

VP-Competitive Operations

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In the spirit of communicating with you, the wonderful members of USSS, the following report is intended to give you a glimpse into what has gone on in my area of responsibility. As your representative on the Board, I feel it's important for you to understand how each of us works to represent you in everything we do. Here are some highlights/thoughts from 2009:

- Worked with the meet hosts to prepare the Final Meet Announcements and Schedules for US Collegiates, Speedo Juniors, US Nationals, Esynchro Age Groups, US Open and US Masters
- Attended the US Collegiate Championship. Fabulous new venue for USSS. Great aquatics director. The first time we've had a host offer (and mean it!) to tear down and pack all the Colorado timing system!!! HUGE job and HUGE time saver! We need to look to get back to this facility, though the judges should definitely be elevated higher. The host flew in Paulette Roche...a great announcer definitely helps make the meet flow.
- Technical aspects of the US Junior Championship were handled by Monte Johnson, West Zone Tech Chair. A number of years ago, I set out to have the zone tech chairs learn to cover the tech aspects of national meets. I received very favorable reports about the meet and the hosts. Again, fabulous facility...Paulette served as a great announcer.
- Technical aspects of the US National Championship were handled by Shannon Korpela, immediate past West Zone Tech Chair and Chair of the USSS Championship Management Committee. It was exciting to be able to view the finals on the web! Once again, the hosts brought in Paulette Roche as the meet announcer. Shannon also handled the technical aspects of the US Open. Beth Moore, South Zone Tech Chair handled the tech duties for Esynchro Age Groups.
- The job of meet announcer has typically gone to someone local and too often they only read names and scores. The meets this year are proof that when you have a seasoned synchro announcer, not only does the audience learn something and remain engaged, but that person can help set the tempo of the meet. They are able to speed up or slow down. I think this is a place where USSS should commit to having a few people that can be used at national meets and have a line item for part of their travel to be covered.
- I have presented to the South Zone the idea of charging an amount (probably \$10-20) for each swimmer entered in each of our SZ championships...and using that money to help cover the travel costs for the zone scoring chair (who is given a bed by USSS if they are the head scorer) as well as the zone tech chair (who receives no assistance unless they are replacing the VPCO and they are not funded by their club). Since we now rely on the zone tech chairs and expect them to be at the national meets if they can, I think each zone should help make that happen. The south zone will be voting at convention, and I've contacted the other zone's chairs to suggest they look to do the same type of thing.
- I worked to assist Betty Hazle (who is the QUEEN of meet management) with the preparations for the UANA Pan Am Jr Championships. It was an honor to serve as a co-meet manager with Betty and Ginny Jasontek. What a FABULOUS meet. While things didn't go off without a hitch, everyone had a great time and gave us some great and positive feedback. What an unbelievable staff the Huntersville Family Aquatic and Fitness facility has and we are very lucky to be able to return there in April 2010 for the US National Championships! Their partners from Charlotte Sports and Visit Charlotte are to be commended as well as the town of Huntersville and the city of Charlotte. FABULOUS southern hospitality was shown to us and our every need was met.
- Worked with Championship Management Chair Shannon Korpela and Sites Chair Ted Roche to update the Meet Manager's guide.
- In conjunction with USSS President Duke Zielinski or AEC President Missy Knight considered the following:
 - Approved a waiver from a collegiate athlete of the "participate in the majority of competitions" rule as she was injured. (Approved by Carole/Duke)
 - Approved a request by the Brazilian federation to bring 11 athletes (instead of the maximum 10) to the US National Championships (as the duet was not part of the team and they wished to bring a team alternate. (Approved by Carole/Duke)

- Considered a request to enter an underage athlete in the 2009 Speedo Jr Champs. (Denied by Carole/Duke)
- Considered a request to waive the qualifying score for a soloist for the 2009 Speedo Jr Champs. (Denied by Carole/Duke)
- In conjunction with AEC President Missy Knight, waived the trio overqualification rule for the trio event from the 2009 Speedo Jr Champs. The event was especially small this year (13 routines). Instead of the top 8 trios being overqualified for Age Group Competition for the next 2 years, we have voted to apply the overqualification to the TOP 3 TRIOS only. Therefore, places 4-8 WILL be eligible to compete in Age Group competition, if otherwise eligible.
- In conjunction with AEC President Missy Knight, waived the rule allowing each foreign federations/club to send 2 judges to the US Open. We correctly anticipated multiple clubs from Canada would enter, and we agreed to allow no more than 3 judges (if multiple clubs did enter) from any one country. (Note that Betty Hazle as OIVP, Linda Loehndorf as Judges Administrator and Ginny Jasontek as FINA tech secretary were consulted before the decision was made.)
- Corresponded with my committee chairs and to warn them of the huge amount of work to be done in this legislative year at convention.
- Charged Athlete Program Chair Myrna Hagedorn with studying the feasibility of lowering the qualifying scores for Speedo Juniors. Four years ago, the higher scores made sense...but in light of the adjustment in the judges scoring, the scores are too high and the meet is too small. The results of her study can be found in the APC convention report.
- A sampling of other rules changes to be considered and discussed by various groups:
 - Qualification from US Collegiates to US Nationals...since free/tech routines are separate events at US Nationals, the collegiate coaches agreed that they'd like to use free routine score only to qualify to US Nationals. Proposals are in the APC report.
 - The collegiate committee is discussing removing the minimum routine time requirements that exist for regionals and nationals only.
 - Figures has prepared to respond to the new FINA figures
 - Discussion about qualifications to Esynchro age groups will continue.
 - Discussion of the US Open will continue. What to do with Seniors? Combo? How to ensure it isn't a repeat of the Esynchro Age Group meet held 1-2 weeks prior, etc. It should be interesting to note that I was able to discuss the Sr Open with a UANA TSSC member from Canada who attended this year's senior open. She was THRILLED to have an event for her seniors to compete and wasn't the least bit concerned at what we consider to perceive as "small numbers". She praised the schedule used and said it was a great meet. Kudos to the host and all involved (and for shading the judges!)
- New Collegiate Committee Chair was elected in March as mandated. Rebecca Story (Wheaton College coach) will assume the position following convention. The Masters Committee will elect their new chair at their meet in October.
- All other chairs will be appointed by the new VPCO after elections are held. At this time, I can't say enough about the chairs of the committees that fall under my area of responsibility: Ginny Chadwick (rules), Myrna Hagedorn (athlete programs), Ted Roche (sites), Shannon Korpela (championship management), Cheryl Cooke (figures), Sue Johnson (scoring), Kim Wurzel LoPorto (collegiate) and Elizabeth Knowles (masters). And of course to Ed Kaminski and Monte Johnson for handling sound this year. Eight committees/subcommittees are a lot to have under one VP. These chairs helped make my job easier. They all know their jobs extremely well and do what they need to do within their area, as well as work with others to help wherever possible. I truly appreciate all they have done and all the support they've given me.

This year proved to be another very hectic year. I dealt almost daily with questions about rules, entries, etc. The wonderful support of Ginny Jasontek, Betty Hazle and Shari Darst has made things a lot easier. Over the years of being on the Board, I have called on them many, many times to help...and they have always helped-willingly. It's been a privilege to serve as your representative on the Board of Directors.