

2008 USA Swimming Annual Meeting Report  
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Submitted by Shawn Columbia

## USA Swimming Executive Director Chuck Wielgus State of the Sport Address

2008 State of the Sport Report by Chuck Wielgus (9/27/2008)

*A Presentation to the USA Swimming House of Delegates Delivered by Chuck Wielgus,  
Executive Director Atlanta, Georgia – September 27, 2008*

What a year! When was the last time some of these things happened?

- A 50 story building is draped in the picture of a swimmer. ·
- The President of the United States is joined by foreign prime ministers and members of royalty in the stands as spectators at a swim meet.
- A bar in Alaska is hushed into silence to watch a swimming relay race.
- Major league baseball games in several cities are replaying swimming races on the JumboTrons.
- A swimmer hosts Saturday Night Live and the show has its best rating in six years.
- Billboard Magazine blames a drop in August DVD sales on the fact that people have been tuned into a swim meet on television.
- ... and I could go on!

Following the success and media coverage of the Olympic Team Trials and the Beijing Olympic Games our sport has never been better positioned for growth ... and now we have to do something about it! From top to bottom; our national office, our LSC's, our clubs; and our **coaches, volunteers and staff, and even our athletes, must seize and leverage the many opportunities that are now before us and help our sport surge to a higher level in the public awareness of all Americans. We cannot wait, we must be acting now!**

But before taking a look at what needs to be done, I think we should take a few minutes to acknowledge and celebrate our successes ... and then we can dive into what this all means to us and what we should be doing about it. And so, my report to you this year will fall into three parts: **A Time to Celebrate; A Time to Reflect; and A Time to Look Ahead.**

### A Time to Celebrate

For starters, it is important to make some comments about the Olympic Team Trials that were held in Omaha, Nebraska. When I met with the staff on the morning prior to the start of the first day of competition I said, *“Do not make the mistake of thinking that you’re at another swim meet ... you’re not! We’re taking this event to the level of the NCAA Final Four, the World Series and the NFL Super Bowl so it’s time to start thinking and acting differently.”*

We had two very specific objectives for the Trials: first, to conduct as technically flawless a competition as possible for the athletes; and second, to put on a great show. The feedback from all quarters indicates that we accomplished these objectives. In particular, the feedback from the athletes and coaching communities has been heartwarming and the praise heaped upon the event organizers, the venue and the city of Omaha has been nothing short of fabulous.

More than **1,200 athletes qualified for and competed at the Trials. And while only 43 athletes** made the team, I'd like to think that almost every other athlete went home more motivated than ever to return in 2012 ... and the same with coaches. It was the kind of experience that once you get a taste you want to come back for more.

**We sold more than 150,000 tickets to the Trials, which is 40,000 more than what we sold in 2004 in Long Beach. More than 12,000 spectators were in the seats for each night's session of Finals, and every session of Finals was televised live on either NBC or the USA Network.** NBC Sports Chairman, Dick Ebersol, told us that he was "over the moon" about the both the event in general and the television ratings in particular.

The Aqua Zone was also a great success, attracting more than 8,000 people per day to our fan experience area. One of the leaders of the organizing committee for Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games -- a seasoned and respected professional -- said that the gold standard for fan experiences areas was the one staged by the NFL in conjunction with the Super Bowl and he told me that the Aqua Zone was far superior, in large part because ours was so interactive-based and kid-focused.

One of the best feelings I got at the Trials was encapsulated by the family I met one day outside the Qwest Center. This mom, dad and their two children had forgone a trip to Disney World, and instead packed up their car and drove from Cincinnati to Omaha to attend the Trials. No ... this wasn't just another swim meet ... it was a true major sporting event and one we will do everything possible to replicate and even exceed in 2012. Let me now share with you a short video that attempts to capture some aspects of perhaps why this young family and so many others found the Olympic Trials to be so much more than just a swim meet. (Video #1 plays)

Beijing, China was something else. I'm not sure how much more can be said about the way in which our athletes performed at the Olympic Games. **31 total medals won; 12 gold; 9 silver; and 10 bronze. And then there is Michael Phelps; 8 gold medals ... the single greatest Olympic performance of all time ... each of us were a witness to sports history.**

Beyond their performances, our athletes were the absolute best role models for all Olympic Team members. Watching how professional basketball and tennis players acted like true Olympians in Beijing was a wonderful sight for everyone, and I have to believe that in some way their actions were influenced by the way that America's swimmers have historically comported themselves at these and past Olympic Games.

No athletes stood taller and with greater pride than our swimmers, and no athletes were greater ambassadors for their sport or their country. And best of all, in family rooms across America

countless youngsters watched and were motivated by the performances of Michael Phelps, Natalie Coughlin, Jason Lezak, Cullen Jones, Rebecca Soni and every one of their teammates.

The reports are rolling into the USA Swimming offices almost daily about the record number of kids who are beating a path to the doors of their local swim club to sign up and tryout. In Mount Laurel, New Jersey, enrollment in the learn-to-swim program has more than doubled. In Chicago, the Lyons Swim Club has seen a 28% increase in their team size since August 1. In Farmington, New Mexico, the Four Corners Aquatic team has grown by 40%. And in Sarasota, Florida, the Sarasota YMCA Sharks have added 135 new members which represents a 36% increase; and new members are registering every day.

And then there was Dara Torres, who has inspired a whole new wave of people to either stay active or to get off the couch and get involved. Even Lance Armstrong is getting into the act and coming out of retirement. Dara will motivate countless others to push the boundaries and our sport will be the beneficiary for many years to come.

And if Michael Phelps has made the sport of swimming cool, just think of the extended opportunity that Cullen Jones has to expand our sport into every neighborhood in America. Rather than me going on and on about how great our swimmers were in Beijing, I think you'll better enjoy a video montage that seeks to capture the joy and success that was Beijing. (Video #2 plays)

In sports it's always more invigorating to be climbing the mountain, as opposed to trying to defend your position atop the mountain. Those on top always have the proverbial target on their back. Our athletes have been on top of the mountain for a long time, and what is especially noteworthy is that they have actually raised the bar with their performances during the past 20 years. Over the last three Olympic Games we have won an average of 30.6 medals, compared to an average of 23.6 medals won in the three Olympic Games before that; and this has been done in the face of an increasingly competitive field of play. More athletes from more countries are swimming faster and much of this is due to the stream of international athletes coming to the United States to train and compete.

