

## United States Masters Swimming Executive Committee Conference Call

March 8, 2006

FINAL

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### Action Items:

1. MSA to buy the web server recommended by Mark Gill and the needed software.
  2. MSA to request an overbudget expense for luggage tags, to be paid for from the Marketing Committee's budget.
  3. MSA to hire BluegrassNet, an IT group based in Louisville, Ky., to work on the software for online entries for the World Championships, for up to 100 hours of work.
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President Rob Copeland called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. EST. Also present were Leo Letendre, Mike Heather, Julie Heather, Patty Miller, Mark Gill, Tom Boak, Tracy Grilli and Meg Smath. Jim Miller joined the call at 7:48 p.m.

### Officer reports

#### *Legal Counsel:*

Patty reported that after the hosts for the 10K National Championship agreed to accept paper entries in addition to online entry, she worked with Marcia Cleveland and Leo Letendre to ensure that the paper entry form clearly informed participants about the risks involved in the race. While it's great to have liability releases on our entry forms, they're not always enforceable and it's important that we clearly inform participants of risks, especially for long distance events that may involve extreme conditions.

Meg Smath has been very helpful in gathering information we will need to renew our trademark registration. Patty hasn't had a chance to make much of what Meg's gathered yet, but will soon compile it and get it to our trademark attorney, John Crittenden.

Patty prepared a proposed agreement for the contractor who will be gathering the data for the magazine/consumer behavior survey, but hasn't heard yet whether it was acceptable or has been signed. She's also worked in recent weeks on a renewal agreement for Margaret Bayless, our contracted Controller. The renewal reflects the change in Margaret's compensation that was approved at convention, as well as some minor changes to the description of services that she will provide.

Julie Heather forwarded to her an interesting question regarding insurance for USMS members on overseas military bases. Sandi Blumit has spoken to our carrier for clarification of coverage, but it may be an issue that the EC would like to discuss as we explore military memberships. Rob noted that our insurance is secondary, and does not cover acts of war. We will ask Insurance Coordinator Colleen Driscoll to look into this situation and make a recommendation. We will also need to discuss it with the Army. There is also the broader question of registering a club not physically located in the United States.

Another registration question was if we can register people who live in foreign countries. USMS has no prohibition against it. There is no problem with swimmers who live in another country but are registering only with USMS, and not the NGB of the country in which they live. There may be a problem for swimmers who live in foreign

countries who want to register with USMS and the country in which they live. Jim said that the issue is within the governing body for each country. In some countries the NGB has to release swimmers for them to transfer to a different club.

***Past-President:***

Jim has been actively engaged with the sports medicine seminar for the World Championships. The Impact Task Force met on March 1; minutes to this meeting are attached. Jim was asked if he has talked to other aquatic disciplines about publicizing aquatic sports through the World Championships, and said he has not yet. He noted that the stories that will come out of the championships will become evident as the event goes on.

***Treasurer:***

Tom said he had very little to report other than the day-to-day operations of our organization. He has sent a letter to the task force that will look at our investment strategy, and has already gotten some feedback. Tom has finalized the credit needed for the Costco conference calling plan and contacted them. He is in the process of setting up the conferencing account, which should be operational by the time he gets back from vacation on March 20.

***Vice President of Local Operations:***

Julie reported that *Records and Tabulation* has just completed the SCM Top 10 and sent it to the printer. The list of All-Americans was completed and sent to Bill Volckening for *USMS Swimmer*. Mary Beth Windrath has been working on ways to spread out the Top 10 tabulation workload, but has been unsuccessful so far. We will continue to explore options.

The *Zone Committee* has approved changes to the Election Operating Guidelines. These will be presented at convention for approval. Mike Lemke presented model bylaws and grievance procedures to the Zone Committee and has received feedback. The committee feels that it is important to try to get representatives from some of the struggling LMSCs to convention, and we will be focusing on identifying those LMSCs and providing grants to have someone go to convention. The committee came up with a tentative list of LMSC workshops to be offered at convention. We would like to present this list to the HOD email list and ask for suggestions for additional workshops. Anthony Thompson is working on LMSC and zone boundaries, and has looked at the USA Swimming structure.

