

Dear New Convention Delegate:

Welcome to the 2005 USAS Convention in Greensboro, and thank you for volunteering your time and energy to the national governing body of US Masters Swimming. You'll be one of a couple hundred delegates at work in an interesting democratic process – usually orderly but sometimes chaotic – and will have many opportunities to interact. Some, like you, are first-timers; many are seasoned veterans. As you'll find in any volunteer organization, some decide to attend only once, but most are hooked and return time and again. Masters Swimming is 36 years old, and you will surely hear from (and about!) some representatives who have been here since the beginning.

While the convention planning documents you will be receiving in August deal with more esoteric matters, we want to assure you that it's not all nose-to-the-grindstone at convention. Early risers can work out to terrific coaching each morning, followed by the race to the free food line. Typically the USMS insurance provider hosts one evening feed (for all USAS reps) and the host LMSC will strive to keep the Masters hospitality suite well stocked (*that's* the place to find out what's really going on!). Masters is a fun loving group, and you'll see that we work hard at maintaining that reputation. Though they hate to admit it, the *USA Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, and Synchro* delegates always look forward to the Masters' typically topical and occasionally irreverent presentation at Saturday night's Awards Banquet.

Following the banquet, you may find a group heading out to the local night scene. Perhaps the USA Swimmers will hold their spirited *Australian Rules Football* team-building competition (Masters teams may enter) or there may be impromptu pool races. And there's always a crowd in the hospitality suite where you can meet your fellow delegates in casual surroundings.

We hope you'll attend our New Delegates Orientation meeting. This will be a busy convention year because of significant changes made to USMS' governance structure, so our designated time slot is 7:30 Thursday morning. This means you'll have to skip one workout, but we will have a special reward for you for ATTENDING the Orientation meeting instead. Please join us for YOUR meeting. No, we don't like to miss a workout either, but you're worth it!

Oh – as one of thirty-plus new delegates, you may or may not be attending with an experienced LMSC associate who can show you the ropes. Would you be interested in a mentor – nothing formal, just another delegate you can turn to for guidance? Either way, here's your assignment: please send Ginger an email note (deadline: Sunday, **August 21**) acknowledging that you received this packet, and indicate yea or nay if you'd like us to assign one of our volunteers to be your personal convention contact. Thanks! Also, last year's new delegates – and the USMS movers and shakers whose signatures they sought – enjoyed our "scavenger hunt" (not to mention some neat prizes for those who participated), so we'll do that again this year.

So bring your sense of humor along with your serious concerns, and be ready for the hectic, organized chaos that we call convention. Please feel free to contact either of us with any questions, or at least to just say "Hi."

Sincerely,
Your USMS Convention New Delegate Welcoming Committee:

Ginger Pierson
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Oregon Masters LMSC

Steve Peterson
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Pacific Northwest Association LMSC

Enclosed information:
USAS Convention – Hints for New Delegates (developed by the Oregon LMSC)
More Information for New Delegates
Fun Only Activities for New Delegates

USAS CONVENTION – HINTS FOR NEW DELEGATES

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE – pre convention “homework”.

Read your convention packet from cover to cover. Make notes and be ready to ask questions about things you don't understand. Get familiar with the officers in the organization; their reports should be helpful.

WHAT TO EXPECT – besides mass confusion . . .

You will be busy! Try to attend some of the activities scheduled on Wednesday if you arrive in time. The social is a great time to meet other delegates (veterans and “first timers” alike) and to ask questions. In fact, the hospitality suite is an excellent place to meet other delegates (and get a snack!). Try not to be late to the House of Delegates and Block meetings. Joanne Tingley is responsible for the USMS Certification table and she and/or one of her crew are always there to be of assistance if you need it.

WHAT TO WEAR – travel light so you have some space for all the stuff you'll bring home!

Dress comfortably; you will be in meetings all day. Most rooms are “well” air-conditioned. Casual, daytime wear (dresses, pants or shorts are all fine, gals). There are 2 functions that most folks will “dress up” for:

- **Insurance Reception**, Thursday evening – a “finger food feed”. Gals wear a nice dress, skirt or slacks
- **USAS Banquet**, Saturday evening – a sit-down dinner. Evening-wear - anything goes. Slacks for men - many wear coat and tie. “Dress to impress” if that's your style. It's a traditional awards banquet.

