

Jacob Byrne: Interim Coaches Representative

Convention Delegate Notes:

Attending the 2013 United States Aquatic Sports Convention was an eye opening experience to the governance and business side of our sport. As a cog within a smaller organization it was incredibly interesting to see how our sport is ran across the country. When choosing workshops and seminars I tried to attend those that I felt would benefit me most as a coach. I chose these so I could take these lessons back to Montana as a resource for other coaches.

Notable Seminars Attended:

Risk Management:

The Risk Management Lecture was helpful on two fronts. The first half of the lecture was dedicated to explaining activities that are covered under our USA swimming general liability insurance. For the most part it seemed to me that if you contacted risk management services with the activity you have planned the team will be covered by the liability insurance. One point of clarification that I thought was important was regarding a trial period for new swimmers. Only the team is covered by liability insurance during this time. The swimmer themselves is not covered during this trial period.

The second half of the lecture was presented by the American Red Cross and gave out an enormous amount of information regarding the Coaches Safety Training changes. For those who do not know Coaches Safety Training is required (once again) by all coaches even if they are lifeguard certified. The course is a "blended learning" course that is comprised of both online learning and onsite skill sessions. If a coach has a Lifeguarding Card then they are not required to take the onsite learning, but are still required to complete the 3 hour online training portion. If you do not have a lifeguarding certification you will be required to take an additional 3 hours of in water training. Work with your local red cross instructors to complete these requirements.

Fueling Your Athletes:

This is the second nutrition talk I have attended presented by USOC staff. There is a wealth of information available in the presentation which has been posted online here: <http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/bbf3f49a-81df-487a-8753-fabee8a97d45/2013%20Fueling%20your%20Athletes.pdf>. There was plenty of discussion regarding the use of dietary supplements. It is always important for an athlete to check the validity and content of any supplements that they might be taking during training or competition. Especially our elite level athletes who are attending championship level meets where they may be randomly selected for a screening. Something that also stuck out to me was the message that as coaches we need to be involved in our athletes fueling, but they themselves are responsible for what goes into their bodies.

Safe Sport - using the athlete training with your club or LSC:

I was late to this workshop, but had participated in many of the athlete safe sport activities at the OTC last May. The biggest take away from this is that there are still a relatively low amount of swimmers, volunteers, and parents who have taken the Safe Sport Training. The training is broken into video segments that easily allow for group or small group discussion to be added to the presentation. In addition the presentation packet also provides different scenarios that make swimmers assess different situations that may or may not be OK. It makes our swimmers critically think about situations and the intentions that might be behind these situations. You can find the athlete training facilitator manual online here: <http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/e44062e7-52b4-4488-a769-6fe62f9ec57c/Athlete%20Training%20Guide.pdf>

College Swimming Real Talk:

This panel was primarily driven by athlete questions. All four athlete representatives and both Coach Sobek and myself attended. There was a sampling of coaches and athletes ranging from NAIA to NCAA Div 1 present to field the questions. It was interesting to see what the athletes felt were most important to ask about regarding the recruitment process. Something that I thought was very interesting was a clarification about NCAA Div 2 visits. If you visit a Division 2 school during your first 5 recruitment visits it will count as one of these 5 official visits. If you are sitting on the fence between Division 2 and Division 1 you can attend 5 official visits at Division 1 institutions and then visit as many Division 2 schools as you would like. I don't think very many swimmers take advantage of all 5 recruiting trips, but if you are in a situation where you might need to take 6 or 7 trips it seems recommended to get all the Division 1 schools out of the way first.

Growth Must Be Positive:

This seminar was slightly misleading. The first half had to do with data regarding the recruitment and retention of swimmers in our sport and other sports. How we stack up and why we are more competitive in other age groups. One of these that was talked about is the "4 hour rule" and our competition length for beginning swimmers. The during the first part of the workshop was to give us raw data that could help us cater how we are marketing our club or LSC.

The second half of the seminar was facility related. However, it was focused more on current trends and recommendations by the USA Swimming Facility Development Committee. From my perspective this was geared more toward pool managers than swim coaches or clubs.

Governance & House of Delegates:

This was by far the best part of the convention experience to me. Throughout the convention you could clearly hear different LSC and committee members campaign for certain issues. The hotly contested items at this year's convention were the 2 dollar a year dues increase over the next 10 years, and the change of the sectional format. Both of these pieces of legislation passed. The sectional legislation was fought hard by the eastern zone, but embraced by the Western Zone and Northwest Section since most of the recommendations were already being used in our two sectional meets. There was a fair amount of discussion regarding the dues increase, but ultimately passed on the house floor by a large majority.

Coaches Representative Report:

Since being elected Coaches Delegate at Short Course State I have been very quiet. I helped compile the short course meet schedule for the May meeting to help facilitate meeting times. From those of you who attended I think that this helped cut the meeting time down immensely and got coaches and swimmers out of the conference center and ready for the meet on Sunday.

While at USAS convention Senior Development Chair Jade Sobek and I started discussing the possibility of using the Coaches Clinic money in conjunction with the AAA camp money. Therefor allowing us to increase what the camp is capable of doing and providing a worthy reason for more coaches to attend and help with the camp curriculum. If you have any requests or interests for the clinic part of the AAA camp please do not hesitate to contact me.