

## General Chair Report to the Spring House of Delegates Meeting May 14, 2016

As I look back over these first eight months of my term as General Chair of our LSC, I have learned quite a bit about the governance of this body. Additionally, I have been fortunate enough to spend time with other General Chairs within and outside the Eastern Zone and discuss with them how their LSCs are run. I wanted to bring back any ideas that would make us a better organization to serve our clubs and members. Upon reflection and looking at the ability of our clubs, coaches, and athletes, I have no doubt that the Niagara LSC is poised to make significant strides in progressing the Core Objectives of USA Swimming. As I go through my report, I would like to highlight key successes during this past SCY season and opportunities for improvement for our LSC based on these Core Objectives.

Listed below are the Core Objectives of USA Swimming. As stated by USA Swimming:

*USA Swimming has adopted three core objectives. These core objectives establish the foundation of the strategic business plan for our sport. USA Swimming encourages all members to participate in the local, regional, and national efforts to ensure that these objectives are accomplished.*

- *Build the Base: We see to expand our membership in order to share our sport with as many other people as possible. We are especially committed to sharing the values of our sport with young people who may discover that swimming is an activity they can enjoy for their entire life.*
- *Promote the Sport – We want swimming to receive as much publicity as possible because we believe that the more people learn about our sport the more inclined they will be to join the ranks of our membership. We are proud of our sport and we seek to celebrate it whenever possible.*
- *Achieve Sustained Competitive Success – USA Swimming has been ranked as the number one swimming nation in the world for more than 40 years. We seek to continue to tradition of competitive excellence. We seek to continue this tradition of competitive excellence. When our elite athletes are successful in fulfilling their Olympic dreams our society benefits from the inspiration these athletes give us.*

I want to take the opportunity to evaluate how we have done as an LSC in living up to these core objectives:

**Building the Base:** As of April 2016, the LSC is down roughly 3% year over year membership from 2015. This is the lowest level that we have seen since April 2012. Additionally, athlete retention continues to be at around the 66.0% level. While we expect a bump in athlete

membership for the 2017 season following the Rio Olympics, we need to find ways to keep our athletes in the sport. Athletes will continue to want to stay involved in activities if they both, enjoy it and see success in it, whatever success is defined as. It is incumbent on us as leaders of clubs and the local governing body to develop programs that can reach all of our athletes. As an LSC, we need to develop these programs that engage swimmers at all levels to not only reward them for their personal improvements, but also provide a pathway for each of them to achieve their individual goals, whatever they may be.

Another area that has been a key development focus over the last several years within USA Swimming in building the base are the Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. USA Swimming sees diversity as a key opportunity for growing its membership. Based on the efforts of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, led by Mike Switalski, the Niagara LSC has been selected to host the 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Summit for athletes and coaches for the Eastern Zone. There is some information included in the Diversity and Inclusion report and I encourage all members to review the information provided.

**Promoting the Sport:** Historically as an LSC, we have relied on the clubs to promote the sport of swimming as they see fit within their local areas. However, I believe that we can use our resources within the LSC to help reach a wider audience. We will be looking at how we can do that as we begin our planning cycle for the 2017 season and beyond. I encourage each of you to provide suggestions to any of our board members on how we can best assist you in promoting the sport of swimming in your local towns.

One way that we do promote the sport is by staging Regional (Zone level and higher) Championship meets in our area. At the end of this SCY season, the Niagara region was once again the center of the championship season for the Eastern Zone. During the weekend of the 24-26 March, FAST hosted the Age-Group Eastern Zone Meet held at the Webster Aquatic Center. A more detailed description of that meet can be found in the Age Group Vice-Chair's report. The feedback that I received was that the meet was extremely well-run. Congratulations to FAST for their continued support of putting on quality meets for the entire Zone.

The following weekend, both the Syracuse Chargers and STAR Swimming held the annual Speedo Eastern Zone (North) SCY and Speedo Eastern Zone LCM Championships. Again, both meets were extremely well run with some exceptionally fast times. Several Olympic trials cut times were achieved by athletes in Buffalo during this session. Thanks to both SYCH and STAR for running exceptional meets and to all three teams for again being awarded the 2017 edition of these meets at last Fall's Eastern Zone meeting.