***Vice President of Community Services:***

Mike said that *Sports Medicine, Health and Safety* is very active, trying to finalize the arrangements for the sports medicine lecture series at Worlds in August. *Fitness* is launching the Virtual Swim to Worlds.

***Vice President of National Operations:***

Leo reported that the majority of the activity since the last meeting appears to be coming from the Long Distance and Registration Committees. The *Long Distance Committee* has completed the acceptance of entry forms for all long distance championships. All issues with the Open Water 10K National Championship were resolved. Applications were

accepted on active.com and on paper. The meet is now over two-thirds full. The One Hour Postal results are being proofed and appear to be in good shape. More than 2,000 swimmers participated. To clarify for the record, O\*H\*I\*O Masters, the host of the One Hour Postal, was not at fault and was not the reason that online entries for the One Hour Swim were not available this year. That fault lies on the shoulders of USMS.

The *Online Registration Task Force* has met once since the last EC meeting. Work on the specification is ongoing. Research is being done in order to address backroom issues that require complete understanding in order to make the project feasible. The merchant account is the big stumbling block. The envisioned process is that when someone registers on the web, a unique transaction identifier will be generated. We will be able to download a file from the vendor processing the registration that will verify that the transaction has gone through and money is in our account.

***Vice President of Member Services:***

Mark reported that the USMS web server experienced a hard drive failure the week of February 26. We had a replacement hard drive installed March 6, and the installation did not go well. The web server was down for 12 hours, including the overnight hours when there was no tech support on site at the data center. We let it go overnight because we believed that the server was resynching the RAID disks prior to bringing up web services, which would take a few hours. After many attempts, we were not able to get the server to come up and work with the new drive in place. The server is now operating with a single disk rather than with the two-disk RAID system we want. We do not know if the replacement disk is bad or if the server port for that disk is bad.

While we are able to operate our server with a single disk, Mark does not want to continue to operate that way for very long because a single disk failure in that case is extremely difficult to recover from. Our current server is nearly 3.5 years old (or 75 in server years). The type of server we are using has also been set to end-of-life status by Sun, meaning that Sun no longer supports them or provides updates for them. This can be a security risk since updates are not provided for newly discovered security holes. There are third-party companies that do support this type of server, but even those are beginning to scale back support for them now.

Mark proposed that we take this opportunity to replace our aging, ailing server now. He doesn't want to go through another round of difficult hardware problems while we are in the middle of taking online entries for Nationals and Worlds. We already have a \$3,000 capital line item in the 2006 budget for adding a second server to be used as a dedicated database server, which would split the load between two servers. We also have \$400 budgeted for server software and \$375 for technical support charges for the server, both within the web operations (5685) line item. Mark proposed that we use the capital line item to purchase a replacement server and the other line items for purchasing software for the new server and support for transferring to the new server if necessary. After we have replaced the server, we will have the opportunity to sell our old server to recoup some of its value, and between that income and the remainder of the \$3,000 capital line item, we may be able to still purchase a separate database server without need for an overbudget. Any activity on a second server should wait until after Worlds entries are over (June 3). We had also budgeted \$1,200 for web hosting/co-location services for the year, which covers 2 x \$50 per server per month. Since we won't be spending \$300 of

this for the first six months for a second server, we have that \$300 also available in the budget, which may be required for additional software for the second server.

Below are three price quotes for competitive servers of the type that Mark would like to replace our current server with. They all are CentOS/Blue Quartz-based servers. CentOS is an open source version of Red Hat Linux Enterprise edition, which is an excellent operating system for servers. Blue Quartz is an open source port of the old Cobalt/Sun web server appliance software that exists on our current Sun Cobalt server. This Blue Quartz software allows for easy maintenance of many common server functions and saves Mark a TON of time. The first two servers listed are identical as far as he can tell. The third one is slightly different—the CPU is a Celeron CPU rather than a Pentium 4, and the hard drives are 120 GB instead of 250 GB. Mark recommended that we go with server 1 below from RaQPort, even though it is \$140 more than RaQWare for the same product, because (1) we have used RaQPort before and have a working relationship with them and know that they can deliver the hardware, (2) RaQPort is in Arlington, Va., just a half hour away from our server co-location center in Laurel, Md., so we may be able to use them to be on site for the installation and transfer of files if necessary. RaQWare is in Louisiana, so they would not be available for any on-site service. These three price quotes satisfy the requirement for such quotes from FOG.