Consider that at recent NCAA Swimming Championships nearly 25% of the participants have been foreign athletes. The competition will only get tougher in the years ahead and our athletes and coaches are going to have to respond to the challenge with an even higher level of commitment and achievement. To our National Team athletes and coaches, I would share the words of Nelson Mandela, who said "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."

In this next quad we will be putting a significantly greater emphasis into our Junior National Team programming efforts, and National Team Head Coach, Mark Schubert, has appointed Coach Jack Roach to lead this effort. We are also refocusing the sports science components of the National Team program and will be seeking to gather information and provide feedback to athletes and coaches that can have more applied and practical applications.

But I'm starting to get ahead of myself. Before talking any more about the challenges we face and what we need to do about it, I think it's very important to take a few minutes to reflect on why what we do has meaning. Yes, it's great to hear the national anthem and watch our gold medal tally rise, but we make an even bigger impact in the lives of every kid we touch.

### **A Time to Reflect**

Eleven years ago we set out to build our base, promote our sport, and achieve sustained competitive success and I think we've been doing a pretty good job. We've been strengthening our club system and providing more support to coaches, establishing more entertainment-oriented events and raising our media profile, and maintaining our position as the #1 swimming nation in the world.

These core objectives remain relevant today, and frankly it would be easy for us to simply ride the wave and keep chanting our mantra of Build, Promote & Achieve. But we're all here for more important reasons than just building, promoting and achieving. Most of us are here because we are passionate about a sport that we believe impacts the lives of people in some incredibly positive ways.

When a child overcomes that first fear of putting their head in the water, they are on a path that leads to the development of self-confidence and self-esteem. And when that child becomes a swimmer, they are one less child that is liable to be a drowning casualty. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death for children ages 5 to 14 and USA Swimming, through our Foundation, is fully engaged in the fight to reduce drowning statistics. Through our Make a Splash programming initiative, we are seeking to join others in the goal of teaching every child to swim, and we're putting our emphasis into reaching at-risk children who without our help would probably not have the opportunity to take swimming lessons.

What we – and I truly mean all of us – are doing through the Make a Splash effort, is broadening the influence of USA Swimming. Build, Promote & Achieve has very much been an inward looking strategy, but now – through our Foundation – we are starting to look outward. We all understand and have seen first-hand how participation in this sport makes people better. Swimming instills not just self-confidence, but discipline, a sense of accountability, a respect for authority, an appreciation for hard work, a sense of belonging to a team, and the satisfaction that comes with accomplishments and rewards. These are all skills and traits that carry-over and that become intertwined within the fabric of a young athlete's personality and value-system.

On November 15, we will be introducing a new program tentatively titled "Friends of Swimming." This program will initially be promoted through our Web sites as an online fundraising initiative that will invite people to become a "Friend of Swimming" for an annual donation of \$30. These funds will be channeled through the USA Swimming Foundation and \$10 of every donation will be directly invested into sponsoring swimming lessons for at-risk children. The rest of the funds will be invested in other USA Swimming and Foundation programs and services. In time, we hope to have thousands, even tens of thousands, of "Friends of Swimming" contributing to the worthy causes that we will be supporting. The U.S. Tennis Association and

the U.S. Golf Association have similar programs and I believe our program can eventually match theirs as we expand our stewardship of the sport.

By becoming missionaries and by seeking to spread the influence of our sport to those who would otherwise not opt in or not have the opportunity, we are taking steps to impact the lives of young people outside our membership. This is good, this is right and this is important! The Oakland Undercurrents Swim Team took this challenge to heart. Led by their coach, Ben Sheppard, the Undercurrents went to New Orleans to help teach kids there to swim. USA Swimming supported this missionary effort and we had a videographer along to document what took place. Let me show you a short video about that experience. (Video #3 plays)

We are also now on the verge of becoming actively engaged in the promotion of swimming as a lifetime fitness activity. Again, this is taking an outward view of our role in American society and recognizing that we are uniquely positioned to become organizational leaders and advocates for lifetime fitness. The benefits to people are far-reaching. When someone incorporates swimming into their lifestyle and makes it a priority, they are improving their health and fighting the obesity epidemic in this country. And if swimming can become part of a child's routine, the lifetime of benefits multiply dramatically.

And while we can all agree that these efforts are meaningful, we need more people to take an active role in getting involved. We need our LSC and club leaders, and our coaches and athletes, to embrace the challenges that the USA Swimming Foundation is undertaking and to roll up their sleeves and join in this missionary work.

And you don't have to do this all by yourself. We are finding that many partners can be found to help organize and fund local programming initiatives. Right here in inner-city Atlanta we are partnering with the Boys & Girls Clubs and have added learn-to-swim classes to the after school and summer day camp programs. In Houston, Texas we're partnering with the Greater Houston YMCA to take swimming instructors into apartment complexes where there are swimming pools to teach lessons. This is but one example of a collaboration with a specific YMCA, and we are extremely excited about the potential for a greatly expanded relationship between USA Swimming and YMCA's in the years ahead. By 2012, we want to have at least 500 of these local partnerships in place throughout the United States; and we need your help to meet this goal.

Now some of you might wonder what this has to do with the core business of USA Swimming, and to those of you who might feel this way I say that this is critical to our future. Not only are these efforts benefiting people and benefiting communities, but by taking a national leadership role in these efforts we are broadening and enhancing the brand name that is USA Swimming. We are expanding our relevancy, and we are ensuring that there is an important place for us in a country whose demographics are rapidly changing. We may not realize the full benefits of this work for another 10 to 20 years, but I assure you that the benefits will come and they will be significant and impactful. We want young athletes to view swimming just as they view mainstream sports like basketball and football. The Olympic Games may happen only once every four years, but swimming is a sport that happens every year. This is exactly what Michael Phelps has been referring to when he has talked about his desire to help change the sport.

*Build, Promote & Achieve* will continue to be the cornerstones of USA Swimming, but through the work of the USA Swimming Foundation we will be helping to raise our profile within American society, improve the quality of life for individuals and communities, and even save lives along the way. This is why we are here and this is why what we do is important.

