

2004 Technical Vice President's Report

Carole Mitchell

As this was my first year in this position, there was a lot to learn...and I'm still learning!

Synopsis of 2003-2004:

- Attended the 2003 US Masters Championship to observe how it was run. Thanks to Betty Hess for all her work at this wonderful meet. Thanks to Donna Homenko, meet manager, for making this meet such a success in Cleveland. Thanks also to Pat Kraft & Amy McClintock from the office for all their help at this meet. They were wonderful! To Ed Kaminski-Sound, Jackie McDaniel, Bob Weigand, Dave Olson & David Scoons from scoring for running a wonderful meet, as usual.
- Proofread the rulebook along with Betty Hazle in preparation for publication. Thanks to Mandy Harlan from the USSS office for all her work in getting this document ready.
- Appointed committee chairs-thanks to all who agreed to serve: Diane Hunsinger-Rules, Denise Shively-Competitive Program, Mary Ellen Weigand-Sites, Jackie McDaniel-Scoring, Betty Hess-Event Management, Ginny Chadwick-Figures, Barbara McNamee-Collegiate and Nan Zack-Masters. They have worked hard over this past year preparing for convention and changes that need to be made.
- Worked with Pat Kraft and all the 2004 meet hosts to prepare the pre-meet and final meet announcements, including the creation of tentative and final schedules. Established an ad-hoc group to look over the schedules and give me input. I appreciate all of those who helped with the schedules this year.
- Participated in all Executive Committee conference calls and the Board of Directors conference call.
- Worked with a subcommittee to develop long range strategic goals for athletes for 2004. These goals include a new membership brochure, training packets for AI group, "ride the wave" Olympic membership plan, the planning of a high school clinic and 2 "meets in the middle" and updated entry forms for Collegiates. Thanks especially to Scott Metzler and Jennie Harper for working on these goals and working so hard to make them a reality.
- Thanks to Betty Hess for serving as the Technical advisor for the 2004 US Collegiate Championships. Thanks to our meet manager Becky Trombley for all of her hard work. Prior to the meet, I worked extensively with Ron Edgerton, North Zone Scoring Chair and Becky to insure that all entries were received in the proper fashion. We had a lot of requests to waive the deadline for specific forms. I worked with Betty Hazle to approve these waivers. In addition, I asked Barbara McNamee and Jennie Harper to look at all of the collegiate forms and make the necessary revisions so that all in the collegiate realm can easily understand what needs to be done and who needs to sign the forms. They will work to get these revised forms up on the USSS website by the end of this year and have them remain on the site indefinitely. This way, all collegiate teams can know early in the season what they need to do for the US Collegiate Championships and won't be struggling at the end to meet the deadline. This will be a HUGE timesaver to our clubs and event managers, I hope!
- Attended the 2004 US Junior Championships in Clermont, FL. Thanks to our meet hosts Scott Aldrich and Mary Rose for making this meet a huge success. The facility was outstanding. I am proud that we were able to keep the shallow part of the 50 meter pool open for practice at all times. A major disappointment was the sound system. Thanks go to our Sound Manager, Ed Kaminski, for working with our hosts to find additional speakers. Once installed, the system was wonderful. This meet served as a huge reminder that the weather in Orlando is unpredictable and the packing of winter clothing is an absolute necessity!!! Thanks to all the officials and volunteers who endured frigid conditions. Thanks also to Beth Moore from Tampa Bay who was available all week to assist me wherever needed (including 2 jumps in the pool after swimmers in trouble!) This served to remind us that we need to alert our lifeguards at each meet---that if they believe a swimmer is in trouble, they are to act, without regard to the competition. I told each subsequent host about this and tried to make sure that their staff understood our expectations. Thanks to our scoring gurus, Dave Olson, Jackie McDaniel, and Harry Bonnell for all their work during this week. Having the scoring room a million miles from the pool served as a challenge, but one that they met head on. Thanks also to Dave for all of his work prior to this meet. Thanks also to Pat and Amy from the office...I couldn't have done it without them.

