

Disability Chair Report

Fall 2007

The following meets were held in the previous year.

April 13-15, 2007 - GTAC

This meet was used as a selection meet for the US National Deaf team selection as well as a developmental meet for other disabilities. Tyler McFarland of Collierville Swimming was selected to the national deaf team and Sawyer Elkins of Lakeshore Foundation also participated.

May 13, 2007 - Dixie Games

The Dixie Games are an annual event that is co-sponsored by Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham and Blaze Sports of Warm Springs, Georgia. This was the first time the meet was conducted in the Lakeshore pool and sanctioned by Southeastern Swimming. Approximately 30 athletes competed in the swimming portion of the event. Next year the meet will return to Georgia and Lakeshore hopes to conduct an additional meet in Birmingham.

July 31 – August 4, 2007 - Southern Zone Meet (Houston)

One athlete with a disability was included in the zone team this year. Tyler McFarland was the only athlete who applied for consideration. Currently we are budgeting for 2 athletes on the 2008 zone team.

August 2007 – World Deaf Championships

The competition was held in Taipei and Tyler used the zone meet as his tune up for this meet.

Upcoming meets.

December 6-8, 2007 – US Paralympic Open (Can-Am Series)

University of Maryland at College Park – international classification available
IPC officials certification course offered

March 2008 – GTAC (Michigan)

Exact date and location to be announced – regional classification available – USP officials certification course offered

April 3-5, 2008 – US Paralympic Trials – international classification available

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

May 2008 – Dixie Games – Blaze Sports and Lakeshore Foundation – regional classification may be available

August 2008 – Southern Zone – Atlanta, Georgia (we are budgeting for 2 athletes)

National Disability Committee

There was considerable discussion about the need to return a USA Swimming National Championships for swimmers with a disability. The discussion ended when the athletes declared that they would not support (attend) the meet.

The meet incentive reward program was reviewed. I am aware of two meets in southeastern swimming that received reimbursement for a total of 4 athletes. The program will be tracked for evidence of continued participation by the athletes who were submitted. There seemed to be some confusion about the referee signature required on the submission form. The referee was only required to

- attest that the athlete participated in the meet, and not to the actual disability of the athlete.
- Two meets have been approved for the Scholastic All American recognition program. They are the US Paralympic Open in December 2007 and the US Paralympic Trials in April 2008.
- Considerable discussion was devoted to the status of the S-14 classification internationally and in the US. At the present time S-14 will be recognized for records in the US but not at the international level.
- A project for disabilities incurred during military service was announced. It was felt that it would be best done under the Masters Swimming programs as this is an older age population group.
- Under new business, a discussion of creating a classification and programs to serve athletes with autism was brought up by a parent/coach/official from North Carolina. This disability does not meet the requirements for classification by the IPC or Special Olympics programs. Considerable legislation is being proposed that would affect the educational rights and obligations of the schools, but does not address sports and recreational activities. This seems to be an underserved population group and the committee will study how USA Swimming can develop programs to address their needs.

LSC issues

- There appears to be a breakdown in the chain of communication between the entry procedure for athletes with disabilities that may require accommodations and the personnel conducting the actual competition. The forms that the coaches submit with their meet entries are not reaching the meet referee, deck referee, and starters. Coaches should follow up on the day of the meet to insure that the referee is aware of their athlete and any adaptations that may be required. Meet entry personnel need additional instruction on where this information should be transmitted when they receive it.
- Please help build a database of athletes currently training in the LSC by sending their name, age, club and general description of their disability to me at p_soders@bellsouth.net and as always, I am available by phone or e-mail with any questions, concerns or comments that you may have.

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