015 we sent four teams into international competition and their achievements are clearly cause for celebration. The first of the year was the World University Games in Gwangju, South Korea. Our 47 athletes earned 34 medals with 15 gold to lead all nations in the overall medal count. Immediately after that were the Pan American Games, and again, we led all nations in the medal count with 34, 13 of which were gold. At the FINA World Championships, USA Swimming took the team trophy with 25 medals and nine golds. And at the most recent event, the FINA World Junior Championships, our athletes topped the medal standings with 26 medals, six of which were gold.

The athletes on these teams showed how exceptional they are not only as athletes but also as first rate representatives of Team USA. Seeing how well they have performed gives me great hope for our future on the international stage.

[Read more here:](#)





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Hypoxic Blackout and Inaccurate Use of the Terminology Shallow Water Blackout

By American Red Cross and USA Swimming

The practices of hyperventilation preceding underwater swimming and extended breath-holding in the water are dangerous and potentially deadly activities. These actions can put the body in a state of hypoxia—a condition in which the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply.

It is our goal to educate the public about the risks of hypoxia in the water and help ensure that those we teach do not engage in behavior that could result in loss of consciousness and death. Our educational programs reinforce the proper methods to breathe before entering and while in the water.

Some refer to the aftereffects of improper breathing as “shallow water blackout.” The use of this language in these cases is misleading since water depth is not a factor in the body’s response to hyperventilation and extended breath-holding.

In an effort to be more clear and accurate, the American Red Cross, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) and USA Swimming do not use nor endorse the term shallow water blackout. In our training programs and public education, our organizations use terminology that describes the dangerous behaviors that should be prevented—voluntary hyperventilation preceding underwater swimming and extended breath-holding. For simplicity, we refer to this condition as hypoxic blackout.

Shallow water blackout is the medical condition that can result in unconsciousness in water that is typically less than 15 feet (5 meters) deep either from diving equipment failure or as a breath-hold diver returns to the surface. There are specific precautions and prevention strategies for this condition.

Lifeguards, swim instructors and coaches are trained to be alert to prevent swimmers attempting to hyperventilate and engage in extended breath-holding activities and to educate patrons of the dangers of these actions. Lifeguards are taught to respond quickly to any individual who is motionless in the water for any reason, including loss of consciousness. Swim instructors are also taught to limit participants to a single inhalation whenever they ask participants to hold their breath and submerge, and to set safety limits whenever setting up activities that involve underwater swimming. Coaches impart the proper techniques to their swimmers in the team environment, promoting optimal performance within safety guidelines.

Being confident and comfortable underwater is an essential aquatic skill. Being educated about safe breathing practices is important to exercising good judgment for safe skill practice and supervision of underwater aquatic activities.

USA Swimming Adds Policies to Strengthen Safe Sport, Anti-Doping

During the USA Swimming House of Delegates meeting Saturday at the United States Aquatic Sports Convention, the USA Swimming membership passed 27 pieces of legislation to strengthen the organization’s efforts in Safe Sport, add restrictions for athletes and coaches found guilty of doping and improve competition operations.

At the conclusion of the House of Delegates, four elected officers to the USA Swimming Board of Directors began their two-year terms. Southern Zone Director (coach) John Roy (North Carolina) and Western Zone Director (non-coach) Dave Coddington (Pacific Northwest) were re-elected to the Board and Eastern Zone Director (non-coach) Mary Turner (Virginia) and Central Zone Director (coach) John Bradley (Minnesota) were newly voted to organization’s volunteer leadership group.

Key legislation approved by the House of Delegates:

- Deny deck access at a USA Swimming or LSC sanctioned event to any individual whose membership has been suspended or denied for violating the organization’s Code

of Conduct

- Require the Safe Sport Chair (coordinator) be a voting member of every LSC Board of Directors
- Prohibit Individual Member and Group Members from privately coaching or providing services to any swimmer suspended for doping
- Require coaches who earned any compensation paid by USA Swimming on account of a swimmer who violated an anti-doping rule to forfeit and return prize money
- Allow footage recorded with cameras approved by the Vice President of Program Operations to be used in review stroke or turn infractions called on deck

A complete list of the adopted legislation/resolution will be available on [USA Swimming.org](http://USA_Swimming.org).