- Attended the 2004 US Senior Championships at Stanford. Thanks to our meet hosts Greg Bacchetti, Heather Olson and Shannon Montague for making this meet a huge success. Having multiple pools for practice works so well and spoils us! It was wonderful to have the 2004 Olympic Team demonstrate. Thanks also to Bill May for participating in the demo. Thanks to Pat Kraft and Amy McClintock for all their hard work prior to this meet and while we were there. Thanks to Ed Kaminski for working sound (as usual!), to Jackie McDaniel and Ron Edgerton for handling scoring and to all the judges who endured the tremendous heat. This meet served as a reminder that our judges need to have shelter during the competition if the sun is this intense. We will work to ensure that this is stressed with the meet hosts in the future.
- Attended the 2004 Board of Directors/Executive Committee meeting in San Jose.
- Attended the 2004 Esynchro Age Group Championships in Indianapolis. Thanks to our meet host Laurie Hartman for all her hard work. Thanks to the office staff who was available during the week to help us as needed....especially Pat Kraft (who got sick shortly after the meet started), Amy McClintock and Scott Metzler who were there every day making sure everything worked smoothly and to Jodi Silotto who was also there all week. What a great facility. Again, having the "shallow pool" as I kept calling the 25 meter end of the pool (which was 7 feet deep) open during the entire meet and the diving well open almost all of the time allowed continuous access to practice for the swimmers. In addition, we tried a different way of warming up our teams (teams started in the lap area, swam their routine with music, then proceeded to an area in the diving well for a specified period of time.) We tried this with our older swimmers, and this allowed them the opportunity to fix things they needed without having to fight for pool space. In addition, having the 3 pools allowed swimmers and coaches plenty of room to warm up figures. This was by far the least crowded I had ever seen a pool during figure warmup. Again, thanks to Ron Edgerton and Jackie McDaniel for a great job with scoring and to Ed Kaminski for running the music with a smile! Thanks also to Beth Moore who once again stepped in to help me wherever I needed. A highlight of the meet was having the new sponsor (eVamor) bring in the Olympic Team for a demonstration during 14-15 finals, as well as a swim by Bill May. The audience went nuts and a great time was had by all. Thanks again to the office staff for putting together opportunities for the swimmers to meet and greet the Olympians and thanks to Bill May for helping to hand out awards. What an exciting opportunity for our grass roots swimmers. For this meet, we were able to email all the club contacts and confirm their entries prior to working the draw. In addition, we were able to post the draws on the website before we got to the meet. This allowed our coaches and team reps to make changes BEFORE registration. This worked extremely well and this process will be implemented for all 2005 events. (and hopefully for the 2004 US Masters Championship as well).
- Ron E. talked with our scoring program designer Norm Donofrio throughout the setup process for the Esynchro Championships. With Norm's help, the program worked extremely well. Once again, it was demonstrated that the complexity of our Collegiate Championships and the 16-19 split age groups in the Esynchro Championships present scoring challenges that we must face in order to make them work. Luckily, we have a SUPERB scoring committee. I appreciate their dedication.
- Attended the 2004 US Open Championships in hot, humid New Orleans. Thanks to our meet host Rene Williams and all of his family (including the sister-in-law doctor who was very, very busy that week) for making this meet a success. The pool was very hot each morning (and unbearable on Saturday), and it wasn't as clean as it needed to be, but those factors reflect on the facility, not the hosts. The hosts were truly gracious and worked around the clock to make sure USSS had everything we needed to make the meet successful. Thanks to Amy McClintock and Scott Metzler from the office staff who spent every minute of the week helping wherever we needed them. Thanks of course to Ed K for running the sound so beautifully and to Jackie M and Harry B for once again taking care of the scoring room so effortlessly. A huge thanks to Laurette Longmire who worked long and hard to get the Colorado Timing System up and running. And a big thanks to Norma Longmire and Sue Johnson who worked it all week. Again, we were able to keep the shallow part of the pool open for the entire meet which helped our swimmers tremendously. It was a great meet attended by our National Team II, as well as the Olympic Duet from Puerto Rico, and national teams from Canada, the Dominican Republic and Colombia. The junior portion proved to have WAY too many swimmers (with 67 solos and 60 duets), but the senior portion had realistic numbers. 18 teams chose to compete in the combo event, again proving to be one of the audience's favorites. I am hoping to have a team or two demonstrate this event

at the 2005 Esynchro Age Groups Championships in Buffalo. We need the younger swimmers to see this thoroughly enjoyable event. In addition, I will work with the OI VP and the office to try and get more foreign teams to attend this championship. They were all very excited about the meet, especially swimming figures in flights and the fact that we stayed on schedule and “got it over with”. The Canadians have already indicated their hopes of bringing both a junior team and a senior team in 2005.

- I met with the new sponsors from eVamor in Indy and in New Orleans. Great conversations. In addition, I met with representatives from Hot Shots and Esynchro to gain and share information. Ed K talked with our sponsors from Colorado Timing and OceanEars to solve problems as they came up.

Observations:

- Entry forms need a few revisions. We’d like to implement entry forms specially designed for each meet, as there is so much confusion over what needs to be filled out. In addition, we need to stress that an email address MUST be provided on the form...one that will be checked regularly. We plan to have scoring email the club summaries to this contact person prior to the meet. This will allow us to make any necessary changes before we get to the meet. That way, the draws can be posted on the web prior to the meet and will be as correct as possible when the coaches receive them at registration. We also must make coaches understand that they must send a copy of the entries to the scoring chair so these can all be prepared. A number of teams “forgot” to do this over the course of 2004. The scoring committee will be working on these changes.
- Final meet schedules were put on the website prior to the start of each competition this year. This seemed to work very well. At some meets, we started events early if we could (Esynchro age groups for instance...where we had pools where teams could practice constantly). At other meets, we stayed with the schedule to allow for longer breaks for the officials and allow open pool time and access to deep water. This will continue for 2005.
- The work of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee took up a lot of my time (and everyone else’s). From dealing with the national training center concept, to the naming of the Olympic Team, we worked very long hours. It is amazing how much we all communicated with each other. Being the communication queen, I’m proud that communication has been a top priority of this administration.
- I was in constant contact with Pat Kraft in the office and President Betty Hazle over the course of the past year. I don’t think one week day went by that I wasn’t in contact with one of them. I appreciate all they did to help me over this past year. I couldn’t have begun to do this without them.
- Without 2 members of the office staff at each meet, the meets would not have been so successful. The staff members helped with the setup and take down of the “meet stuff”, they assisted throughout the competitions with everything and anything, they put the results up on the website even before all the copies were printed at the pool, coordinated and oversaw the parades of athletes and awards and were available to me 24 hours a day. I really appreciate their help. We all helped each other learn what needs to be done to make a meet successful and I want to stress that I couldn’t have done it without Pat, Scott and Amy who rotated events. I appreciate all they have done to help me this past year.

Last but not least, I’d like to thank President Betty Hazle, OI VP Laurette Longmire, Officials VP Pam Edwards, Treasurer Karen Rosolowski, Secretary Kaye Davies and Athletes Rep. Sandra Mahoney who all rotate off this year. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve along side you and the continuing members of the Executive Committee this past year. Thanks for all you do to further the sport of Synchronized Swimming in the US and abroad. I appreciate all you have done to make my job easier.