

Athlete Summit Meeting Reports

Nisha Raghwani:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to chaperone the girls to this event.

I was invited to be part of two discussion events as part of a non athlete track.

1. How the coaches can support the athletes.

Each LSC talks about ways they're trying to develop their LSC.

Offering 10 and under swimmers a swim camp hosted by the older athletes.

Doing a buddy program with an older swimmer and a younger swimmer called big fish little fish.

Teams doing time trials once a month with families given opportunity to come and time so they can get used to the environment and volunteer during future meets.

LSCs hosting social events and gatherings like potlucks, breakfast after Sat morning practice, pizza after Fri night practice.

2. Block party concept

This topic took most of our Friday discussion as a lot of LSCs had various things to talk and discuss.

Few discussion points include -

This will take some revenue away from the LSC and give it back to the 3rd party.

The integrity of the meet results as coaches can run the meet and officials are not needed.

Most LSC have worked really hard to train and recruit officials but now running meets without them would not be sending the right message. Possibly a decline of officials.

The results of the meet can't be used for meets that are sectional and above. And LSC can add more conditions if desired to.

Finally, few LSC brought up the concerns that few of the USA swimming members have a financial gain from this 3rd party offering of block party.

Hannah Cousins:

This weekend the Athlete Representatives went to the Central Zone Athlete Summit in Indianapolis. We learned so much through multiple sessions with people like Matt Biondi, Keenan Robinson, and Bernie Dickman.

Thursday

- Keynote Speaker: Olympian Matt Biondi

The main takeaway for me from Matt Biondi was life does go on. Swimming is not the only thing that matters in your life and it set me up for a weekend of broader thinking not just about swimming, but what I could do outside the sport.

-DEI and Safe sport

With DEI and Safe sport I learned about always creating a healthy culture and how I can play a role in having a fair and inclusive environment. They provided us with many ways to team bond that increase a positive environment for all. Some include themed practices, meet buddies, team shoutouts, and switching up lanes.

Friday

- Connecting Leaders In and Out of USA Swimming with Kathy Fish

I learned how the skills you develop from swimming can directly translate into your professional life. Kathy Fish talked about managing your risks, but not being afraid to take them and failure is just a stepping stone to success.

- Leading Athletes and Understanding Leadership Styles

During this exercise we learned about our personal leadership style as well as the different types of leadership styles. We talked through how to work together with all the types of styles and did activities to demonstrate this.

- LSC Marketing and Communication

One of the most beneficial sessions that I feel can be implemented right away was this session. I learned that the best way to market your LSC is by having consistent posting days, templates, fonts, and logos, having a content calendar, and multiple content ideas to try. Some

ideas included athlete takeovers, promoting different events throughout the LSC, and sharing high accomplishments.

- Personal Professional Marketing Session

During this session we learned about our values and what ones are most important to us individually. The values helped us think of our most important passions and experiences that have led to who we are today. From there we developed our personal brand statement for what we wanted and who we were outside of swimming.

Saturday

- Life After Swimming

I learned to be successful in life and even within the USA Swimming organization you don't have to be the most accomplished swimmer or person to be successful in your professional life. I also learned that being proud of yourself and your accomplishments is not bragging and it's important to show your skills and accomplishments in an interview.

- Sports Medicine with Kennan Robinson

Kennan Robinson talked about the importance of getting a yearly thorough physical and then manage those findings accordingly, whether that's going to see a specialist or incorporating exercises into your daily routine. He talked about the importance of routine and the role it plays in your performance. He also touched on the different careers USA Swimming offers through sports medicine and how he builds a team for national and international competitions.

Sunday

The last couple sessions were all about what we as Athlete Representatives can do for our LSCs. The ideas we came up with were sent to you on Sunday Night. In conclusion, it was a very beneficial and informative weekend filled with lots of learning and tools to better our LSC! I am very thankful to experience this summit and for the opportunity to make our LSC better!

Mehal Raghwani:

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Estella Koenigsfeld:

This past weekend the Athlete Representatives of Iowa Swimming participated in the Central Zone Athlete Summit in Indianapolis. We learned much about how to make our LSC stronger and more enjoyable for everyone.

Day 1:

We started the day off with a keynote speaker, Matt Biondi. He told us about his struggles when it came to his career in swimming. He also focused on how to react to life with neutrality and how every bad opportunity can lead to an even better outcome.

Then we had our Safe Sport and DEI talk. During the Safe Sports presentation, we learned about boundaries and how no one should ever break them. We also learned how to apply Safe Sport to the things around us by recognizing, responding, and reporting. Through the DEI talk, we learned about what diversity is and how it applies to everyone in the LSC. During this talk, we focused on how to bring the people around us closer together and how to include everyone in our plans.

