

The USA Swimming convention for 2013 was very successful. Many important decisions were made, though there were far fewer controversial topics this year than there has been in some past years. The prominent topics of discussion this year were about raising annual dues, time qualification standards for the Sectional meets, and the length the Sectional meets are allowed to be. Discussion also continued from last year about the new Safe Sport program.

A decision was reached that sectional meets can only last a total of four days. This will allow the Sectional meet to act more as a warm up for athletes who plan on attending the junior national meet. Less training time will be taken, as well as giving the athletes a slightly longer recovery time in between the meets. Also, time standards for sectional meets must have time standards no slower than five percent off of junior national's qualification times. This does not directly affect Montana's section because those time standards are already at that level.

The yearly USA Swimming membership dues will increase by two dollars, this new rate will remain the same for the next ten years. This raise in fees will help accommodate for inflation. This decision was a difficult one to reach. It is difficult to ask swimming families to invest more money per year, but it is a very small increase on an individual basis that will benefit USA Swimming significantly. It is USA Swimming's responsibility to ensure the financial stability of the institution.

Safe Sport was initiated a few years back, and most of the major issues involved in it have been worked out. However, it is essential that USA Swimming as a whole

spreads education about this new program. The Montana LSC must help initiate this education. All teams should strongly encourage athletes, parents and coaches to take the initiative to learn more about this growing program. The convention was a huge success; many great people put in a lot of time to make USA swimming a stronger institution.