### **A Time to Look Ahead**

The final thing I want to talk with you about this morning is our business plan for the next Olympic quadrennium. A great deal of thought and effort has gone into the plan, which includes a four-year budget for the 2009-2012 timeframe. Later today you will be asked to approve the 2009 operating budget, and this budget aligns with our business plan that has already been vetted and approved by the USA Swimming Board of Directors.

The business plan contains much detail, but this morning I simply want to highlight the five major priorities that we are adopting as the most important advancements for the next four-year window. These priorities are:

#### **1. Build ... by 2012 we seek to increase membership by at least 20%.**

Our research tells us that on average our clubs are operating at about 80% of capacity. Certainly, there are some clubs that are full and cannot accept any more swimmers, while other clubs are operating well below their capacity. Still, I challenge every coach and every club to find a way to attract and retain even just a few more swimmers into their program. With all the publicity swimming has received this summer the time has never been better to invite new prospects to join. I am also challenging our staff and volunteer leaders to study our current membership categories and see what can be done to attract and accommodate more seasonal members and perhaps even create a new category for learn-to-swim. A 20% membership increase is achievable ... we can do it.

#### **2. Promote ... we will seek to increase positive public recognition of our sport, attract new corporate and organizational partners, and increase USA Swimming's revenues and net worth.**

We are already off to a great start with the recent announcement that NBC will be broadcasting the 2009 FINA World Championships from Rome. This is something that we have been working on for more than a year and I believe it is just the first of what will hopefully be a series of new television and Web cast announcements. A cornerstone to growing our future commercial viability will be seen through our new Web site: Swimnetwork.com. Through our partnership with the Wassermann Media Group, we intend to build and leverage a bigger and broader platform for the sport of swimming with the goal of having Swimnetwork.com become THE Internet destination for the sport of swimming. Here is a short video that tells you a bit about Swimnetwork, what it is, and more importantly what it will become. (Video #4 plays)

#### **3. Achieve ... we will seek to have our National Team win more gold medals at the 2012 London Olympic Games than were won at the Beijing Olympic Games.**

We certainly don't want this to become "bulletin board material" for our competitors' locker rooms, but it's the right goal for us to have for our National Team program. We have the best coaches in the world, and I know that our Head Coach, Mark Schubert, is not only committed to working collaboratively with all our top coaches, but that he is also dedicated to the education and mentoring of our best young coaches who are coming up through the ranks. Early in my remarks I noted our plans to significantly expand our National Junior Team program, but Mark and his staff will also be challenged to determine how to support and work most effectively with the growing number of post-grad and professional athletes that now populate the sport. It is going to be especially important that we find more effective ways to work with the agents, sponsors and other advocates for these older athletes.

**4. Improve LSC Effectiveness ... we will seek to help our LSC's become more effective and efficient in providing programs and services to the athletes, coaches, officials and clubs in their area.**

**The key phrase here is, "that we will seek to help." Already a group of volunteer LSC leaders has been working to develop a program that is conceptually modeled on the existing Club Recognition Program. This new program will be called LEAP, which stands for "LSC Evaluation & Achievement Program" and the intent is to motivate LSC's through communication, education and recognition to strive for higher levels of effectiveness. The program will provide a roadmap to LSC effectiveness and success in four key areas: Business & Organizational Capabilities; Volunteer Development; Club & Coach Development; and Athlete Development. There will be three levels of achievement and the goal is to have all LSC's striving to reach Level 3 recognition by the end of the next Olympic quad. The program will be tested as a pilot by several LSC's this season and based on the feedback from these pilots, adjustments and modifications will be made before the program is rolled out to all LSC's next year.**

**5. Support the USA Swimming Foundation ... we will seek to administer, promote and expand the activities associated with the Make a Splash programming initiative in order to enhance the Foundation's "giving case" for support and thereby use swimming as a means to promote water safety, fight youth obesity, bring greater diversity to the sport, and foster lifetime fitness.**

I have already said much this morning about the ongoing work of the USA Swimming Foundation. By identifying our commitment to the Foundation's work as one of our five major priorities for the coming quad, I hope to be sending a strong message that our Make a Splash programming efforts are vitally important to our future.

Before closing, I must recognize and thank the Board of Directors, a distinguished group of people who serve the sport selflessly and proudly. I want to especially thank Jim Wood for his leadership and consistently good counsel. Jim is an awesome President and I want to personally thank him for being both tough and fair with me. I also want to thank all of you who serve as volunteers at swim meets, with clubs, LSC's and on committees and task forces; USA Swimming works and is a family because of you. And of course, I must thank the USA

Swimming staff with whom I have the privilege of serving. We come to work every day with the passionate commitment to do the best we can in service to the sport.

Thank you for your time today and for allowing me to serve you.

### [USA Swimming President's Address with Special Recognition of Peter Carney](#)

Good morning everyone.

I will try and keep my talk short, primarily thanking people for the work they did this year. Chuck's talk later on this morning will cover in detail much of what has happened this year.

In June this year, we came to terms and signed our contract with the Wasserman media group for the formation of swimnetwork.com

The process of negotiating the final contract took close to a year with uncountable revisions. Chuck Wielgus, Mike Unger, Matt Farrell, Wells O'Brien and Rod Davis were involved in this from the beginning. Wells O'Brien was fantastic. He came on board in our deliberations about a year ago and basically from a legal standpoint put the whole deal together. I am very confident that the final contract is one that protects the interests of USA Swimming and allows this partnership the best chance of success.

The Board of the new swimnetwork.com LLC is Chuck Wielgus, Peter Carney, Bill Maxson and Trent Staley as the athlete rep. I believe this partnership with Wasserman is going to pay great dividends for USA Swimming in the future.

#### **Olympic Trials**

What a great event. The best part however might not have been all the world records, but the experience we gave 1,200 athletes who did not make the Olympic team and might never make one in the future. We gave all of those swimmers an opportunity to compete on a stage like no other and an experience they will remember for a lifetime.

Chuck Wielgus, Dale Neuberger and Ron VanPool, thank you for your vision years ago that allowed us to run a technically great meet within an unforgettable event.

