



**Central American and Caribbean Amateur Swimming
Confederation
CCCAN Leaders Seminar
October 26 - 28, 2012 Miami, Florida**

Dear BOD,

Here is my report on the CCCAN Leadership Seminar.

First, let's discuss the financials and get that out of the way. USMS paid for my travel to the conference. USMS gave the attendees swim caps and luggage tags. USAS paid for my hotel and most of my meals. UANA Masters Pan American LOC-Sarasota 2013 sponsored a luncheon. I donated a USMS dry fit shirt and my club shirt and swim cap for a raffle. USMS financial contribution was very little or what this conference meant and did for the CCCAN federations and what I learn from this.

USAS paid for all attendees hotel rooms, paid for the conference room for one day, a welcome appetizer reception and the Dinner on Saturday night.

FOREWARNING: This is long, but I wanted you to get a sense of the networking and exchange of ideas that occurred over this weekend.

The topics for the weekend

- 1) Olympic Athletes (Fraser brothers, Alia Atkinson, Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace), who discussed their perspective on support from their respective federations, the reason why they trained in the US, what they felt could help impact swimming in CCCAN. Main reason for leaving their country was competition and go to college. The Frasers also stated that the US has the best coaching due to the available resources.
- 2) ISHOF-Bruce Wigo/Alia Atkinson spoke about the history of Native American and people of color were excellent swimmers and how that history will help aquatic sports and learn to swim programs in the CCCAN. One thing that was mentioned that majority of the drowning were tourist and tourist who did not pay attention to the local conditions. The "local" people did not go in the water if they did not know how to swim. Bruce mentioned that if a child does not learn how to swim by the age of 8 years old, the chances of that child learning to swim is slim. (I guess I just made it, living on an island-I learned when I was 8 years old)
- 3) ASCA-Matt Hooper discussed the resources that ASCA has for coaching and also the opportunities the federations had. It was a statistical lecture; he showed them how many events the CCCAN Federation had compared to US, Europe, Oceania, Canada, South America-which was significantly lower than

others; he also showed the number of athletes from CCCAN which was made up of 26 countries (now 27, and hoping for 28) had athletes in the Olympics, how many splashes and how many made finals. Discussion took place that coaches in the US are better, and the US has more resources and support staff. He was trying to show them that CCCAN had a great ratio of countries to swimmers to splashes. However the difference was the amount of medals and that tends to be the determination for funding for federations.

Discussion took place that coaches in the US are better, and the US has more resources and support staff. Federations need to have more competitions that will provide more opportunities for swimmers.

- 4) An Olympic Medalist to National Federation President; Cuban's President Rodolfo Falcon; spoke about athletes wanting to give back and how mentoring the younger athletes; having role models are important and investment into programs are important. Setting clear objective will help you reach goals. Have short and long term goals.
- 5) CCCAN's President Errol Clarke-CCCAN Our Future together
He stated excellently that he does not represent Barbados; he represents CCCAN and decisions being made is for ALL. That's why he doesn't have a federation on his nametag. He only had his name and CCCAN on it.
Breakout sessions took place to discuss the CCCAN Mission. Errol Clarke stated his mission: Together we will embrace, enhance and empower
The attendees discussed what they thought the CCCAN Mission should be and what challenges they are having. What things can they help each other with. They realized that they could be more powerful if they pull their resources together. For example: Most federations cannot send a physician and a massage therapist, etc. Most did not even have enough to send swimmers and coaches. If the federations who had athletes going to an event; they could help pay for ancillary staff which might help their athletes succeed better at the international level.
Collectively their goal was to have an athlete in the finals of all the events. Unfortunately, the amount of financial assistance is dependent on the number of medals the federations produce.
Agreement to have websites functional and link on the CCCAN website. They felt that communication, and support and be unified is better for all.
- 6) Dale Neuberger, spoke about the FINA resources FINA Development Program and IOC Solidarity Program: How to Access and Maximize Their Impact"
Discussion took place on how some federations utilized the grants and how did not. The federations that did shared how it impacted their federation and grew their program. One interesting program was that a federation got a FINA grant for coaching; they brought in a coach to teach ALL their PE instructors on how to teach swimming. Utilizing both the pool and beach.
- 7) Mel-UANA Masters Technical Chair, Rob and I spoke about "Masters Swimming: How to Promote and Develop a Masters Program in your National Federation; this was the most interesting for me. We first asked each federation if they had a masters program. It was interesting that many said, NO "we do not have a federation or no program"; but we have a club