Note that the prices given below do not reflect the final purchase price of the server in any of the cases. Mark wants to upgrade the installation from 1 GB of memory to 2 GB. While all of these vendors will do this for us, none of their websites has such a configuration listed with a price. He expects the price increase for the additional memory to be in the neighborhood of \$100.

1. RaQPort.com—\$1,585  
MSI P1-103A2M server  
3.0 GHz Pentium 4 (socket 775), 2x250 GB SATA II hard drives, 1 GB  
DDR2 533  
MHz ECC RAM
2. RaQWare.com—\$1,445  
MSI P1-103A2M server  
3.0 GHz Pentium 4 (socket 775), 2x250 GB SATA II hard drives, 1GB DDR2  
533  
MHz ECC RAM
3. FirstLightNetworks.com—\$1,299  
Phosphor server  
3.0 GHz Celeron, 2x120 GB SATA hard drives, 1GB PC3200 400 MHz ECC  
RAM

In addition to the server purchase cost, we will need several additional software packages installed on the new server. These are covered by the \$400 server software portion of budget line item 5685. All are to be purchased from nuonce.net. That company is the main source of Blue Quartz server software packages. A number of other companies sell BQ software update packages, but most of them are resellers of nuonce.net software and charge more for them.

- \$90 Mail Scanner / Clam AV antivirus software
- \$90 SpamAssasin anti-spam software
- \$200 Chilisoft ASP software

- \$45 PHP language update
- \$425 total

Note that this is a little above the \$400 budget for this, but may be covered by the lack of co-location fees for the first half of the year for the second server. There are other software packages available for this type of server that may be nice to have installed at some point, but we'll hold off on them for now. The ones listed are essential.

**MSA to buy the server recommended by Mark and the needed software.**

The Executive Committee met in executive session by conference call on February 25 and **MSA to hire BluegrassNet, a midsized IT group based in Louisville, Ky., to work on the software for online entries for the World Championships, for up to 100 hours of work.** The company is experienced in php programming, the language used in the software. This arrangement is working well, and they expect to have a beta version in Michael Moore's hands on March 13.

Mark noted that we have been getting complaints about the webmaster being pulled off of all other tasks to work on the Worlds entry system. There are issues with some LMSC websites. Committee chair aliases have also not been updated. Also, online entry for SC Nationals is overdue.

The *Editorial Committee* has been working on a postal permit application. Our registration forms list the cost of *USMS Swimmer* at \$8, but this doesn't take advertising income into account. Tom advised that the \$8 amount is acceptable for the purposes of the postal permit. We need to make sure that this price breakdown is printed on every registration form. The magazine will publish the cost per member and the permit number (once we receive it) in each issue.

The member preferences survey (see minutes to 1-9-06 EC conference call) has been split into two parts, one focusing on the magazine and the other on consumer behaviors. The website will be dealt with later. The two surveys will be administered simultaneously. There will be no change in the cost to USMS.

*Championship* has sent out 2008 bid packages. So far we have interest from two short course venues and three long course venues (all on the West Coast). The Championship Committee is beginning discussion of a SCM national championship concept. Also, we may have to revise our policy on requiring that the referee and administrative referee of our national championship meets be national championship certified by USA Swimming, because of changes in USA Swimming practice.

The *Communications Committee's* web audit is moving along.

Nancy Ridout has reached an agreement about a Masters camp at Indiana University in Bloomington, working with Joel Stager, as a replacement for the U.S. Olympic Training Center Camp.