Dean Ekeren, Mike Unger, Jack Jackson and hundreds of other volunteers and staff worked together for years to pull this off.

The cooperation and unbelievable spirit from the people of Omaha helped to make this truly special.

Carol Zaleski, Mike Saltzstein, Jay Thomas, Jim Sheehan, John Wilson, Gloria Schulz, Mary Jo Swalley, Jeanine Dennis, Paul Memart, Pat Lunsford thank you for a great job on the deck.

Ron VanPool...what a sacrifice you made to spend the whole meet in the basement watching results from the underwater video cameras. A task so important for our athletes as FINA moves forward in this area.

And a further thanks to Carol Zaleski, Mike Saltzstein, John Wilson and John Kinney who then moved on to work as officials at the Olympic games.

#### **Relationships**

Our relationships are growing everyday with our partner swim organizations.

Thank you Pat Hogan and Pat Lunsford for working so closely with the YMCA in our efforts to create common rules, to train officials and to teach young people to swim through current YMCA programs and our Make A Splash initiative.

The Make a Splash initiative is a campaign of the USA Swimming Foundation. If you have not had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Chris LaBianco or any other members of our foundation staff, take a few minutes during our breaks today and try to find them. The work the Foundation is doing might be some of the most socially valuable work our organization ever does.

Mark Schubert and Lindsay (Benko) Mintenko have changed our relationship with the USOC. The support from the USOC has never been better and more cooperative.

Larry Herr has done a great job integrating the NCAA into our SWIMS database which has been beneficial to both organizations.

John Leonard, Phil Whitten, Chuck Wielgus and the NCAA are working together to help preserve and expand NCAA collegiate swim programs and at the same time are looking at ways to improve the student-athlete experience at the NCAA swimming and diving championships.

### **FINA and UANA**

We have a number of individuals that currently hold important positions within FINA and their positions have helped us make worldwide swimming better. They are: Carol Zaleski, Sid Cassidy, Ron Vanpool, John Leonard, Dale Neuberger, Greg Eggert, Jill Sterkel and Fernando Canales.

### **Congress - Manchester**

This past spring at the Short Course World Championships in Manchester, we had one of our most successful Congresses ever. Much of that success was because of the efforts of Sid Cassidy, and Fernando Canales.

A great deal of thanks goes to all the hard working volunteers who make this convention happen. The logistics necessary to run a convention this size are daunting, yet every year it is handled by a group of volunteers which would rival any paid convention planning group in the country. Thanks again for another great year.

### **Staff**

We are blessed with a great staff. Staff and volunteers have worked very well the past two years in a very cooperative manner. Volunteers in the form of the Board of Directors have set the vision and goals. Staff has done the work to make it happen. Yet there is very healthy cross-over. There are no personal agendas and both groups trust the other to do what is right.

I am not sure you can fully appreciate our staff until you spend some time in Colorado. Our team travels to Colorado Springs at least every other year to train at altitude for several weeks. They get to work early, they leave work late and there is this incredible atmosphere and energy there all based on helping USA Swimming and its athletes get better. Chuck has established a great staff and has instilled in them a pride in their work that shows in everything we do as an organization.

### **Board of Directors**

The collaborative nature of the Board of Directors over the past two years has been phenomenal. Board meetings have been interesting and productive. We routinely had great debates of issues in a civilized manner. Peter Carney, Ed Dellert, Vicki Marsh, Arlene McDonald and Trent Staley are leaving the Board this year. They have all contributed a lot to the Board. They will be missed.

I am very proud of the work of our past presidents. They have all accepted important roles in USA Swimming.

Dale Neuberger as the FINA Vice President

Carol Zaleski as the FINA TSC vice chair and the president of USSIC

Ron VanPool as the IRC chair and USA Swimming representative to the NGB council of the USOC

Bill Maxson serving on the Board of swimnetwork.com

### **The LSC volunteers**

They are the backbone of USA Swimming. We are the number one NGB in the world because of how hard our volunteer base works and how well they team up with our staff. The new LEAP program is just an example of what ideas can become when staff and volunteers work together. Special thanks to Mary Jo Swalley, LeAnne Spletzer and Sue Anderson for their leadership on this project.

### **Coaches and Athletes**

I am constantly amazed at the level of commitment our coaches and athletes put in everyday. They are an inspiration to us. They are why we all do what we do.

### **Olympics**

The entire Olympic Team –they were a class act who all made us proud by the way they handled themselves throughout the Olympic Games. I know we could not have dreamed of being represented by such a fine group of young men and women. Note: I am referring to a 41-year-old as a young woman. That basically means a number of us are barely middle age.

Mark Schubert, Lindsay Mintenko, Eddie Reese, Jack Bauerle – you were the leaders of the team who made us proud this summer and who caused widespread sleep deprivation on the East Coast.

Let me tell you a few stories about what made the Olympics special to me. Not necessarily stories about winning races.

The inclusion of marathon swimming in the Olympic Games ... Emily Silver's incredible story ... Jason Lezak ... The Redeem Team sitting in the stands with our swimmers and asking for their autographs ... Dara Torres ... The incredible attention our sport received when we got home from Beijing.

And now a few final thoughts...

Chuck Wielgus, Mike Unger, Matt Farrell, Pat Hogan, Sue Anderson thanks for being great friends and helping USA Swimming as much as you do.

Executive Committee members John Wilson, Pat Lunsford, Mary Jo Swalley, George Block, Trent Staley, Linda Riker, Mike Lawrence and Peter Carney – none of this could happen without your work. You have all stepped up, taken ownership of your committees and allowed them to flourish.

**Peter Carney – we have known each other for 30 years and both served on Age Group planning 20 + years ago as our first real committee. You are the Perfect volunteer. Always prepared, always seeing the big picture, always thinking of the athlete first and never looking for anything for yourself - Thanks**

Thanks for the privilege of allowing me to serve as your President these past two years.

## [Awards](#)

### Phelps Wins USA Swimming Athlete of the Year Honors (9/27/2008)

**Michael Phelps** (Baltimore, Md.) was named USA Swimming Athlete of the Year and Mutual of Omaha Senior Vice President of Brand Management and Public Relations **John Hildenbiddle** received the prestigious USA Swimming Award. The USA Swimming Award recognizes exceptional contributions to the sport of swimming.

