



Dear Delegate,

Thank you for agreeing to attend the 2014 U.S. Aquatic Sports (USAS) convention in Jacksonville, Florida. Your willingness to serve and the input you will offer are much appreciated. Whether this is your first convention or your thirtieth, and whether you will be at the convention representing your LMSC, as an automatic delegate or an at-large delegate, you should know what to expect and what your responsibilities are.

U.S. Masters Swimming is the national governing body for Masters swimming in the United States. We are an equal member of USAS along with USA Swimming, USA Diving, USA Synchronized Swimming and USA Water Polo. The USMS meetings are part of the overall USAS Convention and delegates from all National Governing Bodies (NGBs) meet during convention.

Pre-Convention

You will need to register with USAS if you have not done so already. Some LMSCs send in all their delegate registrations at once; others expect you to pay for this yourself and then request reimbursement. Please check with your LMSC for its preferred procedure. You'll also need to make a hotel reservation. The convention hotel sometimes fills up, so be sure to get your reservation in early. You can always cancel the reservation if your plans change. You can also get a refund on your registration fee, if you let them know early enough. Most LMSCs only reimburse for half of the room cost, assuming you will share a room. If you don't have anyone to room with, contact Tracy Grilli (<mailto:usms@usms.org>), USMS Member Services Manager. She will play matchmaker for you. You should have already received the necessary form for convention registration. If not, you can find it here:

http://www.usaquaticsports.org/online_docs/registration-2014/reg-1-dev.html

The link on the website to the pre-convention documentation (**USMS is “going green” so hard copies will not be distributed**) is <http://www.usms.org/admin/conv/2014/>. The pre-convention packet contains annual reports for all entities and meeting agendas for committee meetings. **All delegates are expected to read the pre-convention packet prior to arriving at convention.**

Most delegates will arrive on Wednesday, September 17th, and leave on Sunday, September 21st. Meetings will begin on Wednesday afternoon and run through Sunday morning. We recommend arriving no later than 3:00 pm Wednesday and leaving no earlier than noon Sunday. There will be a Board of Directors (BOD) meeting Wednesday, and it is open to all delegates. In fact, any meeting published on the schedule in the convention booklet is open to all delegates. The BOD will also be meeting on Sunday from 9:15am – 12:00pm as well, and if you're still around you're welcome to attend, but it is beyond the call of duty for you to stay just for that meeting. Unless you're on the BOD, of course!

Registration & Certification

When you arrive, the first thing you should do is go to the USAS registration area, where you will be registered and receive your name tag, which you must wear throughout convention. From USAS, you need to go to USMS certification, which will most likely be in the exhibitor area. One of our friendly USMS volunteers will put a sticker on your badge, which indicates you are an official USMS delegate and certified to vote. They'll also check your name off the roll so that we know you're here. You'll be able to pick up additional information at certification, such as a convention evaluation form, information on morning workouts, voting cards and the USMS hospitality room number. Every year, some delegates fail to get certified, thinking they're finished once they check in with USAS. And some even try to come to certification before they go to USAS. It won't work that way! You need to have something to stick your sticker on first!

Welcome Reception -The welcome reception hosted by USAS, is on Wednesday beginning at 7:00 pm, there will be a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres.

USMS Hospitality Suite -Snacks and beverages will be provided in the USMS Hospitality Suite throughout the convention. They will have light meals for breakfast and lunch and snacks in the evenings, so if you're pressed for time, just don't want to spend money for these meal, want to socialize with other USMS volunteers, try the hospitality suite – room 4104!

LMSC Social –Thursday 7:30-10:00 pm. The Florida LMSC will be treating us with Sonny's Barbeque in the hospitality suite (Room 4104). Come and network with fellow USMS delegates while enjoying some great BBQ!

International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame Induction – Friday 6:00-8:15 pm. All delegates are invited to attend the induction of US Masters swimmers - David Guthrie, Tim Shead and Jean Troy.

USAS Banquet – The food is usually pretty good and everyone dresses up, so men, bring a suit, and ladies, bring something dressy. If you have special dietary needs, you can indicate these to USAS when you register for the convention. Expect the banquet to begin on Saturday evening around 7:00 and end around 10:00 pm. Each USAS organization will present their annual awards. USMS presents the **Coach of the Year** Award and the **Ransom Arthur** Award. Everyone looks forward to this portion of the evening because USMS always provides a very entertaining presentation. Some audience participation is often required too, so pay attention to announcements in the HOD meeting! Groups of people can reserve banquet tables (usually seating about 10). If your LMSC or some other group of people doesn't reserve a table, don't worry. Just sit at any open seat.

