

Report: USA SWIMMING National Workshop Sessions / Spring 2022

Submitted by Donald P. Spellman - IASI DEI Chairperson

4/29/2022

Day 1 & 2 (4/21 & 4/22/22)

Upon arrival on Thursday we attended the Keynote speaker (Jon Mann) and a social event to meet other attendees from various LSCs. It was nice to see some old friends attending along with many new people filling various roles with their LSCs. After a long day of travel and to avoid altitude sickness I drank a lot of water and turned in early (based on the local Mountain Time).

Friday morning I first attended the Coach Certification (+ USADA Education) Meeting at 8:30AM led by MJ Truex (USA Swimming staff). This started with a presentation on testing protocols by USADA which included some information about “Therapeutic Use Exemptions” (TUE) and the process to document those medications along and information on the risks of using various over the counter supplements (which are largely unregulated). Questions about TUE medications (and the process to get those medications approved) can be found on the both the USA Swimming and USADA websites.

The Professional Development for Coach Members section is being developed for next year with the new “Coach Certification Pathway” set to be implemented before the 2024 Membership cycle is opened. The Pathway will consist of “Coaching Education Units” to be completed online and allow for “Core Groups” tracks that will include Age-Group, Senior, and Head Coach tracks. The technical components of these programs are being developed by Glenn Mills (of GoSwim) that will offer training and race footage analysis on key aspects of all four competitive strokes. We got a preview of two of these video clips at the meeting before a question & answer period. Both looked similar to footage from the GoSwim series and were very high quality.

My second meeting on Friday morning (at 10:30AM) was the DEI / LSC Leadership: Organizational Equity Building - Challenging Norms / Practices / Policies and Preparing for Organizational Change. This workshop was led by Leland Brown III (USA Swimming staff). Most of the information at this meeting was centered around what resources USA Swimming can provide (most of which are found online) and what various programs LSCs have been able to implement (or maintain during Covid19 time frames). Multicultural and Diversity based clinics and meets were discussed along with a presentation by Schuyler Bailer (a transgender swimmer who was a former member of the Harvard University Men’s Swim Team). Schuyler talked about his experiences in the sport and because of the sport of swimming along with his LaneChanger.com programs he has developed for parents, coaches, and athletes. Some of the overriding themes in the meeting by past and present DEI Committee members was the need to develop and maintain relationships with organizations so we can offer more opportunities in the sport to underserved populations.

My afternoon meetings on Friday started at 1:30PM with the DEI / Coaches / Athletes: Organizational Equity Building (Part 2) which consisted of more discussion on what LSCs and the Zones have been able to accomplish in the past (since the Diversity Summit in Colorado Springs over 11 years ago). We also had a presentation on strategies for communication within our LSCs on how to secure funding, build connections, and implement programs.

I was able to briefly stop in and catch some of the SWIMS 3.0 Meets, Times, Data session (3:30 to 4PM) and see what upgrades are planned for the new SWIMS programs.

From 4 to 5PM I joined Phil Barnes and our athlete representatives for the Athlete / Non-Athlete Session: Collaborative Goal Setting (Part 2). We came up with some ideas for programming and events that the athletes felt would benefit Iowa Swimming Inc. athletes along with some events (including the Swimposium and swim clinics) that were successful / beneficial in the past. These will be presented in the Athlete Representative's reports.

We concluded the day with an Iowa LSC dinner that all our workshop attendees attended.

Day 3 (4/23/22)

Following breakfast I went to the LiveBarn Presentation (8 to 9AM) to learn more about the live streaming services they can offer for swim meets and clinics / camps. These are offered on a subscription based plan for groups (school districts, pool operators, swim clubs, etc.) to use.

The Legislative Review Session started at 9AM and concluded around 11:30AM. Much of what was presented at this session was centered around the new USA Swimming / NGB governance models and how they work with the USOPC. There was also a lot of discussion about the new legislation being proposed and the role of the nominating committee with finding and vetting new BOD candidates in the future. There will be a proposal from the Athletes Committee to change 203.3 (the "120 Day Rule") which included quite a bit of discussion. Ryan Gibbons and Kathy Fish lead most of the presentations and discussions at this session. It should be noted that in 2022 we will have Nominations open for a September election. Open positions will be for Non-Coach Zone Director (1 nominee) and Secretary / Treasurer (2 nominees). In 2023 this process will be altered (with nominations accepted after September 2022 and elections taking place in April 2023) to coincide with BOD positions turning over in September of 2023.

At 1:30PM I attended the Age-Group Development Meeting and was involved in the small group discussion with coaches and officials from Indiana, Montana, and Wisconsin. This meeting was recorded and the proposals for changes to our seasonal programming were discussed (which includes possible changes to the Flex membership program and the introduction of 3 x 10 Week season structures for 12 & Under or 10 & Under athletes at the LSC levels).

From 3:30 to 5PM I watched the DEI National Committee Meeting. Most discussions were centered around getting DEI events planned for 2022 and 2023 (including meets and clinics / camps in our Zones).

We closed out Day 2 with Team Trivia which included all our attendees from Iowa Swimming Inc. Our team named the “515swimmers” placed 7th overall and I am proud to say we did not cheat (like some of the other teams that played and finished in the Top 5) but I am a bit embarrassed that I could not contribute better on some of the music questions and the film section questions. Unfortunately, like with earlier group Trivia contests at past USA-S conventions, there was no “Swimming History” category.

Day 4 (4/24/22)

Our IASI delegation all attended the Central Zone Meeting from 8:30 to 10AM. Coach Tim Bauer from the Coaches Advisory Committee spoke briefly about what issues they would like to focus on until the end of this Olympic cycle. I volunteered to serve on a task force to help develop upcoming Central Zone Diversity Meets (which will meet online via Zoom meetings). Team Iowa was assigned to Lenexa, Kansas for the 2023 Zones 14 & Under Championships (from Aug. 3 to 6, 2023). We also made plans to hold the CZ Open Water Championships on June 16th in Lake Andrea, Wisconsin. Phil and Marie were also making plans to run an LSC Open Water Championship in conjunction with the Wisconsin LSC.

There was a Zone Directors Committee wrap-up / town hall style meeting from 10:30 to Noon that I briefly attended but had to leave a bit early to go get my luggage ready for check-out. This meeting was also recorded and is available on the USA Swimming website.

Overall I was happy to see USA Swimming moving forward to finish this quad period strong while getting the Zones back on track with clinics, camps, and meets. While there are still concerns about our budget projections it seems like our national BOD is focusing on getting feedback from the Zones on which programs are working and what needs to be altered following 2023. The updates to SWIMS and the coaching development programs look innovative and while I am concerned there might be initial issues with how they are rolled out online they should be overall improvements to our current programs. Our LSC athlete representatives were very enthusiastic and engaged throughout the sessions. They also took the “business casual” clothing suggestion from USA Swimming seriously and outdressed many of the other attendees (including me) each day! Phil, Marie, and Jennifer all worked very hard to attend as many presentations / meetings as possible and will bring back a lot of good information and ideas to our LSC for the next few seasons.

If you have any questions about the workshop presentations or meetings that I attended feel free to contact me via email: don.spellman@iaswim.org