Record-Setting Katie Ledecky Earns Third Consecutive USA Swimming Athlete of the Year Honor

Rowdy Gaines honored with prestigious USA Swimming Award

For the third consecutive year, Olympic gold medalist and world record-holder Katie Ledecky (Bethesda, Md./Nation's Capital Swim Club) was named the USA Swimming Athlete of the Year and claimed the Phillips 66 Performance Award for the fourth straight year after a record-breaking swim in the 800-meter freestyle at the 2015 FINA World Championships.

The awards were among the 17 presented at the United States Aquatic Sports Convention at the Marriott Downtown in Kansas City, Missouri.

Ledecky continued to stake her place among swimming's all-time greats with five gold medals, four in individual events, at the 2015 FINA World Championships in Kazan, Russia. With victories in the 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m freestyle events, Ledecky became the first swimmer to win gold in those four events at the same FINA World Championships.

She opened her meet in Kazan with a meet record in the 400m free (3:59.13) on Aug. 2 and followed with back-to-back world records in the 1500m free on Aug. 3 and 4, eclipsing her own world mark in the prelims followed by a world-record time of 15:25.48 and a 15-second victory in the 1500m final. Just one night later, she stepped down to the 200m free to take gold in 1:55.16 and wrapped up her meet Aug. 8 with a third world-record swim with gold in the 800m free in 8:07.39, a 10-second victory. Ledecky also anchored the Team USA women to a come-from-behind gold in the 4x200m free relay. She now has nine career World Championships medals – all gold.

"I am honored to receive the Athlete of the Year award and Phillips 66 Performance Award. I would also like to express my appreciation to Phillips 66 as well as all of the sponsors and fans who back Team USA," Ledecky said. "This would not be possible without the incredible support from everyone at USA Swimming and the USOC, my coach Bruce Gemmell, National Team Director Frank Busch and staff, Tom Ugast and coaches at Nation's Capital Swim Club and all of my teammates there, and my trainer Lee Sommers. Many thanks to all of them and especially my family and to my great USA Swimming teammates for all of their support."

Ledecky joins Ryan Lochte (2009-11) and Mike Barrowman (1989-91) as the only athletes to win three consecutive USA Swimming Athlete of the Year awards. Michael Phelps is a five-time winner of the honor. She is also only the second-ever athlete to win the Phillips 66 Performance Award in four straight years, after Phelps earned the honor from 2006-09.

The 2015 USA Swimming Award was presented to Rowdy Gaines to recognize him for the most outstanding contribution to the sport. The USA Swimming Award is the highest honor in the sport of swimming.

"I am incredibly humbled by this award, mainly because I think swimming has given me so much more than I could ever imagine delivering to it," Gaines said. "We are a family and I always have been and always will be a proud part of the greatest sport in the world."

A three-time Olympic gold medalist, International Swimming Hall of Fame member and prominent television analyst on NBC, Gaines is one of swimming's foremost ambassadors. His longtime work with the USA Swimming Foundation has been key in spreading the learn-to-swim message nationwide. Gaines currently serves as a USA Swimming Foundation Ambassador and works as the vice president of aquatics for the YMCA of Central Florida where his work building the sport of swimming at the grassroots level is immeasurable. Earlier this summer, Gaines was named one of the 30 Most Influential People in Swimming over the Past 30 Years.

For the third straight year, Ledecky's coach, Bruce Gemmell, was honored as the American Swimming Coaches Association Coach of the Year last month. Tim O'Brien of Nitro Swim Club (Austin, Texas) was named the USA Swimming Developmental Coach of the Year.

In open water swimming, three awards were presented. Men's 10-kilometer world champion and Team USA qualifier for the 2016 Olympic Games Jordan Wilimovsky (Malibu, Calif./Team Santa Monica) was named the Fran Crippen Memorial Male Open Water Swimmer of the Year, while fellow FINA World Championships gold medalist and 2016 U.S. Olympic Team qualifier Haley Anderson (Granite Bay, Calif./Trojan Swim Club) was named the Female Open Water Swimmer of the Year. The Open Water coaching and support staff of the 2015 FINA World Championship team was presented with the Glen S. Hummer Award, given to the individuals making the greatest contribution to open water swimming for the year.

In disability swimming, 12-time Paralympic gold medalist (17 total medals) Jessica Long (Baltimore, Md.) earned the Trischa L. Zorn Award. The award is presented for the outstanding performance of the year by an adapted swimmer.

The Adolph Kiefer Safety Award was presented to Lana Whitehead, who has made a significant contribution to safe swimming through her development of the SWIMkids USA program and method. Her education, leadership, training and research are impactful, informative and have created an awareness of drowning prevention throughout the United States.