that has a masters group. Perception here. They also call their fitness swimmers-“recreational swimmers.” Second; “masters swimmer” some only pay club fees, nothing to the federation. Many did not know the history of USMS. They were shocked that we started in 1970 and had only 47 swimmers, then now are 58,000. They were surprised that only 30-40% actually compete. Rob gave the statistic that 37% of adults do not know how to swim and the chances of their children not knowing how to swim is exponential. I compared USMS as their swimming federation and USA Swimming as their Track and Field. In addition, we compete with Triathlon (USA and Ironman). We tend to go for the same sponsorship. We actually split into two groups-Rob and I spoke with the ones that did not have any masters program; Mel spoke with the federations that had “programs” Another issue was pool availability, talked about not all swimming has to be done in a pool, open water programs can be an option.

Interesting that Masters is not considered a separate discipline. The 5 disciplines are Swimming, Diving, Synchro, Water Polo and Open Water Swimming.

- 8) Sarasota 2013 hosted the luncheon and Rob spoke about the 2013 UANA Masters Pan American Championships next year; FUN FIESTA. Rachael Bowman, who is on the LOC from Sarasota assisted with translations.
- 9) Jay Thomas, Spoke on Open Water Swimming: Conducting and Promoting Safe events; he actually mentioned that the Sarasota Open Water event was one of the safest events that he has been too. Regarding safety: Spoke about making races more compact and shoreline swims, smaller controllable wave starts, capping number of participants. NO MORE Long distance-point to point swims. Liability is too high. One federation stated that even having one to one escort is not necessarily safe; another federation requires all open water swimmers to get a medical screening before participating in the swim.
- 10) Next they had area coaches-age group coach, Jen Gibson and senior coach Dave Gibson, and Jesse Vassallo spoke about how to develop successful and comprehensive programming. All of them supported a learn to swim program as a feeder program, that helps promote the sport and is an investment. Defining roles and responsibilities of coaches, succession planning and as a joke “get rid of the parents” Jesse was a successful swimmer, a past President of Puerto Rico. Coaches need to remember if they want the athlete to succeed that they must also realize their role in the process, some coaches are great age group coaches, but not senior coaches. Talked about transfer grace period to discourage club hopping. Coaches from different programs should support each other for the betterment of the swimmer.
- 11) Developing of Full Range of Aquatic Disciplines: Water Polo, Synchronized swimming and Diving. Nick Gaffey will be the meet director for the Water Polo in Orlando part of the UANA Masters Pan American Championships. He will be also hosting a Masters water polo event in Orlando in February, getting alumnus from colleges to challenge each other; he is having 12 men’s teams and 8 women’s teams. He talked about splash ball for the youth-

shallower water, smaller ball, smaller play area and using a noodle for support to initially help keep the kids afloat; he also showed ocean set ups for water polo. He stated that water polo tends to drop off between 15-17 years old, and USA Water polo is targeting high schools to promote water polo. Ashley Johnson, who is a Jamaican, and runs the Coral Springs program; spoke about a learn to synchro "In Sync" that starts at age 4-6 years old, and also partner with dance and gymnastic clubs. She also discussed pool depth; that basic start at 4 feet, and one would only need 7 feet. She also stated that her program has grown when they host competitions and shows and market their events locally. The impact of that is amazing. Mark Ruiz, a US Olympian, who actually dove for Puerto Rico in the CCCAN Championships. He encouraged federations to have programs even if they do not have platforms. He stated that younger divers do not even start on platform (I can't remember) they have to develop skills first. He stated the even if you have only a 1 and 3 meter spring board, that is a great start. He also talked about how in Orlando he started with under 50 divers and now is over 150 in 2 years.

Phew are you getting tired reading this: Sunday, I did not get to type anything until after. I was the moderator on two panel discussions.

First was on "Sharing the experience of Senior Leaders with New National Federation Presidents" St. Lucia, Panama, EL Salvador and Puerto Rico I loved the El Salvador's president's comment: "I learned that you do not spend more money than you have and you pay off your debt." He took over when El Salvador was deep in debt and was sanctioned by FINA. El Salvador is financially stable but does not have reserves yet.

