



IN THE ZONE !

December 2008

As we approach the new year, we have a lot of activities in the Sopac Zone to share with our members.

Sopac loses one of its finest coaches in Grafton Weiss

As many have heard, the Sopac Zone lost one of its finest coaches in Grafton Weiss who coached for many years at Katella High School where he recently won his first CIF Title. Grafton Weiss was one of the most dedicated, conscientious, unselfish, good-natured, honest, affable, and kind persons in the world of water polo coaching. He could always be counted upon to respond to questions in a manner that was very beneficial and helpful to all involved. He had a genuine concern about the welfare of his "kids" and wanted the best for them always. Grafton was a support and role model to his athletes and provided them with strong leadership in his mild manner. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

We will miss him greatly.

Changes A Coming !

USAWP has held several meetings to review its operations and improve our overall effectiveness and efficiency. Our zone has a new set of bylaws to govern our operations, which is consistent among all zones. We are working on growth strategies including ways to recruit younger members to our sport. Keep an eye out for "T" ball coming soon as we will be looking to start a pilot program to achieve this goal. We are also looking to implement an open elite league as well as a masters pick up league for our seasoned members so that they can continue to play this sport we love so much.

The "Zone Team" process has been revamped with the retention of Guy Baker, one of the most successful coaches in Olympic History, serving as the lead of the Olympic Develop Program. Guy is in charge of the ODP for both the men's and

women's programs. The "ODP" will be an integrated program where training squads will be selected for year round training. In the past, the zone team would train to attend the national selection camp on memorial day weekend and then, those that made the national team would continue to train for whatever their competition would be and the rest were done. Now, these teams will train year round including after the camp so that those who may not make the cut their first try can still train at a high level and stay in the Olympic pipeline for future consideration. We will be hosting a tryout for athletes born in 93 & younger (youth team) and 91 & younger (Junior) sometime in January. This will be for both boys and girls. Keep your eye out for more news.

Upcoming Meetings

There are several meetings coming up in early January we want to let you know about. We are in the process of scheduling our annual calendar meeting where all those who want to host a tournament or league have the chance to get their tournament sanctioned. We are modifying the tournament hosting process now so that we can streamline the process and better balance out the various competitions in the zone. During the last summer we hit the limit and are trying to better balance our competitions and the capacity to service those events. If you are planning or thinking of hosting a tournament, we urge you to get your plans together and attend the meeting.

Annual Meeting

We are also in the process of scheduling the annual meeting where we will provide a more in depth discussion of the State of the Zone as well as solicit your ideas and answer your questions. Many people ask how they can get involved and learn more about what is happening; attending the annual meeting is the first step.

Town Hall Meetings

In addition to the annual meeting, we are pleased to announce an upcoming town hall meeting in early spring. At the Town Hall meeting, we will welcome in Mr. Chris Ramsey, the CEO of USAWP as well as Guy Baker and others to review the status and future of USAWP and get to know our zone members better. This will be a great chance to meet our leaders, ask your questions and let them learn first hand what is happening in the zone.

Web Site Revamp

We are underway with our revamping and updating of the website. Our goal is to make it a user friendly destination where you can receive much more information about the happenings in our zone. To date the website has mostly been for

administrators and coaches. Our goal is to make it relevant to all our members with a fresher look and more updated information. You will start to see the changes in the coming week.

Recent Results

On the local level, we have had a busy fall with many successful outings. The SPA league ran for its 47th year with hundreds of kids playing culminating in the SPA tournament hosted by Irvine Water Polo at Woollett Aquatics Comple. This year we added the first ever "SoCal Championships" where the top teams from the SPA league played against the top teams from the Coastal Zone's league for the title of best in social! Congratulations to all the teams that played in the tourney and to our various winners.

Our zone was well represented at the Annual Speedo Cup which was held this year in Ann Arbor Michigan. Attending representing the sopac zone were Orange County Water Polo and United Water Polo on the boys side and for the girls we had Newport and Laguna Beach. Congratulations to these teams for their hard work and a special congratulations to Orange County who took the top honors for the boys and Newport and Laguna who took third and fourth respectively for the girls. Sopac is always well represented at the national championships

The holiday camp is coming up at the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs and Sopac is sending a full compliment of athletes and coaches. This year we had 6 coaches step up and volunteer to help our athletes and attend the training session along with 16 athletes. Thank you to the coaches who make it possible for the athletes to attend and a special thanks to Mindy Curtis of Social who is the travel coordinator for the trip.

As always, if you have a question, please shoot me a note.