

General Chair Report – USAS 2016  
Atlanta, GA  
by Roy Dessloch

This was a tremendous opportunity and experience for me. It had been many years since I had attended the convention, and it was motivational and rejuvenating. Thank you to SCS for funding our delegation's trip. These are some of the highlights of the events I attended, and some of the awesome ideas that could benefit South Carolina Swimming.

#### General Chair Luncheon

National Team Director Frank Busch addressed us. He spoke of the journey to success for the national team leading into the Rio Olympics. The outlook coming out of 2015 and through Trials was a mixed bag, but the two domestic training camps, and the last minutes preparations in Rio yielded a wonderful team work ethic and spirit. He expressed that the team and staff felt our national energy for them, and he hoped that we felt theirs. He also credited extensive and meticulous planning as the key to the amazing performances that transpired in Rio.

#### Mighty Mid Reunion

This was a reunion of the LSC's that participated in a conference in November 2015 at which Kim Crouse and Kile Zeller represented SCS.

- Arizona & Maryland – utilizing a club development program that provides financial incentives for clubs that engage with the LSC. It has helped with recruitment for their BoD.
- Allegheny Mountain & Lake Erie – using a Governance Committee (which includes their Nominating Committee) to develop and implement an LSC succession plan.
- Kentucky – has a board video for recruitment and retention.
- Missouri Valley – made major advancements in their Finance Committee and has developed a wonderful manual.
- North Texas – all LSC and Club HoD will take the LSC Leadership Course that is online.
- Ohio – had great success with a Virtual Distance Meet that is subsidized by the LSC to make it financially viable.

#### Make-A-Splash

This program is not limited to USA Swimming clubs. Any lesson program can apply and become affiliated with Make-A-Splash. Those programs that are a partner for one year can apply for grants. The Foundation can also coordinate grant allocation for organizations or local governments within communities. It was emphasized that parent education is crucial, especially where the parents cannot swim. That is a huge barrier to participation since fearful parents are much less likely to expose their children to lessons.

- There is a new emphasis on using appropriate language is important. Use "safer" not safe, and not the term drownproofing.
- There is an online educational video for Children for Challenges/Special Needs.
- Videos and statistical information to support the need for learn-to-swim programs is available on the website.
- Coming soon will be a National Registry for parents searching online for swimming lessons that will be available to any and all local providers who are partners.
- Also coming soon will be a Bridge Incentive Program which will provide incentive funding for programs moving swimmers from lessons to competitive swimming settings.

### Senior Planning Committee

Plans are being finalized to tighten the numbers of swimmers on the National Junior team. 2020 Olympic Trial time standards will be forthcoming in 2018 after current trends are analyzed.

### Safe Sport

A new area of attention for Safe Sport is the athlete to coach transition. There is a huge proliferation of swimmers who transition into the coaching arena. Educating these young coaches (and all coaches) on appropriate boundaries and behavior is essential. There is now a "cheat sheet" to help clarify what is appropriate and what is not. There is also a Learning Module online to help these new coaches understand this important information.

There was a lot of discussion of disseminating Safe Sport in a variety of venues. There is a Safe Sport Self-Assessment "tool kit" on the website for LSCs and clubs to utilize to raise awareness, educate, and help with proper Safe Sport compliance.

### LSC Development

- The online Leadership School is now available for club and LSC use.
- YouTube Video "Build, Promote, Achieve" highlights the importance of involvement in governance.
- The USAS website has an LSC Leadership Library of wonderful volunteer resources.

### Herding Cats

Very productive workshop on volunteerism on the LSC, club, and meet/event level.

- Workshop handout is on the convention website. It is adaptable to any of the applications listed above. <http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/3a652d17-cb18-496d-a2c5-d99f88c146d4/HerdingCats.pdf>
- BoardSource is a national organization working to strengthen non-profit board strength. [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)
- Volunteers need to be guided by governing documents and handbooks.
- Volunteer development and recognition are essential. There are numerous documents and tools available on the USAS website. <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2627&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>
- Promptly assessing meetings and events after they conclude is helpful so mistakes are not repeated going forward.

### Maximizing Your Athletes

One of the most, if not THE most useful workshop that I attended. Engaging and utilizing our athlete members is crucial. Athletes comprise a minimum of 20% of our BoD and committees, and are 1 out of the 4 votes for each club member at the HoD.

- Communication is crucial. It must be ongoing and through multiple platforms. E-mail is fine, but following up with a text message is probably wise.
- Getting to the athletes is a challenge. Some coaches pass on the information, some do not. Some clubs are politically active, some are not. Wisconsin utilizes an Athlete Liaison position to facilitate this. <http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/89bdfb06-a512-47e9-a335->

[b852c9891769/WI%20LSC%20Policy%20&%20Procedures%20Athlete%20Rep%20and%20Athlete%20Liaison.pdf](http://b852c9891769/WI%20LSC%20Policy%20&%20Procedures%20Athlete%20Rep%20and%20Athlete%20Liaison.pdf).

- Wisconsin also has a social media policy to promote appropriate communication.  
<http://www.usaswimming.org/Rainbow/Documents/14dae7f7-36ad-439d-a04d-71a81cd31a8e/WI%20LSC%20Social%20Media%20Guidelines%20v1.pdf>
- Once athletes are engaged initially, it is important to educate them on their roles and responsibilities, and then continue to cultivate and mentor them.