

Spring 2018 Montana Swimming General Chair's Report

The Winter and Spring have been eventful in that MTS has sent representatives to many workshops, meetings, etc. with USA Swimming. These events significantly help our athletes and volunteers become even more valuable to our LSC and shows USAS we are in it for real. I am surprised each year at convention to learn of the LSCs that do not take part in the education and guidance which is continually offered by USAS. I hope in the years to come MTS continues to see the value in participating in these events.

As General Chair I receive emails, at least weekly, that require some knowledge of swimming and some common sense. Some of them are problematic, but many are simply silly. This is the case with the master swimmer who wrote wanting me to overturn his/her DQ in the master's state championship because he/she had trained for six full weeks and had no idea why the disqualification was called. Sometimes ya just gotta laugh.

I am not sure why, but I also get many emails concerning the Summer Federation League although MTS and USAS have no affiliation with them. Obviously, to many people, swimming is just swimming no matter the governing body.

My biggest rash/bombardment of communications since October, 2017 was the outcry of parents, coaches, and athletes about the "surprise rules" during the State High School meet in Great Falls. Again, this is not my jurisdiction, but I got the calls, texts, emails, and face to face complaints. This concerned me enough that I have asked Merle to try to get H.S. swimming in line with USAS rules and policies in order to make a more uniform system throughout the state.

Our MTS State Championship was held at the Butte Y and this was a meet where our MTS community really pulled together and shined. The Butte Y meet management had a family emergency and many parts of the meet tried to "fall through the cracks", but volunteers from almost every team stepped up and filled in the blanks, making it a successful meet. The officiating crew did an outstanding job and I must give kudos to Merle, Jim and their CJ crew.

I was reappointed to the USAS Sports Medicine and Science Committee and am working on an age group level sports medicine protocol for meets. This is a longer process than I first thought, but we have some really smart people from across the country working on this and I think it will happen. The idea is to keep our age groupers from injury, so all our teams have a better retention rate and less athletes quitting due to injury.

This will be my last few months as General Chair, so I am actively grooming the likely next candidates. But if anyone is interested in this position please contact me and I'll tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly of the position.

Dr Tony Popp