Phelps' mother, Debbie Phelps was in attendance to accept the award on behalf of her highly-decorated son. She brought U.S. Olympian **Mark Gangloff** (Akron, Ohio) to the stage to accept the award with her.

Hildenbiddle was introduced by USA Swimming Executive Director **Chuck Wielgus**.

"When Mutual of Omaha became a sponsor of USA Swimming, John Hildenbiddle taught us what it was to truly be a partner," said Wielgus.

"From their sponsorship of the Mutual of Omaha Duel in the Pool, to the Pan Pacific Championships, to their swimming-themed advertisements in *Sports Illustrated*, our partnership has truly been beneficial to our sport. Tonight we present this most prestigious award, not to a company, but to a man who had the vision to create a wonderful and beneficial partnership."

Hildenbiddle accepted the award, stating, "That is what sports sponsorship is all about. It's not about giving money or your name to an event. It's about thinking of ideas that move both organizations forward."

U.S. Olympic Open Water athletes were also honored today with **Mark Warkentin** (Santa Clara, Calif.) and **Chloe Sutton** (Roseville, Calif.) being named Male and Female Open Water Swimmer of the Year. U.S. Olympic Open Water Head Coach **Bill Rose** received the Glenn S. Hummer Award, given to the person who has made the greatest contribution to long distance swimming..

Completing the coach category, **John Morse** was named Developmental Coach of the Year. The award is given to the coach who places the most swimmers on the National Junior Team. Additionally, **Bob Bowman**, personal coach to Michael Phelps, was recognized earlier this month as American Swimming Coaches Association Coach of the Year.

**Erin Popovich**, winner of six medals at the Paralympic Games in Beijing, was awarded the Trischa L. Zorn Award, given to the swimmer with a disability with the most outstanding performances during the previous year.

The Diversity Inclusion Award, given to the person who has positively heightened the awareness of inclusion efforts resulting in the increase and successful participation of underrepresented groups in the sport. went to Olympic gold medalist **Cullen Jones** (New Brunswick, N.J.). Jones won his gold medal as part of the men's world record-setting 4x100m relay team.

A complete list of the award winners is below.

## **AWARD** **RECIPIENT**

### USA Swimming Award

#### **John Hildenbiddle**

The USA Swimming Award was established in 1981 to recognize exceptional contributions to the sport of swimming. The award is presented each year to an individual or organization selected for financial, material or service contributions to USA Swimming. The award is a two-thirds life-size bronze sculpture of a swimmer mounted over a wave of marble.

### Athlete of the Year

#### **Michael Phelps**

The Swimmer of the Year Award is presented to the athlete judged by the USA Swimming House of Delegates as the most outstanding swimmer of the previous year.

### ConocoPhillips Performance Award

#### **Michael Phelps**

#### **200 IM, 2008 Olympic Games**

This award is presented to an American swimmer who gives the single most outstanding performance during the year. This award is voted on by selected coaches, athlete representatives and members of the swimming media.

### Glenn S. Hummer Award

#### **Bill Rose**

Established in 1978 and named for an Olympian and Coach, the Glen S. Hummer Award is given annually to the person or group making the greatest contribution to Long Distance Swimming.

### Female Open Water Swimmer of the Year

#### **Chloe Sutton**

Established in 1985, the Open Water Committee Award is presented by the USA Swimming Open Water Swimming Committee to the person or group judged as making a major contribution to open water swimming the previous year.

Male Open Water Swimmer of the Year

**Mark Warkentin**

Established in 1984, the Open Water Swimmer of the Year Award is presented by the USA Swimming Open Water Swimming Committee to the swimmer judged as the most outstanding open water swimmer of the previous year.

Developmental Coach of the Year Award

**John Morse**

The Developmental Coach of the Year Award is for coaches who develop athletes a step or two away from major national or international success. The winner of the award is the coach who places the most swimmers on the National Junior Team.

Athletes Appreciation Award

**Mark Henderson**

Conceived by the USA Swimming Athletes Committee in 1983, the Athletes Appreciation Award recognizes the individual or organization perceived by the committee to have contributed most significantly to the Athletes Movement.

Adolph Kiefer Safety Commendation Award

**Jim Reiser**

Awarded to an individual or organization for demonstrating outstanding commitment to aquatic safety. Recipient selected by the USA Swimming Safety Education Committee; not necessarily awarded every year.

Disability Swimming Service Award

**Kiko Van Zandt**

The Disabled Swimming Service Award is presented to an individual (swimmer, coach, volunteer) who has made significant contributions to competitive swimming for athletes with a disability. Members of the Disabled Swimming Committee nominate candidates at the mid-year committee meeting. The vote, by all members of the Disabled Swimming Committee, also takes place at the mid-year meeting. This award originated in the year 2000.

Disability Swimmer of the Year Award

**Erin Popovich**

(Trischa L. Zorn Award)

The Trischa L. Zorn Award is presented to the swimmer (or relay team) with a disability with the most outstanding performances during the previous year. Anyone present at the USA Swimming Disability Championships may nominate a swimmer for the award. A screening committee comprised of a few members of the Disabled Swimming Committee selects finalists. The chairperson(s) of the Disabled Swimming Committee prepares a ballot, then all members of the Disabled Swimming Committee vote to determine the winner. The vote is conducted by mail. This award originated in the year 2000.

### **Diversity Inclusion Award**

#### **Cullen Jones**

**Established in 2006, the Diversity Inclusion Award is presented to the person or group who has positively heightened the awareness of inclusion efforts through various modes and media resulting in the increase and successful participation of currently underrepresented groups in the sport.**

### Kenneth J. Pettigrew Award

#### **Bruce Stratton**

This award was created to honor Ken Pettigrew, a swimming official who devoted over 30 years to the sport of swimming. Each year the recipient is chosen by the USA Swimming Officials Committee.

### ASCA Coach of the Year Award

#### **Bob Bowman**

The ASCA Award is 39 years old. It honors the American Coach who has done the most in the past 12 months to improve American International Swimming Performance.

