

Virginia Swimming, Inc.
Board of Directors & House of Delegates Meeting
April 28-29, 2018
Executive Director Report

Year to Date Registrations: (2017 numbers as of 4/27/17)

Athletes: 6685	(6558)
Outreach: 70	(42)
Seasonal: 69	(57)
Non-Athletes: 942	(922)
Clubs: 46	(47)

LEAP 1 Renewal: LEAP is the acronym for LSC Leadership & Achievement Program. LEAP 1 is designed to assure that LSCs comply with USA-Swimming Rules and Regulations as well as the requirements of non-profit governance. It should also provide continuity as changes in leadership occur. All items for our renewal except two have been submitted. Everything should be completed prior to the May 1st submission deadline.

2018 Awards Celebration at Kings Dominion: At this point, 759 individuals (409 athletes) have purchased tickets to attend this year's event as compared to last year's total of 685 (357 athletes). Hali Flickinger, 2016 Olympian, is the guest speaker.

Combine Awards Celebration & Athlete Clinic in the Future: Currently we budget \$3500 to bring in a speaker for the Awards Celebration in the spring and another \$3500 for the Athlete Clinic in the fall. There are not many athletes available in that price range. According to Josh Davis of Breakout Swim Clinics, we would have more choices and be able to afford a higher profile athlete by combining the two events. He also mentioned that it is easier to book Olympians for September than April. I plan to discuss this with the Athletes Committee during their meeting on Sunday if the Board endorses this idea.

Action Item: Endorse concept of combining the Awards Celebration & Athlete Clinic beginning in 2019.

SwimBiz Workshop: Earlier this month I attended this workshop in Colorado Springs. This annual workshop is designed to emphasize the use of social media, advertising, and branding as well as sponsorships and local promotions for teams and LSCs. This year's workshop also included an inside look at Flex membership. This was an excellent workshop and I appreciate the opportunity to attend. Report attached.

Projects in the Works: Recently John Stanley and I met with members of the Events Management staff at Liberty University to discuss hosting the 2019 Eastern Zone Diversity and Inclusion Camp as well as the 2019 Eastern Zone LC Age Group Championship Meet on their campus. I have since submitted the required applications for hosting those events and hope to hear back from them as to availability and cost in the next few weeks.

2018 EZ LC Age Group Championship Meet: Plans are underway for hosting this year's meet at CSAC. I met with members of the Richmond Region Tourism group, NOVA's staff, and Adam Kennedy to plan for the event at the local level. I also have a meeting scheduled with NOVA's staff on April 27th to discuss the details of hosting the meet.

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Flex Membership: Detailed information is included in my report from the SwimBiz Workshop and Matt Farrell, USA Swimming Sports Marketing Director, will be at our meeting to discuss the program. This is not a membership category that is required by USA Swimming. That is, each LSC has the option to offer this type of membership to its clubs. Like Seasonal membership, it is then the club's decision as to whether offer it to their members. The registration fee is set at \$20, with \$10 being retained by the LSC. Flex is a year-round membership but athletes are limited to participating in two sanctioned meets below the level of LSC championship meets. If the athlete chooses to upgrade his/her membership, the registration fee will be credited toward the normal annual registration fee (ex. for 2019, instead of paying \$77, the athlete will pay \$57 for the membership category upgrade). As I understand it, the HoD needs to vote to accept Flex as a membership category. There are varying opinions as to whether this requires a Bylaw change so I have contacted the Chair of the Rules and Regulations Committee for an opinion. If VSI decides to offer this membership category, I plan to set up meetings in several areas across the LSC to meet with clubs to provide information as to the various ways it can be utilized.

Action Item: Endorse Flex as one of the membership categories offered in the LSC.

SwimBiz Workshop Notes

FLEX Membership

- Rationale for Change
 - Almost 80% of parents don't consider joining a swim team once child completes Swim lessons
 - Retention rate for 12 & u is about 60% but this number does not account for those who leave and then rejoin
 - 58% of parents interested in programs that practice 1 – 2 times per week. Drops to 30% when asked to practice 3 times per week
- Features of Program
 - Intended primarily for 12 & u but can be used for any 18 & y athlete.
 - Athletes are allowed to participate in two sanctioned meets per year below the championship level (approved or observed to not count)
 - LSC determines where 'championship' level meets start (ex. Would we consider district or regional meets to be championship or just Age Group and Sr Champs?)
 - SWIMS will track meets and not load times if athlete has already swum in 2 meets. (SWIMS does not track 25s so unless athlete participates on a relay or longer event, s/he will not be considered to have participated in that meet). Software vendors have also been asked to add a feature to track meet participation.
 - \$20 fee for Flex Membership will be credited to full registration fee if athlete 'moves up' to full membership
- Additional Info
 - Program can only be offered through a USA Swimming team
 - Coaches for the program must meet all certification requirements. Jr. Coaches may be used just the same as for regular practice.
 - Can be used for many purposes: pre-team, summer league, stroke clinics or day camps, fitness programs, learn to swim, pre-season high school, home school programs, etc.