HOSPITALITY SUITE

There is a hospitality room for all delegates, expertly and enthusiastically run by volunteers from the hosting LMSC. It is open daily when meetings are not in session (before 8:30 am, during lunch, late afternoon and evening). Munchies, drinks, and fruit are always available at no cost. The room name/number will be available at registration. Stop by often for a snack and/or socializing. Some will conduct business; however, it's mostly casual. Before you leave, don't forget to **thank the volunteers** who keep the suite well stocked and clean.

EATING – a necessity. . . but when is there time?

Sometimes meetings overlap and a quick bite is more likely to take place than a leisurely meal. Working lunches are common. Many delegates struggle to find time to eat, so bring a few snacks to have on hand – just in case.

- **Complementary Breakfast** is served in the vendor village each morning (muffins, bagels, coffee, tea and juice) from approximately 7 – 7:30 AM. If you attend morning workout, get off the bus and go directly to the breakfast area so you don't miss the free food, then go to your room to change. Numerous meal options (\$\$) are available at the hotel as well.
- **Lunches/Dinners** – Feel free to invite yourself to anybody's lunch or dinner group, whether it's in the hotel or at a local pub. The more people you meet the more you can learn. Look for info about planned events when you register.

MORNING WORKOUT – held at a local pool from 6-7:15 AM. We share the pool with Olympians!

The bus schedule for departure times will be available at registration. The USMS Coaches Committee coordinates the coaches and workouts each day (Wednesday through Saturday this year) and they provide a quality program for all ages and abilities. Plan to attend one or two workouts - they're fun and will stimulate ideas. Some die-hards attend every day but choose to forgo practice while at the convention.

MEETINGS – so many meetings . . . so little time!

You will not be able to take them all in. Your LMSC may meet in advance to decide which meetings each delegate should attend. Pick the meetings that most interest you and will do your LMSC the most good. Obtain handouts from the meetings you attend and share what you have learned with the other members of your LMSC when you return home.

- **House of Delegates Meetings – really important.**

Everyone should attend **ALL** House of Delegates meetings. Committee reports are given and important **VOTES** are taken. The delegates from each LMSC often sit together.

- **Zone Meeting – also really important.**
On Saturday each Zone will have a lunch meeting for **ALL** of the LMSC delegates in their zone. If you have zone concerns or thoughts, you might want to contact your Zone Representative before convention.
- **Meeting Minutes – copies for all!**
Each committee prepares minutes of their meetings and copies are made for every delegate in the convention. Completed minutes will be distributed via accordion files that will be located in the House of Delegates room (each delegate's name will be listed alphabetically). In between HOD meetings, the accordion files will be kept in the Hospitality Suite. Get a copy of all minutes, arrange them in the agenda order, and please read them! You'll receive a briefcase or bag when you register so you'll have something to store all these papers in!

Wrap-Up Session – tying up loose ends and brainstorming.

Sunday morning we have a valuable session that allows us to review what was done and brainstorm what we can do to improve for the next year's convention. So...plan to attend this too.

MORE INFORMATION FOR NEW DELEGATES

Check-In and Certification Procedure

- Step 1: Check-in at the United States Aquatic Sports (USAS) booth. You will receive:
 - a) a notebook that contains meeting information, delegates and officer's names,
 - b) an identification badge that should be worn during the convention,
 - c) a miscellaneous souvenir,
 - d) a ticket for Saturday's banquet, continental breakfast tickets, and
 - e) a carrying case for your materials.
- Step 2: Immediately proceed from the USAS booth to the USMS certification table to certify that you are a delegate. This is the process that verifies a delegate's eligibility to vote in the House of Delegates (HOD). Here you will receive:
 - a) a color coded delegate sticker to affix to your ID badge (the colors denote an officer, voting or non-voting delegate, board of director member, new delegate),
 - b) three voting cards (YES – NO – ABSTAIN),
 - c) a swim practice schedule and location of bus pick up,
 - d) schedule changes,
 - e) new delegate orientation information, and
 - f) hospitality room information.
- The above two (2) processes must be completed by each delegate. You must have a certified ID to vote as a member of the HOD and be eligible to attend HOD meetings.
- The USMS Certification / Information table will be open from 8 am until USAS closes on Wednesday. On Thursday morning, USMS Certification will be at the entrance to the House of Delegates meeting room from 8 am until the HOD recesses. Those who have not checked in can do so there.
- If you did not register for convention in advance, you will do this at the USAS booth. Then you will need to have the USMS Secretary sign a certification release, before you can proceed for the balance of certification material.

Roll Call

- The official roll will be taken only at the first HOD meeting on Thursday morning. The secretary will call names of those who were not present at subsequent meetings.
- When a written ballot vote is needed, the vote is taken with a roll call and you will take your ballot to the podium.

