

2008 Pacific Swimming Long Course All-Star Team Director Report

Selection of the NACC and WZ teams was done on Tuesday, July 22 at the Residence Inn in Pleasanton. The NACC selected their team first from applicants who applied to just the NACC and to both. That numbered 98 applicants for a possible 80 spots. As it turned out, the NACC only picked 73 swimmers. There were some swimmers who had NACC cuts but the selection committee felt that these swimmers would not get a second swim at the meet and would do far better at WZ. There was only one swimmer with one Jr National cut. One of the selling points of the NACC was they allow swimmers with Jr National cuts to swim their events against top level competition.

After the NACC team was selected and coaches made calls to the swimmers, the WZ team was selected from the remaining 190 applicants. All together, we received 221 applications. This is approximately 100 more than usual. This points out that we have created interest in All-Star teams in a greater number of swimmers.

There were a lot of questions regarding the two meets. Confusion as for which meet swimmers should apply. Clubs need to educate their swimmers on the opportunities that Pacific Swimming offers. All-Star teams and Camps are a bonus that few LSCs offer.

Costs for both teams together will exceed the budget, mostly due to airfare. The NACC was originally budgeted for a team of 64. That was based on 8 swimmers per age group 11-12 to 17-18. Earlier this year they agreed to go to 80 swimmers, 10 per age group. Expecting to ask for an increase in the budget, further preparation showed me that room and board would be less for the 80 swimmers than the original 64 but the increase in airfare "ate" that up and then added some more. Overall, the NACC will probably be over budget about 30-40%. It will still be under the figures I calculated the co-pay from.

The WZ team will probably hit the budget or be slightly under, thanks to Gary Knowles and Darryl Woo and all their hard work. Short flights to and from major airports, unlike Canada, make it easier to budget.

There was a lot of talk about the high co-pay. Many suggestions about fixing the co-pay at \$200 and have Pacific Swimming cover the balance. Along the same point, there were more requests for financial assistance of the co-pay. I formed a panel of Fred Vogelgesang and Joyce Lanphere to review the requests. Following the same guidelines we have done previously and are in the P & P, we granted the requests of 3 coaches for 5 swimmers reduction in co-pay to 25% of the original co-pay. Without this assistance, these swimmers would have had to withdraw their application. Because of the assistance, they will all be going, 3 of them for the first time.

Final observations of these teams, IT IS A LOT OF WORK!!! The two team format is at times very confusing. The size of the database to select the team through HyTek has gotten to big. Access to SWIMS is necessary. Knowledge of a computer program that will allow sorting of data from passport numbers to shirt size to favorite snacks to medical information is a high priority. Travel agents are a must considering the cost and venues. (I am working with one for the 2009 Pacific Coast All-Star meet.) In the end, it is not about fast swimming at a championship meet. It is more about what parents can do for their children, a reward for not only the swimmer(s) but for the family. It is about what clubs can do for their senior program and not age group. Swimmers are rarely rested, shaved and tapered for these meets. In fact, most swimmers are finishing 3-4 weeks of championship meets. From JO's to Sectionals to summer league champs to Far Westerns. Though clubs support these teams, they are not committed to them. Clubs should be directing certain age group swimmers to one of these two meets for the end of the long course season as a peak performance meet, instead, the older swimmers are beaten up through the 3-4 weeks before and if they don't make Jrs, they are a last minute applicant. The younger swimmers target the team competition for Far Westerns. None of this is right or wrong but for the money Pacific Swimming is spending and what it hopes to achieve from these meets, I would suggest they are not getting their monies worth.

With all this said, I am resigning as All-Star Team Director. My last meet will be the 2009 Pacific Coast All-Star meet in Federal Way, WA. I think Pacific Swimming would be better suited to save their money, find a corporate partner, and go into the business of putting on National and International Championship meets in their own state-of-the-art venue. All the hard work that Pacific Swimming volunteers do is not achieving Pacific Swimming goals. It results in activities that only a few can partake and benefit. Considering the size of the LSC and the amount of money it has, it needs to find a better way of rewarding its members.

Respectfully submitted,
Darwin Takaki
Pacific Swimming All-Star Team Director