Developmental Program Example – Bob Keizer

- Designed to meet the needs of families
- Has sessions broken down by age group: 5-8, 9-11, and 12 & over
- Offer practice three times a week for 30/45/90 but only want athletes to come 2 times a week (offers flexibility)
- Teaches the same skills as those taught in competitive program
- Requires less of parents of athletes in this program compared to those in competitive program
- Large number of athletes in this program do not compete
- Team has own summer swim league
 - 300 athletes split among 4 teams
 - Currently registered as seasonal but will be Flex next year
 - Teams all practice together but also break up to practice team specific things like relays
 - Run 4 tri-meets during season rotating among the teams so that each team has three meets
 - Sprint events with nothing longer than 50 except 100 free and 100 IM
 - Meets are no longer than 90 min
 - Championship meet at end of season to identify team champion
 - Top 16 Champs Meet, too

Marketing Ideas through Social Media: presenters from MilkPEP, Stadium, TAC Titans, MySwimPro, USA Swimming

- General Ideas
 - U Tube has major control of market of those in the age range from 2 to 14 but Instagram is currently the fastest growing social media platform
 - Create work by kids for kids – builds loyalty; let kids define your work
 - Diversity in any production is important – kids expect to see this
 - Be authentic, entertaining, inspired
 - Often kids are more cautious about what they post than adults
 - Understand kids marketing laws and guidelines
 - Clubs should try to get a blanket media sign-off for media posts at registration (see suggested statements on USA-S website)
 - For any communication, have a kid component and corresponding mom component
 - Bring webcasts to your social media platform
 - Quick interviews at a meet (maybe at Kings Dominion)
 - Videos should be 1 to 2 minutes long, never over 2
 - Training video for coach mentoring
 - Use Snapchat with ‘takeover’ enabled
 - When trying to develop a partnership, pay attention to the types of contact used by that business (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) because this might be the best way to contact them
 - Follow posts of business so that they know who you are before first contact

Negotiating Partnerships: TAC Titans,

- Sponsorship is a relationship with no one size fitting all
- Identify your “assets” that are worth something to somebody
 - What makes your team or organization unique
 - What is your mission
 - What are you values
- Identify the value that your team brings to the potential sponsor
- Discuss ways to measure outcomes- use indicators agreed upon by you and partner
- Socials media apps have many analytics available – mine data already have and see what info you can derive from it
 - How much ‘reach’ you are getting
 - What is sentiment about club
- Start small and then move forward

Working with the Media

- Reporter is conduit of information that you want to get out
- Tips to use:
 - Summarize info – go straight to the conclusion
 - Be articulate – don’t use pronouns (ex. When asked “what is your favorite color” say “my favorite color is blue” instead of just “blue” or “it is blue.”)
 - Anticipate questions that might be asked to formulate answers; don’t try to think on your feet
 - Support your message with statistics or proof points (examples)
 - Beware of tactics to make you use words to make story more interesting
 - Be wary of questions that cause problems

- If you don't know answer, say that you don't but that you will try to get it
 - If you don't understand the question, ask to rephrase or clarify
 - If it's better for someone else to answer, say so
 - If it calls for speculation, don't answer it but bridge back to your message
- Avoid answering with "no comment" or "off the record"
- If the story is big enough, try to get out in front of it when possible by releasing it yourself. Call in a specialist is necessary
- Respond with a statement as soon as possible but only when ready
- Before doing an interview, check out reporter or news outlet to determine any potential bias
- Be proactive when interviewer doesn't ask what you want – follow up with an email, photos, talking points or envelope send before interview
- Never add 'your part' of the story to one that is negative about a peer organization

Organizational Culture:

- Is the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another
- Is your guiding force, vision, and mission
- Is important for all leadership in organization to know it and be able to state it in 5 words or less
- Stress "this is one organization"