### Election Results

USA Swimming Election Results (9/27/2008)

USA Swimming held its annual elections at the House of Delegates meeting on Saturday. Eleven Board of Director positions were elected.

**President** – Jim Wood of New Jersey

#### Vice-Presidents

**Administration Vice President** – John Wilson of Georgia

**Athletes Vice President** – Tyler Storie of Oregon

**Program Development Vice President** – Mary Jo Swalley of Southern California

**Program Operations Vice President** – Pat Lunsford of Ohio

**Technical Vice President** – George Block of South Texas

**Treasurer** – Tom Hasz of Gulf (Texas)

#### Zone Representatives

**Central Zone** Paul Thompson, Non-Coach

**Eastern Zone** Marci Callan, Coach

**Southern Zone** **Richard Pockat, Non-Coach**

**Western Zone** Brandon Drawz, Coach

## Of Suits and Self-Esteem

By John Lesko

History is full of examples of hysterical hand-wringing by selected individuals over one “next big threat” or the other. Rock-and-roll, “The Bomb”, global terrorism, and the superconducting supercollider were supposed to be the end of us all. Armageddon always seems to be at hand.

I feel things have been a little bit like that with the emergence of modern performance swimwear. Projections of the end of our sport as we know it have been frequent, and just a little bit crazy in some circumstances. Like many, as the summer marched on, even I couldn’t help but be drawn into this perspective.

But, something happened after the waves settled. The swimming world still stood. In reality, facts mount that things are better than ever. So what happened? How did we manage to save ourselves?

This question was still on my mind when I arrived in Las Vegas for the American Swim Coaches Association convention several weeks ago.

Something that people should understand about coaches (particularly developmental club coaches) is that some modesty gets bred into you as part of the seasoning process.

When things go well, the swimmer gets all the credit.

When things don’t go well, it’s at least half your fault. Or, at least that’s what you say.

It has to be that way. Physically, young people are sturdy beyond measure. Mentally, they are not. This is why “allowing the hit, but softening the blow” is such an important part of a coach’s function.

So, coaches often are reluctant to talk about themselves and their dramatic impact. Maybe it’s a chronic lack of confidence or self-esteem.

Despite this, they’re the unseen hand, the “dark matter” that has always held the swimming world together.

Now, about these suits.

Doubtless they are the brainchild of genius minds at the various swimwear manufacturers. They were worn by swimmers swimming in the brainchild of more brilliant minds, a fusion of breathtaking architecture and engineering known as “The Water Cube”.

In Beijing, the world’s attention was drawn to image after image of those same suits moving through water in that same beautiful venue with a degree of grace that was nothing short of magic.

However, the world only watched each effort for a just a moment, much too short a time to perceive the source of the power they just witnessed.

This made me think. Why is it that we’ve been so quick to attribute our sport’s advance to technological breakthroughs and not the brilliant minds at work throughout the sport?

From the time I spent in Las Vegas at the American Swim Coaches Convention, I took away one stunning realization. The amount of brilliant minds at work in the sport today is nothing short of staggering. You may not yet know the names of these individuals working on tomorrow’s performance, but you should.

Ever heard of Glenn Mills of [GoSwim.tv](http://GoSwim.tv)? He’s the guy producing the excellent instructional videos that your child is watching at practice.

[John Bradley of the Rochester Orcas](#)? If your child’s coach came home from Las Vegas with lots of new ideas about utilizing video in practice, this is the guy who probably put that thought in their head through his presentation in Las Vegas.

[Josh Davis](#)? He's likely one of the guys behind the swim clinics your child attends. He teaches with an amount of energy and enthusiasm that I haven't seen duplicated anywhere else. (*Editor's Note: You can see Josh in action in [Episodes Eleven \("The Josh Davis Swim Clinic"\)](#) and [Fourteen \("The Speech"\)](#) of "Chlorination".*)

With all of this in mind, I'd like to submit an alternate theory for the rapid advance in swimming performance we've witnessed over the past year or so.

Not all of the brilliant minds I've talked about made their way into suit and aquatic center design. In fact, based upon what I witnessed in Las Vegas, not even anything approaching a majority of them did.

They're designers, but they're not crafting swimsuits. They're molding and shaping the perfect technique that will produce tomorrow's speed gains.

They're engineers, but they're not building pools. They're building and tuning the high performance machine that may reside in your house and call you "mom" or "dad".

There's no million-dollar marketing campaign behind them. They don't have a name that sticks in your the head like "The Water Cube".

Most of them are too humble to tell you really how much they really matter, which is why it's left to those of us who opine about the sport of swimming to do so.

The truth is simple, as it often tends to be. It's not magical suits or pools. It's the people that built the suits and pools. But mostly, it's the people who build the human machines that power the those suits that swim in those pools.

Our success in not due to widespread doping, whether it be pharmacological or technological. The swimming community simply gotten smarter. It's long beyond time for us to take a few minutes, take a little pride in ourselves, and appreciate just how far we've come.

*John Lesko is the Editor of [Swimnetwork.com](#).*

## [2008-2009 USA National Team and National Junior Team](#)

USA Swimming Announces Roster for 2008-2009 National Team and National Junior Team (9/24/2008)

USA Swimming has released the roster for the 2008-2009 National Team, which stands from September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009. To be eligible for the team, athletes must have posted one of the top six times in Olympic events at the 2008 Olympic Games, 2008 Olympic Trials and/or the 2008 U.S. Open. Times include times from prelims, semifinals and finals (A,B,C) only.

Members of the 2008-2009 National Junior Team were selected based upon their achievement of a National Junior Team time standard at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials, the 2008 U.S. Open and/or the 2008 Speedo Junior National Championships. To be eligible for the Junior Team, females (17 and under) and males (18 and under) must not be attending college prior to the scheduled international competition.

Both rosters can be found under the rosters section of the National Team page on the USA Swimming website or by clicking [here](#).

For full information on selection criteria for these teams, please visit the qualifying criteria section of the [National Team page](#).

