

Safety First

is the theme of this announcement:

submitted by George Young 02/13/2014

Two very different approaches to water safety. One dealing with the wet side of the aquatic field and the other will touch on the dry side of aquatics.

The **wet side** is the highlighting of a noteworthy product that was actually exposed to the public in 2013 and I had the pleasure of previewing this product a few times at World Aquatic Safety Conference. The product actually won the 2013 IPSPE product Award for "Best new Product of 2013".

The product is called **iswimBAND** and a so simple but yet a technical complex safety device. In a nutshell, before a swimmer enters the water they put on a light weight, soft plastic headband and if he or she is submerged beyond a preset time limited, an alert will be sent to an iphone or ipad. This safety device is not designed as a primary safety gadget, **but** is a carefully designed blueprints to add to the layer of protection that each pool should practice. A solid state of the art safety tool. OK, will kids be willing to wear a headband in the pool.....? Well kids wear helmets on bikes because the law forces them to. I believe likewise for the iswimBAND. If the laws states each child has to wear one they have no choice.

The only down side of the product is the cost. A unit can cost \$150.00. Hopefully the economic theory of supply and demand will kick in and the cost will drop in the years to come. **OR MAYBE** -- Just maybe..... Bill Gates will make it a personal agenda to end drowning in the world and also help promote water safety awareness. **The Gates Foundation's** effort to eradicate polio offers the chance to protect millions of children from paralysis forever - we all witness that first



hand. Funding iswimBAND for all public pools would help drive down the cost and also make the iswimBAND a benchmark safety device and a key element of the layers of protection for swimming pools.

Now for the second item dealing with the dry part of water safety: Highlighting the USA Swimming Safe Sport policies. Currently, my swim club is exploring hiring a few new coaches. Not hiring any new coaches for the last 4 years I had to do some research of the in and outs of hiring and certifying a new hired swim coach and follow the policies, procedures and recommendations set forth by USA Swimming. The process started off very slow and became over whelming! Employment screening has to be done. Finger printing, DMV records and social networks - all have to be reviewed. Intense stuff and not an easy task. Then the new coaches themselves have to go through online training and also pass several certification classes before they will be classified as a "Certified USA Swimming Coach".

For me at times I held my arms up in the air and wanted to scream. But shortly after I took a few deep breathes I would come back and say to myself, "This has to be done to make USA Swimming one of the safest sports in the world!" Well, when it's all done and the new coaches are on the deck working their magic everyone involved will be proud to say "We are a certified USA Swimming Coach and coaching one of the best sports on this planet, NOT just in the water but also a very safe sport on the dryland side as well".