

2008 Annual Report from General Chair, Terry Maul

I'll start by thanking Bill Vargo and Helen Kelly for all their assistance and advice during my year in this position. I has been both interesting and challenging. I have basically watched and listened to those around the Association in an attempt to better understand just what issues we need to address, and I'll have more on that later

I've watched athletes from our Association succeed in meets ranging from the Olympics, Olympic Trials, Zone championships, All-Star meet, Sectionals, and of course our own JO's and Senior Champs. The sport is certainly alive and well in this Association.

But how do we keep it there and can we improve on it? After watching for a year, here are a few things I think our association needs to address in the year ahead.

1. We need a clear, concise, complete mission statement. Some of us have already begun to put our ideas together, but it needs a lot more work. This statement should be our road map for the design of programs that will help the Florida Association continue to grow.
2. After this mission statement is completed, we need to develop a few "functional" committees to address the particular areas of emphasis that are outlined in the statement. Once we know where we are going, we can create a plan to get there.
3. I would like to see a change in the "philosophy" of the officiating in our association. As I travel to other associations and even as I watched the Olympics, I have witnessed a more "flexible" approach to the management of swimming competition. Yes it has to be fair and we have to follow the rules, but a referee should be able to make decisions "on site" that are in the best interest of the competitive experience.
I am afraid that if the young lady with the torn suit at the Olympics had been at our JO meet, she would have been disqualified for delay of the meet. Yet, in Beijing they waited so she could swim.
4. We need to have more organized programs for coaches' development. We have a wealth of knowledge in this state and we should be funding educational opportunities for young coaches in our association.
5. And even though it is strained right now, we should move forward and be the leaders in improving the working relationship with Florida Gold coast.

And finally, in memory of Larry Shofe, I ask all of you to remember how he challenged all of us regularly at these meetings to work to make this one of the best swimming Associations in the country. Larry put in a lot of years of work to make this association stronger and I /We will miss him.