Another was that the federations decided that investing in staff was the right direction, they can focus on aquatics and get things done faster. They were just talking about one person. Comments were made that when that person is a employee of the country and the country doesn't pay them then what do they do. Success for increasing revenue is hosting events; getting sponsors for events; applying for grants for programs such as learn to swim and making sure if the program is 6 months- include in the grant request "everything-cost of kickboards, caps, coaching, facility cost-electric, chlorine and add a little to it for the unexpected cost" That will also decrease your federations cost for the pool usage fees.

Second was on funding for Important National Federation initiatives. Have your mission, set goals both short and long term, show your success, show transparency especially with the budget and audits. After any event; thank the sponsors and show them the budget and the impact to the event. Most likely they would support you again and possibly give you more. Hosting events for all levels; promoting your event. Making sure your brand and image is consistent and your message is clear. One thing-one federation did was they could not

compete to get the large sponsorships, so they did little things which then amounted to some funding, it took more work but it was better than nothing. The open water learn to swim was called "seaweed learn to swim"; think outside the pool-if the limitation is the pool; think of alternative income.

The Keynote Address: "YOUR National Federation: How to Tell Your Story within CCCAN, UANA, FINA."

Greg spoke about web presence: about half of the federations had websites and about 5 had updated records available on the website.

Interesting that clubs in the federations use websites and social media more than federations. The club websites were up to date.

Greg spoke of the importance of marketing the sport at all levels-club records, meet records, national age group records, Caribbean records, CCCAN records; wins at meets; they are all news worthy. Every event should have some type of publicity.

Wrap up session:

The attendees were very appreciative for the opportunity and felt that this was a worthwhile event.

CCCAN agreed on a temporary mission:

To promote, develop, educate, support

Communicate between the federations and

To excel on the worldwide and to place in finals in all disciplines.

(I could not remember everything-I was helping with another task)

They ran out of time to discuss objectives and goals.

A goal that they agreed on was increase communication, mentoring and helping each other. 2) Get their web presence established 3) update all federation records and send to "Maureen" they have a printed book of all the records which was outdated (3 years old)

The top three things I think we can learn from this event:

- 1) Communication is important and being unified will make a stronger statement and gain more support.
- 2) We have the resources and should provide opportunities to others; it can be as simple as showing them what was available on the USMS website. They were open to ideas, willing to learn and wanted to be better.
- 3) Providing information on opportunities for them; it is cheaper for some federations to come to the US for competitions than to fly to a neighboring island. In addition, we can support their events; most get their funds from events.

What I learn from this:

- Marketing and Promoting Masters will grow and our sport; the correct brand and image needs to be consistent and communicate
- Many were seeking direction and tangible items, immediate implementation same as convention
- We have resources that others are wanting from us-club and coach services, clinics for adults, learn to swim for adults
- They do need help; they would love for our master's swimmers to swim in a meet (not a national championship scale) They talk about having \$100,000 in reserves is a lot and some get \$4,000 per year from their country for their program. Some federations are government support programs, some or self supported and some are supported by their federation's Olympic movement.
- It is cheaper for us to fly to some of the federations than to fly across country
- It is cheaper for some federations to fly to Florida-Miami, Ft Lauderdale and Orlando than to other Caribbean islands
- The successful federations figured out a way to have 1-2 paid staff, which has significantly impacted their success and funding.
- Recognition has a positive impact; any type from competitions club records, LMSC records, Zone Records, couples that meet
- Need a media relations or public relations contractor

What I am going to do:

Appoint a task force: International Goodwill Task Force-Jim Miller, Nancy Ridout, Mel Goldstein, Nadine Day and Rob Butcher
Mission: To promote and support masters swimming beyond the United States
Discussion: What can we provide?, What justification of expenses if any and how much? Why are we going beyond the US boundaries when we have issues at home?

We have had request for the club and coaches education.

We are advertising about an open water swim in the Caribbean in the Summer issue in Swimmer magazine.

Asking for USMS to support their master's events, pool and open water.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

We can discuss this more in February.

Respectfully submitted

Nadine Day

USMS President