

Hello USA Synchro!

It has been one year since you chose me to be your leader. What an interesting year! I have learned a lot about the organization and the people who have been running it. I understand where we are and why, but more importantly I recognize the changes that must be made for us to move forward. We have done a great job of maintaining our current membership numbers and sustaining what we already have. The questions we must ask ourselves now are:

- What can we do to learn, grow, and improve in the year ahead?
- How can we improve the “synchro experience” for athletes, parents, coaches, judges, fans and supporters?
- How can we attract the new 21st century athlete?
- How can we regain our competitive edge in the world?

As we head to the USAS Convention to vote on legislation and some new members of the Board of Directors, we should remember these questions:

- Who is going to take us forward?
- Who has the ideas and vision to create a better experience?
- what lies ahead for the sport of synchronized swimming in this country?
- How can we become the sport of choice and who can take us there?

Our votes will decide if we maintain or move ahead.

One of my main goals during this year was to make sure that USA Synchro had the right package to move ahead, not just the wrapping, but the product inside. With that in mind, the Board of Directors approved the creation of a new website and the development of a new logo as well as a branding and marketing strategy. We worked with a very talented group of designers from Spring Design, Inc. of New York City to create a brand that we can sell to potential sponsors and just as importantly, to potential synchro swimmers and their parents. Thanks to Ken Markman of Los Angeles for his leadership role in this endeavor and for connecting us with these great designers. They did a tremendous amount of research, discovering what synchronized swimming is both here and around the world, who we attract and why, and how we can attract more athletes and more attention to our sport. We should have our new logo and a new strategy for moving forward very soon.

For coaches and athletes, as we move into the fall training period, remember that our athletes must be swimmers first. Strong swimming and kicking with proper technique that is both effective and efficient will provide synchro swimmers with the greatest foundation for a successful competitive year. In order to regain our competitive edge in the world, we need to improve in all areas- swimming and fitness levels, technique, and choreography. With a new three-pronged approach we have the possibility of improving. We cannot afford another year of the status quo. More countries are improving rapidly with a scientific approach to training and technique and a logical and skill oriented approach to choreography.

Thanks for the experiences I have had this past year and I look forward to seeing many of you at convention.

Sincerely,
Duke Zielinski