



Dear USA Synchro Family and Friends,

Congratulations to all of our swimmers at the 2011 esynchro US Age Group National Championships in Federal Way, Washington. We watched performances from more than 1,000 athletes and 76 clubs from all over the country. Congratulations to our Age Group Champions who represented 10 different clubs from all four zones. In every age group, there were at least two clubs represented in our champions and in the 16-17 Age Group, 4 different clubs won the titles in solo, duet, trio and team events. We had 38 clubs, half of those participating, represented in the final events in the four different age groups: 11-12, 13-15, 16-17 and 18-19. The diversity across our four zones and our many clubs is important in expanding participation and in developing a broad base of synchronized swimmers across our entire nation.

Thank you to our wonderful hosts and volunteers of the Pacific Northwest Association. Especially to Svea Dagel, the meet manager who was there every minute of the competition and did any job that needed to be done. Thank you to Mike Dunwiddie and his staff at the King County Aquatic Center; the decorations and set-up were beautiful and you kept your fantastic facility clean and running smoothly throughout the event. Thank you to Renee Miller, Svea's mother Carol, Marty and the many others who staffed the fabulous hospitality room and hosted the officials' reception for our judges, scorers, meet management personnel and coaches. Thanks!! The food and service were terrific! For those of you I did not name specifically- I know how hard you worked during the event and in the weeks and months ahead of time. My heartfelt thanks for helping this event run so smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you also to Jackie McDaniel, our head scorer as well as her assistant and awards chair, Sandra; Monty Johnson, sound technician; Toby Smith, Vice President of Competitive Operations; Paulette Roche, announcer; and Linda Loehndorf, judges chair. Thank you to our judges, many of whom judged hundreds of routines and figures during the nine day event.

I enjoyed seeing so many of you and having the chance to visit with athletes, coaches, judges, scorers, and parents. This is such a great opportunity to learn about swimmers and clubs across the country; to hear your concerns, your



questions, your complaints, and what has been going well in your own niche of our organization. I appreciate most your ideas for growth, for fairness, for improving our swimmers' skills and fitness, and so much more. At this meet, I feel that I gain a better understanding of USA Synchro and a broader perspective on what can help our sport, our organization, our clubs, and each of you individually.

A number of important discussions I had concerned athletes who have had concussions. Concussions have become far too commonplace in our sport, occurring during lifts and throws, pattern changes, regular team practices and at competition warm-ups. The injuries suffered by many of our swimmers are severe and debilitating not only to their swimming careers but also to their scholastic pursuits and everyday activities. Our coaches and swimmers must become aware of the risks of concussions and use every precaution when training lifts and tight pattern changes to eliminate the chances of collisions. We are having discussions at USA Synchro and FINA, our international governing body, to improve education and limit the occurrence of concussions.

Many of my conversations during our stay in Federal Way were with athletes. I am so impressed with the level of thinking exhibited by our synchronized swimmers. Rather than being bombarded by complaints, I was presented with solutions and positive ideas for many of their concerns. Our athletes truly are the next generation of women, thinking outside the box and finding solutions.

Again, congratulations to all of our swimmers. Your dedication and hard work throughout the year resulted in performances that you can all be proud of. Thank you for visiting with me throughout the week. Your enthusiasm and positive energy for synchronized swimming invigorated me for the months ahead.

All the Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Duke Zielinski'.

Duke Zielinski
President, USA Synchro