## **Luggage tags**

**MSA to request an overbudget expense to pay for luggage tags, to be paid for from the Marketing Committee's budget.** Tom noted that we have had several instances in which payment was delayed because expense vouchers have not been submitted or overbudget requests have not been made in a timely manner. Any cost-center heads who have questions about procedures should ask their division vice president.

## **New computer for National Office**

Leo will meet with Tracy April 1 to evaluate her computer and peripherals and recommend whatever upgrades are warranted.

## **Katrina Task Force**

Rob clarified that O\*H\*I\*O Masters' actual offer was to match \$1 for each donation by participants in the One Hour Postal, not to donate \$1 per entrant on their own. They also designated the Salvation Army as the recipient of these donations.

## **Ad Hoc ISHOF Nominating Committee**

This committee was to have given the Executive Committee a list of their goals and objectives by this meeting, but Mark said he had only recently requested the list from Chair Ginger Pierson, so she hasn't had time to respond yet. We will therefore consider this at the next meeting.

## **Proposed article in *Swimming World***

Mark has been approached by *Swimming World* about an article on swimming supporting swimming. Specifically, it will be about the relationship between Masters and the varsity at the University of Louisville; entry fees for Masters meets help support the varsity teams, and the varsity swimmers, in turn, time at Masters meets, and the program's graduates help coach Masters.

## **Executive Director search**

Rob reminded everyone that if people ask about applying for the job, we should point them to Anderson & Associates, our search firm. A draft of the position description has been received from Anderson & Associates; after refining, it will be sent to the Executive Committee. We will also need to post the description on our website. A general application form for USMS employment has also been created.

Following is the proposed interview process:

- Anderson & Associates screens candidates (reviews résumés and performs phone interviews)
- Anderson & Associates interviews strong, viable candidates (face-to-face interviews)
- USMS Search Committee reviews résumés and write-ups on candidates recommended by Anderson & Associates
- USMS Search Committee interviews candidates at SC Nationals in Coral Springs; members of the committee will show the candidates around the meet, introduce them to other Board members and people active in USMS
- USMS Search Committee recommends candidates (one or more) to the full Board; the Board is provided résumés and write-ups on the candidates; full Board is given the opportunity to talk with each candidate or ask questions on a Board conference call (separate calls for each candidate)
- Board then approves which candidate, if any, they want to hire

Tom questioned whether Anderson & Associates needs to interview candidates face to face; video conference could be an alternative.

## **U.S. Army partnership**

Rob participated in a conference call with Mel Goldstein, Mark Gill and Jerry Clark to discuss things we could do for the Army. Mel also talked with Army representatives at a national parks and recreation meeting. Rob has been in contact with the Army's representative, Paulette Freese, about getting a program off the ground at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, and will meet with her sometime in the next four to six weeks. It has been established that the bases will be able to use Army funds to help pay for programs.

## **World Championships update**

Michael Moore submitted the following report:

Online registration is not yet available. We were told that we would get a beta by 9 February 06. This did not happen. After hearing that we would be getting a beta in a few days on 20 February, Mark Gill and I had a full and frank discussion, and Mark secured a firm that specializes in php programming to help Jim Matysek with the programming. They started reviewing the code on 25 February. On Wednesday 1 March, I was promised a beta in a week—that would make it 8 March. There have been problems with the server that have taken Jim off the online registration to work on the server. I have reviewed alpha f, which is the work in process. It appears to be working OK, but I have not devoted a lot of time to it as I have other things to do and Jim and Mark have asked me to wait. Mark has been doing a great job of trying to manage the online registration. While not having online registration, Tracy has received about 70 registrations, that have generated about \$8,000. (We have not deposited the money yet, but we may soon.) Until online registration is available, there is no sense in pushing registration, as we want people to register online and it saves Tracy from trying to read European script.

I spoke with Marian Hildebrand, the meet director for the FINA World Masters Championships in Munich. She said that 50 percent of the registrations will be received in the last two days. That happened at the Munich championships, the LEN championships last year and another large meet she worked. Barry Fasbender said that 80 percent of USMS National Championships entries are received in the last two weeks.

