

2010 USA Synchro Competitive Operations Vice President's Report Toby Smith

Thank you for the opportunity to serve USA Synchro. Aligned to the overall goals of USA Synchro, I have directed Competitive Operations in several initiatives:

Enhance events

1. Improve technology
 - i. Automate event registration: Based on outstanding staff work especially from Jennifer Hawkins, we have implemented online event registration which checks member registration, calculates fees, and provides meet hosts with electronic files, simplifying event management significantly.
 - ii. Implement new scoring and improve display: The scoring committee has developed and implemented tools that have enabled new style judging, and we await final FINA decisions on methodology to complete this initiative. Sponsor Colorado Time Systems has supplied new software and display to significantly enhance score availability and visibility. Thanks to Scoring Chair Sue Johnson, Scoring Program Task Force leader Laurette Longmire, and meet scoring chairs Dave Olson (4 national meets!), Monte Johnson, Candie Deatherage, and Bob Wiegand for their outstanding work and flexibility this year as we transitioned complex scoring tasks with multiple methodologies. This culminated in immediate, accurate display of scores and rankings with live video feed at Junior Worlds; an effort that has received worldwide acclaim for USA Synchro. At each meet, local organizing volunteers have developed proficiency in new technology and scoring tools, improving readiness and meet operations capabilities.
 - iii. Improve quality and reliability of sound system: Following a year of consistent problems, we worked with our sponsor and supplier Clark Synthesis to implement a new system, with:
 - b. reliability (goal is to have no delays in meets due to failures; we have had no more than 30 minutes of delays)
 - c. improved underwater sound (a mix of UW speaker types has enabled teams to hear underwater clearly, significantly improving from past system)
 - d. added hydrophone for underwater sound monitoring
 - e. additional improvements now being implemented to increase air amplification and speaker capacity.
 - f. Thanks to sound techs Monte Johnson and Ed Kaminski for their efforts to enable improvements and deliver reliable, quality sound at national meets.
2. Build additional events around meets, enhancing audience, athlete and coach experience
 - i. Seminars: At meets, we have held seminars that were widely attended on
 1. Collegiate synchro (adding nearly 100 athletes to recruit list)
 2. Nutrition
 3. Shoulder injury education and prevention
 4. Concussion injury education and prevention
 5. Anti-doping
 - ii. Exhibitions: Our National Teams have conducted exhibitions, autograph and community outreach sessions at three meets.
3. Thank you to meet hosts for their outstanding efforts on behalf of USA Synchro
 - i. Masters: Ashley Johnson and the Aquacades and City of Coral Springs, FL
 - ii. Collegiates: Jenny Claypool and Stanford University
 - iii. Juniors: Cheryl Cook from Austin Angelfish and Ann Nellis from University of Texas at Austin
 - iv. Nationals: Traci Barron from Huntersville Family Fitness and Aquatics
 - v. eSynchro Age Groups: Patti Melber and the Town of Tonawanda Aquettes, especially for great Pink the Pool, Falls and hospitality event enhancements.
 - vi. Opens: Beth Evans and Lynda Warner of Pirouettes of Texas
 - vii. Junior Worlds: Ginny Jasontek and Carol Valles, as well as the entire USA Synchro staff, notably Taylor Payne and Jordan Dillon.
4. Observations from meets
 - i. Size: In general meets were similar in size to previous years, with minor fluctuation.

1. Juniors: Did not grow despite qualifying score adjustment as judges also calibrated to FINA guidelines. Athlete Programs is considering further adjustment. This meet needs to be about 50 athletes larger for financial viability.
 2. Collegiates: While stable in size to previous years, is considering if other qualifying paths (more local) would encourage more club participation and potentially lead to overall collegiate growth, critical to overall collegiate synchro success.
 3. Opens: Six foreign federations attended, about double previous years, aligned to our goal of developing this as a premier international meet. We need to continue to enhance this event with foreign participation, with enhanced hotel, meal and transportation options.
- ii. Hotels: Use of host hotels is critical to host financial viability. Hosts are required to house officials, and seek to do so with comp rooms. Sites is considering ways to encourage hotel compliance.
 - iii. Schedules: Maintaining a balance between a tight schedule so as not to make meets longer than necessary vs. having potential delays continues to be a challenge. In general, we finished within 30 minutes of schedule.

Leverage work of Committees. Highlights:

1. Athlete programs: Chair Myrna Hagedorn worked in partnership with Betty Hazle to update the rulebook with the massive changes of our legislative year as well as implement significant improvement in ease of use with a more user friendly numbering system. Myrna also has continued in an effort to quantify our structure to enable zones to consider alternatives that could lead to more balanced age group qualification paths.
2. Rules: Chair Joanna Scoons helped provide consistent application of rules, and has helped gather input on critical changes.
3. Figures: Chair Betsy Caza is working through updates to keep current with FINA descriptions.
4. Event Management: Chair Patty Flanagan balanced judging with event management at four national meets.
5. Collegiate: Chair Rebecca Story has initiated and coordinated activities to update collegiate policies, create a strategic plan, and has begun activities to grow collegiate synchro after NCAA discontinued emerging sport status.
6. Scoring: Chair Sue Johnson developed tools to implement new scoring. As well as working at several national meets, Sue was selected by FINA as Chief Recorder at two FINA World meets.
7. Masters: Chair Beth Borland helped with member input to sponsor BOD motion to maintain old elements.
8. Sites: Chair Ted Roche coordinated activities to select all 2011 sites, offer suggestions for meet profitability improvement, and solicit bids for 2012 and beyond.

VP Highlights

1. Actively worked six national and world meets, consulting with organizing committees on meet plans and coordinating technical meet management.
2. Worked with office staff in coordination of activities and enhancement of sponsorships/suppliers.
3. Consulted with staff to manage competitive operations budget within 1% anticipated year end variance.
4. Attended two BOD meets in person and approximately monthly conference calls and dozens of email votes.

Future direction

1. Seek event profitability improvement to help stabilize USA Synchro in light of upcoming increased challenges
2. Seek competitive structure to enable growth of synchro
3. Stabilize sound improvements
4. Implement new scoring once FINA methodology finalized
5. Extend technology advancements beyond national meets