Meetings

There are a number of orientations, workshops, presentations and gatherings scheduled for you (there just is not enough room in this letter to list and explain them all). Please refer to the Announcement section of the pre-convention packet (referred to above) for information on these programs.

On Thursday, all delegates of each zone will meet together to discuss issues common to their region, these meetings take place from 10:00am – 11:00am am and are led by your Zone Chair.

You are expected to attend every session of the HOD. This is where the official business of the corporation is conducted. Try to keep side conversation to a minimum so everyone can hear, and you don't miss important information. At the each HOD meeting, Chris Colburn, USMS Secretary will call the roll of those not certified or who have not yet checked in. This year the USMS At Large Board will be elected. There will be information about this election during this first HOD session. Since there are contested elections, we will have a Meet the Candidates Forum on Thursday from 12:00pm – 1:45pm. Please take time to read about this year's candidates for the Board of Directors, since you will be voting in the contested elections. <http://www.usms.org/admin/election14/>

USMS is divided into four divisions: Administration, Local Operations, Programs and Community Services. We try not to have committees in the same division meeting at the same time. Some committees meet more than once during the convention, but most meet only once. When you attend a meeting, you will see that the committee members sit at a table, and those who are not members sit in the audience. Everyone attending the meeting should sign an attendance sheet. Most committee chairs want to hear from the audience members as well, but the committee has to get a lot of work done at convention in a short time, so audience participation may be limited in some meetings. Only committee members may vote during committee meetings.

In our attempt to go “green” we are phasing out the printed meeting minutes/accordion files. USMS has made arrangements for internet access in our HOD room and all meeting rooms. Committee meeting minutes/reports will be uploaded to the convention page of the USMS website and be available for you to review on your digital reader (lap top, iPad, cell phone, etc) soon after the completion of the meeting. If you will not be bringing a digital reader and prefer to have hard copies printed, please contact Tracy at usms@usms.org by Friday September 5th.

Committee reports will be presented at the HOD sessions. Also, issues may be voted on, so it is extremely important to have the committee minutes read beforehand. The committee chairs will only address important decisions, and then ask for a motion to approve the minutes. You are free to ask questions and challenge decisions, but once the minutes have been approved, we have accepted the committee's decisions. If there is debate on an issue, speakers will be limited to three minutes each, with one minute for rebuttal, if needed. Debate can sometimes be drawn out. Once everyone who wants to speak has spoken, a vote will be taken. If it seems that debate is going on too long, any delegate can make a motion to stop debate (“Call the question”). The motion to call the question is not debatable, but it does require a second. Once the motion is seconded, we vote immediately whether to call the question. We are NOT voting on the issue yet, but only on whether to cease debate. If 2/3's vote to cease debate, then those who were in line at the microphone when the question was called will still be allowed to speak, but no one else. And then we'll (finally) vote on the issue. Most issues will require only a simple majority to pass. Please refer to a greatly abridged version of Robert's Rules of Order (<http://www.usms.org/admin/conv/2013/robertsrules.pdf>) for more explanation.

This is a Rules and Long Distance Rules year, meaning we will concentrate on amendments to parts 1 & 3. We will only consider emergency amendments for Legislation (2, 4, 5 & 6 and Appendix D). The procedure will be reversed next year. The Rules and Long Distance Committees will discuss every amendment submitted to them and either

recommend or not recommend each one. They may also amend proposals first, and then recommend or not recommend. Amendments that are recommended require only a simple majority in the HOD to pass. Amendments that are not recommended will require a two-thirds majority to pass. The Legislation Committee will first decide if an amendment is an emergency. If not, they won't consider it further, and it's a dead issue for the convention. If they do consider it an emergency, they'll decide whether to recommend or not. If they recommend it, a 90 percent vote will be required to pass it.

During the Saturday afternoon HOD meeting, we'll have a feedback session. This will be informal; comments, suggestions and feedback are invited. Some of the best ideas for improvements to convention have come out of this session. We do want to know what you think. Immediately following convention you will receive via Survey Monkey, a Committee Request Survey. If you are on a committee and want to remain on a committee, **you must complete this survey**. If you're a new delegate, you can ask to be put on a committee. Or if you want to change committees, you can make that request too. We generally try to appoint delegates to only one committee, but sometimes exceptions have to be made. You will also receive via Survey Monkey, a Convention Evaluation Survey. Say whatever you think, these will be anonymous.

Again, thanks for agreeing to be a delegate, and we look forward to seeing you in Jacksonville!

Chris Colburn, Secretary
Chris Stevenson, VP of Local Operations
Tracy Grilli, Member Services Manager