[National Team](#)

[National Junior Team](#)

[World University Team](#)

[National Team Coaches](#)

[2008-2012 Quad Plan/Calendar](#)

[2008-2012 Open Water Plan/Calendar](#)

[Michael Phelps at UofM](#) & [Phelps](#)

Olympic gold medal swimmer Michael Phelps, center, acknowledges the crowd at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich., Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008. Phelps was back at the University of Michigan, his home for four years before the Beijing Games where he was honored alongside other Olympians with ties to the school before an NCAA college football game against Wisconsin.

(AP Photo/Tony Ding)

The following are the daily convention synopsis/reports produced by USA Swimming volunteers

**Paralympic Games in Beijing.** Erin Popovich won four gold and 2 silver medals and Jarrett Perry won a bronze medal after setting the world record in the 100m backstroke in prelims. Team USA set 99 American Records - 85% lifetime best times - and won the Gold Medal count with 17.

**College Swimming 101 for the Athletes:** A panel of collegiate swimmers discussed recruiting, college swimming and college life in an athletes-only meeting. A CD of resources and recruiting tips was distributed. If you'd like a copy of this CD, please email Kim O'Shea at: [koshea@usaswimming.org](mailto:koshea@usaswimming.org) to have one sent.

**College Swimming 101 for Coaches and Parents:** A panel of collegiate coaches discussed recruiting, college swimming and college life in this meeting. The same CD of resources and tips was distributed for the adults, and copies may be sent by emailing Kim O'Shea at: [koshea@usaswimming.org](mailto:koshea@usaswimming.org) .

**The Disability Committee** is hosting a Disability LSC Workshop in Colorado Springs, April 3,4,5 in 2009. The 59 LSC's will be asked to cover the cost of transportation to Colorado Springs and USA Swimming will pay for housing, food, and other expenses involved in the Workshop. The Disability Chairs are expected to leave with a full understanding of the swimming opportunities throughout the U.S., the strategies of inclusion on swim teams, Zone and Sectional Meets and Local competitions that will benefit the LSC and teams throughout the country.

The Disability Committee will review five educational brochures that can be downloaded at the Disability Page. These brochures will be updated and brought up to date with rules and recommendations of section 105 of the Blue pages of the USA Swimming Rule Book

**Club Coaching for Coaches' Panel (Thursday):**

Moderated by Georgia Coach Harvey Humphries, this panel of Chris Davis (Swim Atlanta), Justin Correia (Swim Macon) and Michael Gobrecht (West Shore YMCA) discussed everything from training groups to club fees and facilities. They discussed the differences of smaller clubs, YMCA structures and large clubs of over 1000 swimmers, as well as their similarities in coaching kids.

**Senior Development Committee CORRECTION:**

The Senior Development Committee voted to approve time standards for the 2009 World Championship Trials, U.S. Open and Junior Nationals. For the **summer** Junior Nationals **relays**, time standards will only be offered for long course meters swims. All standards will be available at the House of Delegates meeting and on the USA Swimming website.

**SWIMS**

Each year SWIMS processes over six million times from over 5,000 meets. Additionally, SWIMS has been enhanced to process times and membership information from secondary organizations. USA Swimming completed a partnership with the NCAA to handle all Division I times and athlete info this year.

- **Scholastic All America-** Reported a successful change to the program by implementing a time standard for the performance component of the program. As a result, participation was down by 25% with over 925 athletes qualifying. Over 140 individuals qualified for their third straight year.

- **NAG records-** a "record" total of 104 NAG records have been broken so far in 2008. These records have been updated on the USA Swimming web site and certificates are being sent out. This information will also be submitted for the 2009 rule book.

- **World, American, U.S. Open records-** between the Olympic trials and Olympic Games there were 20 World, 45 American, and 20 U.S. Open records broken.

**-Disability Recognition-** The T&R committee will continue its work of the past year to try to find ways to recognize the performance achievements by disabled athletes.

**- Age Group Recognition "Top 10"-** The preview lists for the 2007-2008 (9/1/2007-8/31/2008) season has been sent to the tabulators. The lists will become official around the end of October. The information will be posted on USA Swimming.org and published in Splash. The transition to single age recognition program has been well received. The committee will add 18 year-old athlete recognition next year.

**-ConocoPhillips Reimbursement-** There were two meets available for performance reimbursement. At the 2008 Olympic Trials 52 athletes received over \$59,000 from the program. At the 2008 U.S. Open, 76 athletes received over \$16,000. Additional information can be obtained from Suzanne Heath.

**-SWIMS Enhancements-** The T&R workshop reviewed the year's enhancements, focusing on four areas: reports, time sweep, OME and the NCAA. **Contact NC's Suzanne Heath for details.**

#### **Safety/Risk Management Workshop:**

Michele Hilavasa, RN, MPH, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention talked about recreational water illness, cryptosporidium (crypto) and chloramines that can cause problems in the pool. She stressed awareness, action and advocacy and encouraged the audience to visit their website. The second hour of the workshop focused on USA Swimming insurance coverage available to members and optional coverage available to LSCs and clubs. The audience asked specific questions about their individual situations from reps from the Insurance Broker and USA Swimming.

#### **LSC Development Committee**

The LSC Development Committee hosted the General Chairs' luncheon on Thursday. Executive Director Chuck Wielgus spoke to the group, **including NCS General Chair Jonathan Watson**, to introduce the LEAP initiative which will be discussed in greater detail tomorrow at the General Chairs' Workshop. LEAP stands for LSC Evaluation and Achievement Program, an initiative to study and evaluate LSC effectiveness in serving the needs of members. The General Chairs also discussed how an anticipated membership bump following the Olympics will affect planning and programming in their respective LSCs.

#### **Steering Committee:**

The Steering Committee meeting featured a "download" of the 2008 Olympic Games, and the key learnings of the U.S. Olympic Coaches. The Committee also had a productive discussion on how we can swim better as a country.

#### **OIOC:**

Key personnel provided reports on Team USA's international competitions during the 2008 calendar year. These included the Junior Team competition, Short Course World Championships, World Youth Championships and 2008 Olympic Games. In addition attendees were treated to reports from members of the Olympic coaching and support staff and others who attended and represented Team USA at the Olympic Games.