Finally, as a follow-on to the 2014 release of "Touch the Wall ", USA Swimming Productions has recently completed its newest production entitled "The Last Gold", which focuses on the 1976

United States Women's Olympic Swim Team and the East German doping scandal. The film has been selected to premiere at the Los Angeles Film Festival during the June 1-9, 2016 timeframe. From there, it will be released in 300-500 movie theaters around the country for public viewing from July 11-13. Having seen a pre-released version during my recent General Chair's summit in Denver in April, I can tell you it was an extremely entertaining and compelling story. I encourage all teams to relay this information to your members and keep an eye out for where this will be shown in an area near you.

**Achieving Sustained Competitive Success** – The third core objective is probably the most concrete area that we evaluate and I would like to provide some highlights of the successes seen in the LSC.

- **Olympics Trials:** We currently have 10 individuals within our LSC that have qualified for the US Olympic Trials that will be held in Omaha, NE from June 26 – July 3, 2016. We congratulate the following athletes for their achievements:
  - Megan Burns (UN/Univ. of Buffalo) – 50 Freestyle
  - Garrett Clarke (UN/Univ. of Buffalo) – 200 Breaststroke
  - Mike Duggan (BAAC) – 50 Freestyle, 100 Butterfly
  - Scott Huang (UBST/Univ. of Buffalo) – 200 Breaststroke
  - Andrew Marsh (TTSC) – 100 Backstroke, 100 Butterfly
  - Luke Otto (STAR/Univ. of Buffalo) – 100 Breaststroke
  - Luke Reisch (FAST) – 100 Butterfly
  - Katie Smith (PACK) – 50 Freestyle
  - Makayla Sargent (VICT) – 200 Breaststroke, 200IM, 400IM
  - Lindsay Stone (PACK) – 800 Freestyle

Additionally, there are several athletes within 1% of the Olympic Trials standards. With both Regional and National level meets occurring in the next several weeks, we will be cheering on those athletes to make those Trials cuts.

- **Age-Group Performance:** Last year when I was reviewing our performance versus other LSCs in the Eastern Zone, I noticed that we had a large disproportionate number of athletes that had not a "B-level" performance. In reviewing, the 2016 season SCY results, I noticed the following trends when compared over the last 10 seasons:
  - This year, Niagara had its 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest number of "< B-level" swimmers (lowest was 2008).
  - This year, Niagara had its 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of "AA-level and higher" swimmers (highest was 2012).

As cut-times in our championship meets got harder, our swimmers still showed marked improvement over the previous year. Both coaches and athletes should be commended

on the development of the swimmers in the LSC. While this improvement is a step in the right direction, we still have a considerable ways to go to be on parity with similar size LSCs in the Eastern Zone. However, I have no doubt that the coaches and athletes within Niagara can continue this trend.

**Next Steps:** This summer, we will develop the 2017-2020 Quad Business plan for the LSC. This four-year business plan will set the framework for the initiatives and programs that we would like to see developed in support of our clubs and members within the LSC. This plan will be presented at the Fall HOD meeting and the supporting budget to achieve these objectives.

**Acknowledgement for Service:** In conclusion, on behalf of the Niagara LSC, I would like to thank the following individuals for their service as their terms will soon be ending. It is these volunteers that ensure that the administrative operations of the LSC runs effectively. I would encourage everyone in the Niagara LSC, both athlete and non-athlete club members, to consider getting involved in either the board or on committees with the LSC. We are always looking for people within our membership who have great ideas that can help set the direction of the LSC for our members in the future.

Adam Zaczkowski – Administrative Vice-Chair  
Christine Regelsberger – Age-Group Vice-Chair  
Ryan Callan – Technical Planning Co-Chair  
Will Chidsey – Technical Planning Co-Chair  
Becky Sapio – Coach’s Representative  
Nick Burdo – Athlete Representative  
Stephen Snyder – Treasurer  
Jim Stromski – Officials Chair

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone or email and I am more than happy to schedule a time where we can discuss those areas.

Respectively Submitted,

Eric T. Lind  
General Chair  
Niagara Swimming, Inc.