Longtime coach, former USA Swimming Junior National Team Director and current athlete relations manager Jack Roach was awarded the Athletes' Appreciation Award. The award recognizes the individual or organization perceived by the committee to have contributed most significantly to the Athletes' Movement.

A complete list of winners:

Female Open Water Swimmer of the Year: Haley Anderson
Fran Crippen Memorial Male Swimmer of the Year: Jordan Wilimovsky
Glen S. Hummer Award: Catherine Vogt, Dave Kelsheimer, Dr. Josh White, Eric Posegay, Laurel Liberty, Bryce Elser
Adolph Kiefer Safety Commendation Award: Lana Whitehead, SWIMkids USA (Mesa, Ariz.)
Trischa L. Zorn Award: Jessica Long
James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Disability Coach of the Year: Queenie Nichols
Outstanding Disability Service Award: Aiken-Augusta Swim League
Make a Splash Hero Award: Liquid Lifesavers (Danville, Ill.)
Safe Sport Impact Award: Paul Stockett
Diversity Inclusion Award: Sue Anderson
Kenneth J. Pettigrew Award: Clark Hammond
ASCA Coach of the Year (Presented at the ASCA Convention): Bruce Gemmell
Developmental Coach of the Year: Tim O'Brien
Athletes' Appreciation Award: Jack Roach
Phillips 66 Performance of the Year Award: Katie Ledecky, 800m Free – 2015 FINA World Championships
USA Swimming Athlete of the Year: Katie Ledecky
USA Swimming Award: Rowdy Gaines

Perfect Fly and Breast Walls

By Russell Mark, USA Swimming National Team High Performance Consultant

Coaches always preach perfect finishes in workouts. But so often in a race, an athlete will approach a turn or finish in-between strokes. Do you take another stroke or glide into the wall? Neither are ideal. Races are won and lost because of poor timing into a turn or finish.

Don't leave it to chance!! This summer at the prep camp leading into World Championships, Coach Sergio Lopez had Kevin Cordes doing sets of 25's and 50's dedicated only to perfect timing at the wall. Kevin was making adjustments 2 or 3 strokes before the wall, and hitting each wall perfectly.

Lo and behold! Kevin made noticeable adjustments at World Championships to hit his walls perfectly too. If you can practice this little thing in workouts, it'll be very easy to make it happen in a meet.

[Learn more here:](#)

Athletes: Apply for the new Safe Sport Fellowship

Applications are now open for the inaugural class of the Safe Sport Fellowship. The Fellowship is an exciting opportunity for athlete members to take on a leadership role within USA Swimming. Fellows will attend three Leadership Institutes throughout their 13-month commitment, as well as implement innovative Safe Sport projects in their home LSC. It is free to apply and participate, and Fellows will gain valuable leadership training, create new professional contexts, and experience an opportunity to plug into the leadership of USA Swimming in an unprecedented way.

For more information on the fellowship, please read the [Fellowship Job Description](#) and the [Fellowship FAQs](#).

[Safe Sport Fellowship Application](#)

Please contact [Maggie Vail](#), Safe Sport Education Specialist, with any questions

2015 Arena Pro Swim Series at Minneapolis

Arena Pro Swim Series Minneapolis (small)The 2015-16 Arena Pro Swim Series kicked off Nov. 12-14 with the Arena Pro Swim Series at Minneapolis. The event returns to the University Aquatic Center on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

[For additional information click here:](#)

Got Anger? How Anger Prevents Accountability

Posted by: John G. Miller, QBQ, October 2015

Note! See John share "Got Anger?" on [Periscope/Youtube here!](#)

I've noticed something about people who day in and day out practice PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

They're in control.

They don't fly off the handle or overreact. They don't allow anger to take root, shaping their behaviors.

Being human, though, we can have anger that prevents us from being accountable.

[Here are three anecdotes:](#)

Are Parents Ruining Youth Sports? Fewer Kids Play Amid Pressure

By Michael S. Rosenwald, Washington Post, October 4, 2015

The number of children playing team sports is falling, with experts blaming a parent-driven focus on elite travel clubs, specialization in one sport and pursuit of scholarships for hurting the country's youth sports leagues.

Baseball, basketball, softball, soccer and touch football — long staples of American childhood — have all taken hits, worrying public health advocates, league organizers and professional sports organizations.

More than 26 million children ages 6 to 17 played team sports in 2014, down nearly 4 percent from 2009, according to a widely cited survey by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association. Total sports played have plummeted by nearly 10 percent.

[Learn more here:](#)