It was a bit of a coincidence that on the second day of Convention in Atlanta, the most talked about man in swimming was at a local pool. **Michael Phelps** did not come to swim, but rather to inspire 200 youngsters at the Warren Boys & Girls Club. Phelps spoke about water safety, his Olympic experience and working to achieve his dreams. The stop was one of many for Phelps, who has visited several Boys & Girls Clubs across the nation. This particular Boys & Girls Club is of note to the USA Swimming Foundation, as one of four clubs that make up "Make a Splash Atlanta," the campaign's pilot program. To date, the program has touched over 2,000 kids in Atlanta.

***I was at a concert where the Symphony played the national anthem. Sam, my Neighbor's 3-year-old son, stood up and said, in a loud, excited voice, Listen! They are playing Michael Phelps' song.*** -Submitted to the Oregon Symphony website

## Miscellaneous

USA Swimming is up to 75 staff members

Starting May 15, 2009, there will be a body suit restriction for 12&under events (but not for 12&Under swimmers in Open or Senior competition).

USA Swimming budget, as presented by NC's Peter Carney who is also Treasurer of USA Swimming bits and pieces:

	2009	Quad
Revenue	\$24,718,600	\$108,493,500
Expenses	<u>\$25,423,000</u>	<u>\$108,117,900</u>
Operating Income (loss)	(\$704,400)	\$375,600

### From International Relations Committee

USA Swimming & Dubai appear ready to enter into an agreement on a World-Class training center in Dubai, one of the 7 states that make up the United Arab Emirates.

Chicago is one of four cities still in the running to host the 2016 Olympics. The other three cities are Tokyo, Madrid, and Rio de Janeiro. Chicago would construct an \$80 million dollar aquatics venue very similar to Atlanta's – 20,000 seats and a roof with essentially no ground level exterior walls and, similar to GA Tech's pool, convert it into an indoor facility after the Games. There may be a very slight inclination for Rio (the Games have never been in South America) & Chicago, esp. over Madrid given that 2012 is in very near by London. The host city will be selected on Oct 2, 2009.

USA is hosting 2010 Pan Pacs and bidding to host 2011 Junior Pan Pacs.

### From Age Group Chairs Workshop

New Open Water Program is out! POW!=Pool Open Water and it is good. Check it out on the USA Swimming Web Page under "Swimmers" or "Coaches" (it will be under "Coaches" soon if not already).

Much interesting discussion and neat ideas re: Open Water, Camps, Vision & Mission (where NCS is FAR ahead of most LSCs-thanks Jonathan & Richard), & Creative Meet Formats.

The "Foundations of Coaching" is now available in a 2 DVD package for just \$25.00

USA Swimming is negotiating with NBC to get rights and put together a DVD of all 34 USA Swimming Olympic medal races with intention to mail to each club by DEC 31.

Chart of all 59 LSCs' Champ meets event limits, formats, event costs, etc. distributed.

## **USA Swimming Stats Review National/LSC levels (Sept. 2007)**

Information can be found at: [www.usaswimming.org/stats](http://www.usaswimming.org/stats)

### Section 1: National Team Report Card

What is it: This is an analysis of the National Team performance results for 2007. The 2007 world rankings (to date) are included. A combined best times from 07 and 06 are compiled 120 deep. The current 2008 Olympic Games start lists are noted (modified to include all U.S. athletes). Finally, the 2008 Olympic Trials start list are included.

### Section 2: Youth development Pipeline Report Card

What is it: This is an analysis of our developmental “minor league” pipeline system. The 2007 world rankings (to date) with just swimmers 18& under are included. The 2008 Olympic Trials (18&under only) start list are included (18 or younger at time of swim!). Finally, the 2007 world rankings, 11-75 are included.

#### NCS Meets

	Meets	Individual	Relays
2007	123	207,970	4,780
2006	103	186,037	4,918
2005	96	165,478	4,266

2007

NCS Rank out of 59 LSCs	Members	% with Trials	# with Trials
11 <sup>th</sup>	6288	0.51%	32

**USA Swimming Year-Round**

YEAR	ATHLETES	Inc/Dec
2007	251,547	+ .09%
2006	249,326	+ 0.1%
2005	249,182	+ 7.0%
2004	232,361	- 1.0%
2003	235,013	+ 3.0%
2002	228,216	- 2.0%
2001	232,253	+ 5.0%
2000	221,352	+ 2.0%

**North Carolina Year-Round**

NCS	Inc/Dec	New	Retention
6,282	+403	2,169	65%
5,879	+172	2,242	62%
5,707		2,240	61%

**2006**

1. Southern California	15,791	-111
2. Illinois	15,724	+411
3. Indiana	9,546	-115
4. Middle Atlantic	8,318	+115
5. Potomac Valley	7,796	+375
6. Metropolitan	7,704	+399
7. New Jersey	7,100	+152
8. Florida	7,049	+207
9. Michigan	6,656	-357
10. Southeastern	6,223	+9
11. Georgia	6,072	-89
12. Minnesota	6,021	-17
13. New England	6,016	+19
14. North Carolina	5,879	+172

**2007**

15,741	-50
15,518	-206
9,885	+339
8,275	-43
8,189	+393
7,989	+285
7,387	+287
7,168	+119
6,855	+229
12 <sup>th</sup> 6,353	+130
11 <sup>th</sup> 6,545	+473
14 <sup>th</sup> 6,210	+189
10 <sup>th</sup> 6,756	+191
13 <sup>th</sup> 6,282	+403

**2007 Count of Clubs by Number of Year-round Athlete Members for 2007**

# Members	# Clubs	Total Members	Ave # of Members per Club	% of Total # of Clubs
0 to 50	1,167	27,085	23	42.4
51 to 100	694	50,460	72	25.2
101 to 150	408	50,710	124	14.8
151 to 200	204	35,198	172	7.4
201 to 250	135	30,121	223	4.9
251 to 500	124	40,822	329	4.5
501 to 1000	17	10,052	591	.6
1001 or more	5	7,099	1419	.2
Total	2,754	251,547	91	

42.4% of clubs have fewer than 50 members, with the ave. number being 23 athletes

67.6% of clubs have fewer than 100 athletes

Only 22 clubs have 500 or more athlete members (.8% of clubs)

**Would be interesting to task someone to graph the # and % of NCS clubs that fall into each category (0 to 50, etc.) and %.**

- FIN -