

Sept. 11-14, 2019

RE: Notes from the Convention

### **Wednesday, Sept. 11**

**Keynote Address – Trevor Moawad:** Trevor is a Mental Health Conditioning Coach specializing in “neutral, behavior based thinking”. The item that stayed with me the most was the explanation of eliminating negative thought, and more importantly why verbalizing negativity is even more destructive. This is something that I will work on explaining to our Officials in training, mentoring, and overall communication.

### **Thursday, Sept. 12**

**Western Zone Business Meeting:** Meeting started with the voting for Board positions, and the voting for the 2021 Western Senior Zone and AGO Championship locations. Elk Groove will host the AGO Championships at their new facility. After a vote to increase entry fees for the Western Senior Zone Meet to help offset facility cost, Clovis Swim Team has agreed to host the Senior Zone Championships. Dale Ammon will remain the Zone Director – Non Athlete.

We also had updates from the Executive Director for USA Swimming, Tim Hinchey, the President of the Board, Bob Vincent, and other USAS representatives. Some of the items mentioned are improving communication, finding out what Team needs are, transparency throughout USA Swimming.

We also were introduced to the nominations for the Board positions.

Veronica Hernandez was introduced as the new DE&I Chair for the Western Zone, taking over for our own Kent Yoshiwara. The focus, “Educate, Initiate, Celebrate”! Veronica gave a report as to what DE&I is doing in the Zone including Team Grants, Athlete scholarships, upcoming meets, etc.

The new Athlete Rep. will be Maria Davila.

New Business included Policies and Procedures corrections, the new meeting format and discussion about any future financial revisions to be received 20 days prior to a meeting. Adjourned at 10:10 AM.

**Autism 101 for Coaches – Amanda Pope:** I decided to attend this class to find out any information regarding teaching children with Autism to swim as I have a niece with autism. One of the first statistics that was noted is that 91% of accidental deaths in children with autism is due to drownings...a staggering number. This is due to elopement and wandering off. Children with autism have a lack of generalization, lack of perceived danger and a lack of awareness.

Autism is classified as a spectrum disorder, and the severity determines where a person is on the spectrum. Coaching a child with autism can be very difficult due to potential lack of visual communication. A Coach must be very specific when giving instruction, also using non-verbal communications.

Amanda explained that a diagnosis is an explanation, not an excuse. A Coach does not use Behavior Modification, but rather behavior Management.

**Friday, Sept. 13**

**Mighty Reunions: Bright Ideas Contest Presentation and Awards:** This was a presentation of the entries for “Best New Ideas” from across the LSC’s. North Carolina’s entry had to do with “Business and Organizational Success”. This included a wide range of topics throughout an LSC. These included “registration for Officials”, “explanations of “type of Memberships”, Deck Pass, Registering Clubs, etc. The program is meant for ease of navigation throughout the LSC for Coaches, Teams, Athletes, Officials, etc. – I voted for this one.

Next up was “Volunteer Development” presented by Oklahoma. This was geared towards “Safe Sport” and included a “safe Sport Wheel” that had different topics for discussion...

Mississippi had a “Club and Coach Development” entry that focused on Reuse and Recycle Donation having to do with recycling awards, etc.

Niagara submitted an Athlete Development entry having to do with “Athlete Wellness Initiative”. This was geared towards awareness and intervention for athletes that may not realize that there are groups for athletes to reach out to for help for mental wellness.

**A Team Approach Today for a Better Tomorrow – Dr. Danny Mistry:** A lot of information was discussed in regards to Sports Medicine and Science. “What does Right Look Like”. Discussion revolved around a Team approach with the Medical Professionals, Coaches, Parents and Athletes. Understand, Diagnose and Treat medical situations. The presenters promoted Education and Research.

Concussions were discussed. The “average” type to heal from a Concussion is 4 weeks. Of course this varies from Athlete to Athlete as every individual is different as well as ever concussion is different. It is important to “reduce” activities, not necessarily “remove” the Athlete from activities.

A note was also made regarding training. Cross Training 1 to 2 hours in another sport for a young athlete helps prevent injury.

The “Female Athlete Triad” was mentioned, but I have no idea what it had to do with.....

**Meet the Candidates:** This was an opportunity to meet the Candidates running for the new Board positions. The Candidates were asked a few “blind” questions and had an opportunity to answer. Some candidates were certainly more comfortable with this format than others. One candidate seemed to be running for her “journey” in life. Although a fellow Official, I did not vote for her. Their Bios were informative for me although I did change my opinion of one of the candidates after hearing their answers and their closing statements.

#### **HOD meeting:**

The Friday HOD meeting includes the Memorials for the Members of USAS that have passed away in the previous year. They all will be missed as they were all Loved. After the memorial, the meeting went to the more enjoyable with awards being given.

#### **Saturday, Sept. 14 – HOD meeting:**

As I had noted in the past, what an Outstanding opportunity to meet with Officials from all across the United States. To reconnect with Officials that I have worked with in the past from various LSC’s, and meet new Swimming Friends that I look forward to working with in the future. This is an excellent opportunity for Pacific Swimming to hear different ideas and also to promote Pacific Swimming Officials

Wrapping up, I truly had an outstanding experience to be around like minded people, Volunteers, that do what we do out of the Love of the Sport and the people we work with. I must say that I got the most enjoyment, other than learning new ideas, was meeting the people that I have had the pleasure to work with over my Officiating Career. The Convention was enjoyable, inspirational, informative and a whole lot of fun! I look forward to my next opportunity to attend. **Respectfully Submitted, Michael Davis**