

USA Swimming Convention Report
2014 USAS Convention – Jacksonville, Florida

Michael Zuppone
Metropolitan Swimming
Junior Athlete Representative
michael.zuppone@metroswimming.org

The annual USA Swimming Convention was held this year from September 16 - 21 in Jacksonville, Florida. Representatives from all over the country discussed new rules, goals, and challenges facing USA Swimming in the coming year.

Below are some notes I took at the meetings during the convention regarding **topics involving athletes in USA Swimming**. Metro athletes should browse through this report.

1. Athlete Committee Meetings

- i. Discussed how each LSC (Local Swim Committee) elects its Athlete Representative. Popular methods include:
 - a. Voting at a designated meet
 - b. Voting at a Board of Directors meeting
 - c. **Online Voting** (which Metro now uses)

- ii. A large problem across the country is getting athletes to realize how they can **voice their opinion** to the governance of USA Swimming. This can be done by:
 - a. Communicating with Athlete Representatives
 - b. Participating in Athlete Rep. elections
 - c. Attending Local House of Delegate Meetings
 - d. Writing to the LSC Board of Directors about how to get involved

2. New Rules and Regulations

- i. A new championship meet called the **Legends Meet** was created that will run in three locations throughout the country the same weekend as Junior Nationals (this is discussed in detail in the “Eastern Zone Meeting” section below).

- ii. **Deck Changing** is now **prohibited** at every pool in USA Swimming. This was perhaps the most controversial topic discussed at the convention. A meet official will now be able to discipline all swimmers caught deck changing at a given meet. No exceptions!
- iii. **Mixed Relays** will now be permitted at most swim meets throughout the country during the upcoming season. Host Teams will have the ability to schedule these into their meet programs if they so choose.
- iv. Athletes may submit proposals for new rules and regulations to be reviewed by the House of Delegates next year as long as they follow the proper format. Email the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee for details.

3. USA Swimming Marketing Report



- i. How non-swimming parents view swimming:
 - a. 16% do not consider it a team sport
 - b. <80% do not consider placing their children on a swim team
 - c. Most parents only look to teach their children **how to swim**. They do not consider joining a **team**.
- ii. Ways to promote swimming as a team sport:
 - a. Show swimming as a **fun** sport. USA Swimming uses the word "funnest" in its advertisements to give the sport a fun feeling (even though it is not a real word).

- b. Advertise to **moms**, who tend to have the greatest say in whether or not a child joins a swim team.
- iii. The **Swim Today** Campaign:
 - a. Encourages participation in competitive swimming.
 - b. www.swimtoday.org

4. Safe Sport Report

- i. The **USA Swimming Safe Sport program** ensures that athletes are **protected** from all aspects of the sport.
 - ii. **Safety** is perhaps the **most important** part of USA Swimming. It is important that athletes are aware of and protected from:
 - a. Psychological abuse
 - b. Sexual abuse from coaches
 - c. Physical injury cause by an undermanaged pool deck
 - d. Other forms of injury
 - iii. Members of USA Swimming are encouraged to visit www.usaswimming.org/protect and watch the information/training **video** for their role in the Safe Sport initiative. Videos are available for the following:
 - a. Athletes
 - b. Parents
 - c. Non-parents
- Athletes, please **encourage** your friends/parents to go online and watch the videos!

5. Athlete Leadership Report

- i. Athletes are encouraged to act as leaders of their teams, especially toward younger athletes. Good **athletes** should:
 - a. Focus on effort, learning, and fixing mistakes
 - b. Be optimistic and coachable
 - c. Have an ability to encourage everyone to do better
 - d. Remember: “I am what I am through who we all are.”
- ii. Tips for building **stronger teams** include:
 - a. Having times when everyone celebrates **good effort**, such as a designated high-five time after practice.

- b. Rejecting practices such as hazing by instead focusing on **team bonding** activities.
- iii. There are three key ways in which each athlete can improve the culture of swimming:
 - a. Promote the **Individual** by always staying optimistic and trying your hardest.
 - b. Promote the **Team** by encouraging others and staying strong in the face of challenges.
 - c. Promote the **Sport** by showing others that you really enjoy swimming and get excited by going to practice in the morning.
- iv. Athletes should aim to be **Scholastic All-Americans** by excelling both in the pool and in school.

6. USA Swimming State of the Sport/Membership Report

- i. There are currently 339,843 year-round Athletes registered in USA Swimming and over 400,000 total members.
- ii. USA Swimming has showed a continued “**tradition of growth,**” with a 47% increase in the number of athletes aged 13 and over during the last 10 years.
- iii. USA Swimming has over a 90% retention rate for athletes aged 13 and older.
- iv. The United States won 40 medals at the 2014 Pan Pacific Championships in Gold Coast, Australia, and 47 medals at the Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Kihei, Hawaii.
- v. The 2016 Olympic Trials Time Standards are now available on the USA Swimming website.
- vi. The **USA Swimming Foundation** has now taught over 2.5 million children to swim through its **Make a Splash** program since 2009, continuing its goal of “**Saving Lives and Building Champions.**”
- vii. The Foundation also raised over \$500,000 to cover expenses for National Team Athletes.
- viii. Athletes should visit the following website to find out how they can **get involved** in Make a Splash or in their **local community**:
<http://usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2092>

7. Eastern Zone Meeting



i. 2014-15 Eastern Zone Championship Meet Schedule:

Spring 2015:

3/19/15 – 3/22/15	Speedo Champ. Series Sectional Meet (South) (Short Course – Christiansburg, VA)
3/19/15 – 3/22/15	Speedo Champ. Series Sectional Meet (North) (Short Course – Ithaca, NY)
3/26/15 – 3/28/15	EZ Short Course Age Group Champs (Webster, NY)
3/26/15 – 3/29/15	Speedo Champ. Series Sectional Meet (Long Course - Buffalo, NY)

Summer 2015:

6/27/15	EZ Open Water Champs
7/16/15 – 7/19/15	Speedo Champ. Super Sectionals (Ithaca, NY)
*7/30/15 – 8/3/15	USA Swimming Legends Meet (Greensboro, NC)
7/30/15 – 8/3/15	USA Swimming Junior Nationals
*8/6/15 – 8/9/15	EZ Senior Zone Champs (Buffalo, NY)
8/6/15 – 8/10/15	USA Swimming Nationals
8/5/15 – 8/8/15	EZ Long Course Age Group Zone Champs (Richmond, VA)

* Two new championship meets will be offered to swimmers in the Eastern Zone, the USA Swimming **Legends Meet** and a **Senior Zone** championship meet:

a. The USA Swimming **Legends Meet** is a new competition created by USA Swimming to provide athletes with an end-of-season meet option faster than Sectionals but slower than Junior Nationals. It will run concurrently with Junior Nationals, so **swimmers may only attend either Legends or Junior Nationals**.

b. The Eastern Zone **Senior Zone Champs** is a new competition created to give senior swimmers who do not qualify for Junior Nationals a season-culminating meet. There will be only one time standard for each event at the meet (for each gender). Metro **will not** travel as a group to this meet, so swimmers **must** attend with their own team and coaches. This meet will run **concurrently** with the Age Group Zone Champs.

ii. Other Changes:

- a. A motion passed allowing the meet referee starting at the next Long Course **Age Group Zone Champs** to allow **chase starts** to give the 11/12 year old age group more time to rest before finals.
- b. A motion passed requiring athletes in the “C” final heats at **Sectional** meets to be under the age of 18. This gives younger swimmers a greater chance to earn a second swim at these meets.