

Report to the Metropolitan LMSC Membership(11/01/2007)

United States Masters Swimming (USMS) Convention 2007

Submitted by Delegate Conrad Johnson on behalf of Mark Block and “ex-officio delegate”/USMS National Insurance Coordinator, Colleen Driscoll.

To ask questions in detail, please contact Conrad Johnson
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Each year USMS has its four day convention as a sub-part of the convention of United States Aquatic Sports (USAS), comprised of five NGB's (National Governing Bodies): USMS, USA Swimming, USA Diving, USA Water Polo and USA Synchronized Swimming. This year, the convention was held in Anaheim, California and was attended by two Metro LMSC delegates of our allotted four (400 swimmers= one delegate and Metro has approx. 1,700 members) delegates, one of whom was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Conrad Johnson, the LMSC Treasurer (Team New York Aquatics; McBurney/Dodge YMCA) attended on behalf of the chairman and registrar, who are obligatory attendees but were unable to attend due to vital professional commitments) This report was written with the able assistance of Mark Block (Chelsea Piers), attending for the first time. The Metro LMSC receives a unique, additional benefit as Colleen Driscoll (Aquafit) attends as the long standing insurance coordinator for the national organization.

The specific challenge this year for our smaller-than-usual delegation, was to monitor four days of meetings, the social events where working relationships are often formed/nurtured, going often from the early AM to the late PM, often simultaneously, that may or may not immediately reveal their direct/indirect impact on Metro LMSC members. Pre-convention meeting coverage planning is a carefully plotted but knowingly inexact endeavor.

As Mark Block describes the overall task, “ I have always been focused on how the LMSC and USMS can help swimmers at the grass root level and I therefore, focused on meetings with issues that directly affected swimmers. This focus changed as the convention progressed and I could not help but learn about almost

every aspect of the organization. Being a participant in the House of Delegates and getting to know and speaking with members, gave me a tremendous start in understanding the issues at large, the procedures for solving them and comprehending how much of an impact we can have on the outcome.”

- 1) **The most vital and immediate impact we report** is the inauguration, after years of insistent lobbying by our registrar Maria Anderson and others, of **NATIONAL ON-LINE REGISTRATION**, bringing USMS to par with other sports organizations in this regard. The contracted vendor/program *CLUB ASSISTANT*, designed by and for swimmers, promises good support through the inevitable de-bugging process.
- 2) We made **careful analysis concerning the 5.00 dues increase** voted in 2006 for implementation in 2008. USMS is becoming in our opinion, necessarily and positively, in principle, a more professional and accountable organization. The increase provides for a new Executive Director (more on this later) and the elevation of the Magazine Editor to salaried status. USMS now has four full/time positions: Executive Director, Webmaster, National Administrator and Magazine Editor; and two part/time positions: comptroller and national registrar. If accountability flounders now, it seems more likely to be in the elected officer and committee chairman domains. The increase also factors in the start up costs of on line registration, the assumption of a meet expense loan write off of approx. 150,000 dollars from 06 Worlds and some general increased costs (ie. Postage and insurance etc.) **a situation which we in the Metro LMSC must also prepare and budget for.**
- 3) Conrad, with Colleen’s invaluable assistance, attended the Insurance/Risk Management events/Workshops, **following discussions closely on the need for our LMSC and its constituent clubs/teams to have appropriate and adequate insurance and/or recommended safety/risk management policies.** FYI, you can now do your pool rental/event insurance certificates on line. Stay tuned as we get the instructions posted on www.metroswim.org/insurancecerts.
- 4) With ten years experience on **the USMS National Finance Committee**, Conrad can monitor the entire organization, albeit sometimes cursorily, as

items proceed through the budget approval process. It is **“the best perch in USMS,”** to see that items favorable to Metro LMSC members are treated well. Of particular note, was seeing that on-deck coaching funds were approved should Metro LMSC members attend 08 Worlds in Perth, where individual team coach travel costs may be prohibitive. Also, helping to get seed/planning funds for a new national championship open water event at 25K to be held this coming summer.

Sometimes this perch allows for funding requests to be calibrated accordingly if projects are, in our judgement, seeing it as Metro LMSC members, either overly ambitious or ill-equipped for the task.

- 5) Mark closely **monitored the Long Distance Committee**, open water swimming being dear to the hearts of many Metro swimmers. Site selection for the 2008 and 2009 events can be found at www.usms.org under “competition.” The 10K open water event may return to our area in 2010.
- 6) Mark Block also writes; “one of the most important outcomes of the week for me, and an issue I know will directly impact all USMS swimmers, is the **proposed creation of a new USMS Triathlon Committee**, to sponsor and promote triathlons and related activities (like open water swims at triathlon distances) in USMS programs. The triathlon community is growing far faster than the USMS swimming community and I believe by expanding into this area, we can capture that growth as well and offer tremendous opportunities. I am working with USMS President Rob Copeland, VP Mark Gill and UCLA Masters Head Coach, Gerry Rodrigues to help put this proposal into working reality.” To learn more about this potential new committee, contact Mark at (mablock@pospayment.com)
- 7) Another highly relevant issue affecting the Metro LMSC was at hand in **a loud debate over the creation of a “regional team category,” for national championships**. The legislation requiring a 2/3 vote to pass, narrowly lost by two votes, Metro delegates voting in the affirmative. Metro stand-alone teams, swimming in a regular facility/as a group/all year round have to compete, unfairly in our eyes, against teams, if equivalently sized, against teams (“regional teams”) that draw from a wide geographical area. Their swimmers often see each other only once a year at the meet where they make what is clearly a “regionally-derived” team, not a “locally-based” team.

- 8) Metro delegates **vocally, publically and assertively challenged the USMS leadership on the issue of the recent FINA (the international governing body of swimming) rule change that would NOT recognize as FINA world records, swims that took place in non-member FINA meets even if recognized and sanctioned by USMS.** YMCA and IGLA meets would not be recognized. It is absurd that a USMS sanctioned world record swim/event should not be recognized as such based on a technicality the USMS leadership should have creatively resolved.
- 9) **We had our first opportunity to meet/assess the new USMS Executive Director, Todd Smith.** To be fair, he must be given enormous credit for, in his first few months on the job, clearing the in excusable logjam that was on line registration and getting it in place in 2008. A more underwhelming impression was made when we learned that Colleen, after a decade plus of loyal and able service to USMS, getting us the best and best-priced insurance possible was somewhat unceremoniously relieved of her duties in favor of the ED's personal expertise. One could argue that skillful management never assumes a task unless there is no competent/loyal person to whom it can be delegated. Their loss if our gain as here in the Metro LMSC we know our safety/risk management policies will be the best possible they can be.

So, at Colleen insistence, we must reiterate again, in the most serious tone we can assume, repeated at every risk/safety related convention event that there is **NO DIVING ALLOWED IN ANY USMS WORKOUT, AT ANY TIME, UNLESS DIRECTLY SUPERVISED BY COACH (ES) AS PART OF AN ORGANIZED WORKOUT COMPONENT/PLAN.** (Please note that a recent USA Swimming sponsored study revealed that the impact physics/potential harm was the same whether someone dove in off the blocks or off the side of the pool.

Updated safety/insurance compliance rules/policies are always posted on the www.metroswim.org website