Committee Name: **Communications**   Session # (if more than one meeting): 2   Cmte. report #: 21

Minutes recorded by: Meg Smath   Date/time of this meeting: September 17, 8:00 a.m.   REVISED

ACTION ITEMS - OTHER

1.   MSA that we recommend that the Records and Tabulation Committee work with the Top Times database developers to come up with a plan to work toward a single meet results database.

Committee Chair: Hugh Moore   Vice Chair(s): Michael Moore, Meg Smath

Number of committee members present: 14   Absent: 16   Number of other delegates at this meeting: 11

Committee members present (list all): Hugh Moore, Susan Ehringer, Raena Latina, Ray Novitske, Kelly Crandell, Kathy Casey, Dennis McManus, Anne LaBorwit, Jane Masters, Meg Smath, Bill Volckening (ex-officio), Jim Matysek (ex-officio), Tracy Grilli (ex-officio), Lynn Hazlewood (Executive Committee liaison).

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at: 8:00 a.m.

1.   **Webmaster:** Jim Matysek introduced Marian Briones, web developer, to the committee, and noted she has been a big help throughout the past year. During the early part of last year they concentrated on redesign of the website, and added several behind-the-scenes tools for maintenance. Right now the online entry system for the world championships is their highest priority. That is planned to go live January 1, with beta testing beginning next month. This will be the first time our online entry system has been used for multi-sport entry (worlds will also include synchro, water polo, diving, and open water). January 1 is also the deadline for having SC Nationals online entry ready, and Jim is hoping to have a system for payment for the 1-hour postal ready by then. The rule book should be posted by January 1 as well. All this means there is no time for new projects in the next few months. Prioritization of tasks for next year will be the responsibility of the next Executive Committee. Kathy Casey asked if there was a form or procedure for requesting a web project? Jim said anyone requesting a new web project should email support@usms.org to get it in the pipeline. Guidelines for web projects are in the policy section under administration on the website. Jim added that detailed explanation of what's needed helps determine priorities, but asking for a specific look is not helpful. Chris McGiffin asked how prioritization works. Jim said he participates in a weekly conference call with Hugh and Lynn Hazlewood, in which they review and revise priorities. Many seasonal projects move up in priority as deadlines approach. Bill Volckening noted that development of the usmsswimmer.com was another time-consuming project during the past year. Ray asked about progress on online registration, a members-only section, and long-range planning. Jim said online registration is on the task list, but he hasn't had time to complete it. It's very complicated, because it varies greatly by LMSC. Ed Tsuzuki asked what moves something up in priority. Hugh said they consider how many members will a project benefit and how long will it take. Lynn added that priorities are often deadline driven. Jim noted that we also prioritize the ongoing tasks, and that because we have no support staff, he must devote some of his time to that. Lynn added that how long a project has been in the queue is also a factor, and that priorities shift and are affected by policy decisions. Lynn will email the task list to committee members for their information.

Meet results database. Hugh read a report submitted by Mel Dyck, chair of this subcommittee, which included the following: "At the first of the year, 2005, our subcommittee was established with the mandate to try to recover and preserve results from all meets sanctioned and recognized by USMS. The goal is to improve the Current Top Times searchable database into an accurate record of all swims performed by registered USMS swimmers, regardless of where they stand with respect to the best swims. It is felt by committee members that the Top Ten is an extremely valuable program for the recognition of top performances, but that USMS actually serves the entire community of swimmers, not just the elite. We all know 50th place swimmers who train just as hard as those who achieve a number one place. Their times should be available just as readily as those record-setting performances. But Current Top Times has another valuable service. It provides a timely searchable database so that a hard-training swimmer can see how his/her competition is doing around the time of critical meets. We can routinely provide results to the database as quickly as the results are submitted.… At

its inception, the subcommittee was in the middle of the short course yards season, known for having many meets in nearly every LMSC. This season, we have merged 103 meets into the database, roughly 2.7 times the previous high of 38 meets. Special thanks are due to a number of very aggressive subcommittee members who tracked down and delivered most of these meet results files. They are Cav Cavanaugh, Barbara Dunbar, Laszlo Eger, Mark Gill, Julie Heather, Fritz Lehman, Jim Matysek, Mary Pohlmann, Jeff Roddin, Barry Roth, Ed Saltzman and Ed Tsuzuki. Our current long course season is also going well, thanks to the dedication of the same group of members.… However, it is my opinion that the archiving of swim times will not be truly complete until there is a directive from the USMS management that meet directors and/or Top Ten chairs provide the full set of swim results." John Baumann asked that Mel's report be forwarded to the Records and Tabulation Committee. Ed Tsuzuki asked why we have both Top Ten and Current Top Times databases. The title "Top Times" is admittedly misleading. What it really is is a meet results database. Meg moved, Kelly seconded, that we recommend that the Records and Tabulation Committee work with the Top Times database developers to come up with a plan to work toward a single meet results database. MSA unanimously.

Discussion Forum monitors. Most monitoring is done by Jim and Lynn. Hugh is a backup. Occasionally posts escalate to a liability concern. Hugh said he would like volunteers to keep the forums on topic and steer questions to someone who knows the answers. Hugh used to try to do this on his own, but the volume has become too large. Hugh occasionally has had to close threads to stop flaming. Hugh asked for volunteers, but none were forthcoming.

Content review. Meg reported on her subcommittee to review current content on the website, which included Susan Ehringer and Mark Hurley. They saw no problems with current articles, largely because the Sports Medicine Committee had already reviewed those articles. For future articles, she recommended a gatekeeper, largely to make sure they conform to our style. Kelly Crandell and Kathy Casey volunteered to do this. Doug Garcia noted that some of the articles may require more than just grammar checks. Kelly suggested that badly written articles could be returned to authors with requests for revision. Doug has asked for funds in the Marketing budget for editing press releases, so maybe those editors could also be pressed into service for this purpose. We need to establish a process to get articles in the queue and get editorial review.

Communication plan. Ray Novitske reported that the subcommittee that also included Kathy Casey and Tom Lyndon has developed a framework for a communication plan., which has three general steps: (1) Identify current communication vehicles. (2) Determine how effective they are (including cost effectiveness). (3) Make recommendations for improvement.

TASKS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

1.   A committee must be established to select the recipients of the new Communications Award. Bill said the criteria for the award have been outlined and delivered to the Recognition and Awards Committee. A schedule must be developed and volunteers (including those from other committees) must be recruited. Kelly Crandell and Raena Latina volunteered to be on the selection committee.
2.   Kelly will also be taking over administration of the Newsletter of the Year Award.
3.   Hugh would like to see us establish percentile goal times.
4.   Hugh would like to explore establishing virtual dual meets.
5.   Ray suggested we find a means to highlight LMSC communications vehicles as educational tools.
6.   We will ask the new Executive Committee to consider more communications workshops at next year's convention.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.