As of last night 28 percent of the rooms that we have blocked have been reserved (about 7,000 room nights). Late last month there were over 1,200 people who had registered. We do look upon that as an encouraging sign. There are also many swimmers who have found their own hotel rooms in the Bay Area.

We are working on securing tall touchpads. As I have told the Executive Committee, if we have to purchase the pads and install them, this could raise expenses about \$50,000. We would have to purchase/secure nonstandard FINA pads—a regular FINA pool is 25 meters wide, but Baker Pool is 25 yards wide, so we would need a pad that is about 2.1 meters wide instead of one that is 2.4 meters wide. Also, we are going to have to have Baker Pool surveyed to be sure that it meets the regulation length requirements.

We are now getting five to 10 requests for information, or questions, every day and we reply as quickly as we can. It is important that YOU encourage your swimming buddies to register and compete at the XI FINA World Masters Championships. If you need meet books, please let us know and we will send them out to you.

We will be having a full teleconference meeting on the Sports Medicine Conference this Thursday [March 9]. I think this will help iron out some of the concerns and issues that have arisen.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email or phone me.

### **Sponsor package**

Rob, Patty and Mel Goldstein will explore creation of an agreement that combines the existing sponsorship structure and the logo license fee.

### **SWOT analysis**

Meg said that only a few Board members have turned in their rankings for our SWOT analysis (see minutes to BOD Midyear Meeting). Rob will remind everyone to turn them in as soon as they can.

### **Internal Auditor**

Leo spoke with Legislation Chair Sean Fitzgerald about possible legislation to discontinue this position.

### **Secretary's correction**

In the minutes for the Executive Committee's 2-15-06 meeting, the incorrect abbreviation was used for the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame. Instead of MSHOF, the abbreviation should be IMSHOF.

### **Next conference call**

The next Executive Committee conference call will be Monday, April 3, at 7:30 p.m. EST. The next Board of Directors conference call will be Wednesday, April 19, at 7:30 p.m. EDT.

Meg Smath,  
Secretary



## Minutes of the Impact Task Force

3-1-06

Time of meeting 8:00–8:40 p.m. EST

Submitted by Jim Miller, MD, Chair

Attending: Michael Heather and Michael Moore

### **Action Items**

- Videographers are on board—determination of financial support is under way for submission to the EC.
- A brief introduction will be prepared by the chair for submission to writers and sports publications to offer services of the task force with the intention of coordinating efforts.
- Contacts will be investigated within the Palo Alto/San Francisco Bay area of organizations that would be served by being involved in the event and its marketing.
- Next meeting will be with the Sports Medicine Committee organizers who are working to create the Conference on Masters Aquatics and Sports Medicine—attendees at that conference call will be Laura Kessler, Jody Welborn, Michael Moore, Michael Heather, Anne Cribbs, Jim Miller.

**Members of the Committee:** The membership has not changed but Marketing Committee representation was expected at this meeting. Unfortunately, conflicts did not allow them to join us. The next meeting must include them and will follow the conference call dealing with the Sports Medicine Conference.

**Discussion:** The small number of participants did not allow for sweeping action but the fundamentals and our progress were reviewed and the action items shown above did take form. Bill Bowen is on board from the Academy of Art in San Francisco. The quality of the videography is expected to be high, allowing a wide range of applications in the future. Anne does have a list of sportswriters and publications that she has developed. I shall produce a piece indicating the presence of this task force and our ability to help direct their efforts from the input of the information that athletes supply to us. Examples would include human interest stories as well as selected competitive rivalries.

An attempt will be made to contact organizations within the San Francisco Bay area that would benefit from participating in the Championships. Examples would include local health care organizations, health initiatives, etc. Michael will give me the list of what is present locally for me to establish these contacts. This should provide a benefit to marketing, publicity, sports medicine and funding.

**Next meeting:** The meeting including Sports Medicine is scheduled for 3/9/06 at 8 PM EST. (The date and time were selected several days after the conclusion of this meeting.) The parties involved are listed above.