Day 2:

We started the day with a talk about how to use leadership skills in and out of swimming by Kathy Fish. Through this talk, we focused on the aspects of good leadership and how they are modest and passionate about their work. We also talked about the importance of learning from the best and being able to take a step back and just listen.

We then moved to talk about marketing and communication within the LSC. We learned how important it is to have a stable social media presence and how to format one so it is pleasing to the viewers. We were able to acquire multiple strategies when it comes to social media and how we can promote Iowa Swimming better.

Following the LSC marketing strategies, we discussed how to build our brand and how we can use our goals to push ourselves further. We evaluated our passions, goals, and values to create a personal brand.

Day 3:

We started this day off with a discussion about what life after swimming is like. The main takeaway from this talk is how we can and should use the many skills we've learned in swimming to benefit those around us in the future. We also learned about how small the community of swimming is compared to other sports and how networking can work in our favor in the future.

Then we discussed sports medicine and how we can help the people in our LSC stay healthy and perform to their best abilities. We focused on the importance of recovery and how it can directly benefit your muscles, joints, and ligaments. We also received detailed information about who to go for when it comes to specific injuries.

We followed that with a discussion about how to be a servant leader and how we can implement it in our LSCs. We focused on how no matter whether you gain recognition for your achievements or not, you should still complete and participate in whatever you're doing to the best of your ability.

Day 4:

We started with a talk about what sports development is and how we can use it in our LSC. We learned about the 3 main pillars: growth, retention, and performance. Using these pillars we can help the athletes in our LSC become the best athletes they can be while having fun. We gained resources and we're given many examples of how we can create these pillars.

Then we got back without LSC to discuss plans for the future. We gained a lot of new insight on how to build our LSC and bring everyone together, so we focused on the plan to complete those ideas. Most of our time was spent creating the finishing touches for projects already in place, like sending out a form to build the Athletes Committee. This time allowed us to share our ideas with other LSCs and in return we were able to broaden our idea of what the Athlete's Committee can do.

In the end, we were able to learn so much from every single talk or activity while also being able to network with other athletes and gain new insight into all the things our LSC can accomplish.

Olivia Frantum:

Our trip to Indianapolis for the Central Zone athlete summit was highlighted by our chance to attend Olympic Trials on Friday and Saturday night and be a part of numerous meetings, allowing us to create new ideas and improve our leadership skills.

The summit started on Thursday afternoon with a DEI and safe sport session. This session showed me how broad the topics are that safe sport and DEI oversee. On the surface, swimmers know their coaches (and potentially themselves) must do basic safe sport training every year, but there are many more intricacies of these two topics that many people are not aware of. The biggest take away I had from this session was that DEI isn't aimed at making everyone agree, but rather for people to accept each other's differences and still accept and respect them.

Our sessions on Friday included Connecting Leaders In and Out of USA Swimming, Leading Athletes and Understanding Leading Styles, LSC Marketing and Communication, and Personal Professional Marketing with Zach Toothman. The first two sessions were aimed to teach us what types of leaders we are, what the strengths and weaknesses of that type of leadership is, and how to effectively work with others of similar and different leadership styles. The later two sessions though were aimed at learning how to market yourself and grow your own brand. In these sessions, we learned how important it is to be able to make yourself marketable and learn how to communicate with other people in your LSC. During these sessions, we were given the opportunity to have a Q&A with Kyle Sockwell, which further taught us that we should learn to find our voice and not be afraid of what others think of what we have to say.

On Saturday, we met with many people who work for USA swimming, who presented to us some of the parts of how USA swimming works. On Saturday, the session that stood out to me was the sports medicine sessions, where Keenan Robinson shared lots of knowledge with us about how treatment works for the national team swimmers, and some of the things people who aren't on the national team should be doing to stay healthy in the sport of swimming. This session was interesting to me because I want to go into a similar field in my future career, so it was cool to learn how USA Swimming manages all their medical staff and how all it entails.

On the final day, a large portion of the time was spent coming up with ideas to implement in our LSC and potential barriers to accomplishing them. It was very interesting and educational to listen to other groups share their ideas and struggles as well. The goals we came up with and how we plan to implement them were sent to you in an email earlier this week.

Overall, the 2024 Central Zone Athlete Summit was very informative and beneficial to the Athlete Representative growth within our LSC. We were able to workshop our own ideas for the IASI LSC, and were given even more great ideas by other LSC's in the central zone that would also be great to implement!