

UANA CUP – Athlete Representative Report

By: Naomi Grand’Pierre UANA Athlete Rep

Spent four days in Peru to attend the UANA Cup and got the chance to interview several coaches from different international delegations and speak directly to the athletes, who were attending their first international competition. Below is a report of insights, findings, suggestions and an overall summary of the trip.

UANA In General

- Main Insight: UANA should have a website with a list of best practices for athletes/tips for how to help swimmers
 - Would be useful for athletes but also coaches and parents
 - Best practices should offer a variety of categories, tailored to each audience
 - Athletes: nutrition; pre-race strategy; post-race strategy; managing social media; how to handle interview; managing anxiety and stress; mental health and self-talk during training and practices; time management; traveling to international competitions...
 - Suggestion: having videos from retired athletes (both famous and not to give a variety of perspective all from qualified swimmers (example 5+ years of international competition/college swimmer/etc.))
 - Coaches: understanding training from the athlete’s perspective; self-talk and practice/training –how best to encourage your athlete to have a positive experience in the sport; managing anxiety and stress with your athletes; technology and training...
 - Parents: understanding training, traveling and competition from the athlete’s perspective; how best to encourage your athlete to have a positive experience in the sport; managing nutrition...

Athlete Representation

- Main Insight: structure representation based on zones rather than countries: CCCAN Rep, Carifta Rep, North/South/West/East Africa Rep, Canada Rep, America Rep, Mexico Rep, Asia Rep (but issue stems with bigger countries—China and Japan for example probably want their own reps), South America Rep (but issue stems with bigger countries—Brazil and Chile for example probably want their own reps), Central America Rep, Middle East Rep (issue stems in whether a female in an athlete rep position would be beneficial due to cultural constraints)
 - Need criteria for athlete rep (as of now, many countries aren’t sure what the role entails/qualification requirements are)

- What does the athlete rep do?
- Is there a ratio of # of athletes to appointed rep?
- Is there a criteria to become an athlete rep? (age, experience, time standard)
- What about budget? Do athlete reps need to travel or are they more so a part of federation decision making and legislation?

Feedback from Specific Countries

- Barbados (current athlete representation: no)
 - Has a national team captain both male + female?
 - Gets their input for swim meets only (currently no decision making or legislation involvement)
 - The coaches should decide the athlete rep, not the athletes
 - Federation should get athlete representation from every club
- Columbia & Brazil (current athlete representation: no comment)
 - No comment. Don't see the point in athlete representation...
- Paraguay (current athlete representation: no)
 - Federation should choose the athlete rep
 - They have about 500 swimmers, 6 of which are top performing athletes and 1 of which is female
 - They would like more female participation and representation but don't know how to address the issue
- Chile (current athlete representation: yes)
 - 14 total athletes with 2 athlete leaders, one male and one female
 - The athletes pick the leaders and the athletes have a voice
- Jamaica (current athlete representation: no)
 - What is the criteria for athlete reps?
 - Should there be two per country or two for the whole Caribbean?
 - Each club should have one team captain that collectively makes up the athlete committee for Jamaica
- Bahamas (current athlete representation: no)
 - Coaches should vote on athlete rep
 - Athlete reps should be a college freshman
- Mexico (current athlete representation: yes)
 - Athlete reps are captain of the team and participate in PanAms and World Champs

Extra suggestions

- Currently, there is no communication between the IOC, coaches and officials. Can UANA serve as the middleman and also integrate athletes into the conversation?
- Anonymous reporting via UANA website to report inappropriate behavior from coaches, parents, federations and athletes (multiple reports for one individual/entity could be tracked and addressed)

Summary of Talks with Athletes

- Training athletes to be influencers on social media
- Training athletes for engagement with media/interviews
- No real interest in Safe Sport in the international community. How can we address this/ make more relevant or relatable for athletes?
- Summary of talking points from Alia and Naomi's talk with the athletes

Alia Introduction – 2 min

Naomy Introduction – 2min

Alia → Olympics: the real experience – the struggle in between

Naomy → Olympics: the real experience – the struggle in between

Q&A

Alia → Anxiety – Prerace

Naomy → Mental Health / Self-Talk While Training

Alia → YouTube own race – Social Media

Naomy → Technology & Training

Alia → Nutrition

Naomy → Self-care – Stretching / Sleeping

Alia → Academics / Balance

Naomy → Time Management

Alia → College: personal story

Naomy → College: personal story

Alia → After college / leadership

Naomy → Involvement with your federation

- Will be distributing

Q&A