



Big Sky, Big Dreams, Big Success

May 8, 2021

Montana Swimming House of Delegates,

This past year has certainly been different, challenging and an exercise patience and perseverance in navigating the constantly shifting sands of the global pandemic and the national, state, local and facility responses to the pandemic. However, this is a great sport, with wonderful, generous and caring people that work for the benefits of our athletes. This is especially true in Montana. So, let me start with a heartfelt thanks to the MTSI Board, Exec Committee, athletes, coaches, club boards and volunteers that stepped up, dug in and delivered for our athletes. With the challenges of the pandemic, we had to find or create new ways to do things. Those new things required new methods of review and approval – and, in some circumstances a lot of trust in me and many others to get things done and move them ahead. So many stepped up and I'm so proud at how folks came together, helped each other and successfully delivered opportunities for our athletes. I truly hope that the additional spirit of cooperation demonstrated this past extends to the future.

Last year at this time, all pools were shut down and nothing was certain. You all found ways to get facilities open, to navigate facility patron limits, manage and implement COVID protocols and everything that they entailed, kept everyone safe. Our LSC provided grants to our clubs which enabled clubs to then apply for other grants and funds. All our teams stayed intact. Not everyone had the same opportunities, but, because of your efforts and creativity, all our kids had at least a couple opportunities to compete. We adapted and changed how meets were sanctioned, approved, and run. And we shoehorned ourselves into a two-facility short course championship event with adapted qualifying standards. We also collaborated to invent and run a meet to replace the NW Age Group regionals that was cancelled for the second year in a row. All this required lots of extra consideration and effort. Additionally, we managed to do all of this while maintaining the general financial viability and health of our LSC. Thank you all!

My one big regret is that we were not able to execute our B/C Championship meet or some reasonable facsimile for our more novice swimmers.

As we come out of the pandemic and associated restrictions, we look forward to 'normal.' However, we had one major item pushed out with COVID uncertainty that need to be addressed near term. We didn't award a bid (or bids) for 2021 LC State at our October meeting. We need to select a location (or locations) for LC State this summer and determine what, if any, modifications will apply to qualifications and operations of that meet.

I provide some specific updates and direction on specific items below. More generally, there are areas of our LSC operations that I think we can improve, and which require additional effort. I will be reaching out to appropriate individuals and groups to scope and initiate these efforts. They include:

- Improved systems for payment and tracking of meet costs and entry fees surcharges for to the LSC,
- Improved systems for payment receipt and tracking of entry fees for LSC Championship meet,
- Ongoing efforts to clean up our LSC Policies & Procedures and Rules & Regulations documents,
- Implement an effort to plan and provide support around the state to address aquatic facility shortages,
- Plan and implement an effort around fundraising and sponsorships at the LSC level, and
- Continue and enhance our recruitment, training and promotion of officials.

Safe Sport/MAAP – Five Montana LSC teams are now Safe Sport Certified. I encourage other teams to continue efforts toward certification and/or make their certification a priority. Recertification for the currently certified teams will be required beginning next year.

Governance – USA Swimming is currently proposing several new and sweeping changes to its Bylaws including changes to the makeup of the national HOD, increased awareness and representation around DEI initiatives, and others. These changes, once finalized, will certainly require additional changes to our LSC governance documents. Some changes will be good and will be welcomed (e.g., DEI initiatives). I have also been frustrated in the past with some of the flow-down requirements from USA Swimming and anticipate some additional angst. I would prefer that the National Governing Body provide us with the goals, requirements and focus of their efforts while potentially providing suggested language to bylaws, etc., while allowing the LSCs to craft compliant approaches that address the different realities of LSCs across the country. For example, I don't believe that USA Swimming should require the exact number of athlete reps MT Swimming should have on its board. Rather than require one Sr. Athlete Rep and one Jr. Athlete Rep with the same term, they should state that at least two athlete reps are required and allow us to meet or exceed their requirement. No one should care that Montana Swimming has four athlete reps. The annual meeting format and HOD structure changes also appear to reduce the weight of our LSC voice and our ability to affect changes at the national level.

Budget/Finance – The finances of the LSC are still relatively healthy. Last year, we used some of our reserve funds to provide stimulus to clubs and I and others were concerned about significant deficit spending during the pandemic. We were able to manage and control our programs and associated spend without significant additional red ink. See also the bullets above regarding improving payment and tracking of entry fee and surcharge income and sponsorship/fundraising.

Closing –Thanks again for all the extra effort and consideration this past year. Please continue be patient, creative and above all safe in addressing the challenges ahead. Feel free to contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Yovich
General Chair
Montana Swimming
myovich@woodardcurran.com