Meetings

- "Block" Meetings: committees with common interests have been "blocked" together, and they will meet Wednesday evening.

- Committee Meetings: USMS has over 20 committees. The official committee members usually sit around the table while non-members sit in the audience. Members will discuss business as per the agenda published in the convention packet. The audience may speak when called upon by the chair. Issues are usually discussed here, not in the HOD; usually, only a vote is taken at the HOD.
- Attendance at each meeting is taken – be sure sign in.

House of Delegates Procedures

- All delegates are expected to attend the HOD meetings.
- In the HOD meeting room you will find a table and blue file boxes. The files are arranged in alphabetical order and one will have your name. Minutes from meetings, messages, and other pertinent information will be filed in these blue boxes. Pick up your materials often and read the minutes as soon as possible to keep current on issues. They are numbered to help you keep them in order.
- Two microphones are located in a center isle so that any comments or questions made by the HOD can be heard by all and recorded. Often, the mikes will be identified as “pro” and “con” to indicate whether the speaker is for or against the item being discussed. Wait your turn at the microphone and, when called upon, state your name and LMSC before speaking on the issue.

Voting

- The convention packets are sent in advance so delegates can read and discuss issues with their LMSC in preparation for convention. You should vote in a manner that would serve your organization and not with your personal views.
- Some of the different types of votes that may take place are:
 - a) A “sense of the house” may be asked for, when an opinion is sought.
 - b) A motion and a second may be made with discussion and eventually an official vote.
 - c) A motion may be “tabled” so that details can be worked out before bringing it to a vote.

Hospitality

- Complimentary “nibbles” and beverages are available in the USMS Hospitality Suite throughout the day and evening but the room is closed during HOD meetings. The suite is a great place to meet new people, further discussions, make arrangements for dancing, dinner, partying, or just “hang out”.

Mentors

- A Mentor is someone who will assist you with various questions you may have, or refer you to someone who has the answer. Your LMSC may provide you with a mentor or you can be assigned one by the New Delegate Chair. Take advantage of these people as they are convention “veterans” and are willing to help out any way they can.

FUN ONLY ACTIVITIES - For New Delegates at the Convention

Here are a couple of annual events in which new delegates are encouraged to participate. They are so fun(ny), exciting, and relaxing, that many “oldies” get involved every year. You will be recruited, primarily by Steve and Ginger, and will be cajoled by all to uphold “the tradition” of the Masters Induction process. These events may eventually end up in our Rule Book as a requirement as a “right of passage” to demonstrate your commitment to have fun. (All activities are optional). Most people will take information from the meetings of Convention back to their LMSC’s, but your most memorable experiences will be your “real introduction” into the Masters with these activities.

Australian Football

This team event is sponsored by the USA Swimmers about an hour after the banquet on Saturday night, somewhere in the hotel. About 100 athletes plan for four days to challenge anyone interested in trying to defeat World Class swimmers, divers, synchro, and water polo players in a ten-minute game. They will

explain the rules right before the contest and will try to stimulate your interest. (All who participate are sworn to rules of secrecy for an even playing field).

Masters, smiling with enthusiasm, begin with dry land exercises, cheers, and chants. We know what works best! World Class Athletes conduct the games, but Masters have NEVER lost this team event. Win or lose, a group picture winds up this exciting event. (We like to support our youth by our participation, and they pretty much expect it now.) Change into comfortable clothes for this match. Tuxedos and evening gowns are okay but to “get in the groove”, freedom of movement and quickness are our secrets for success.

Condom Races

Yes, that's what it says, Condom Races! A famous USA Swimmer - name not to be disclosed, introduced this event at Convention many years ago. Masters learned quickly and have continued this event ever since. It will be held in the Hospitality room after the banquet on Saturday night as long as contestants and supplies hold out. There will be time to participate in both the Australian Football and the Condom Races, so you don't have to choose. In fact, when you return from another Masters WIN, you will be honored as you enter to partake of this event too. (Go to Australian Football first, then the Condom Races). Wear what you want but comfy is good here too. Most folks will change.

Scavenger Hunt

This was a new event (introduced last year), which is designed to be fun while discovering many aspects of the Convention and meet enthusiastic people from “all lanes in the pool” in the process. Again, this is an optional event, but to stimulate your interest, prizes will be awarded to all who get involved to complete the various phases. The list for the hunt will be distributed at the New Delegates Orientation on THURSDAY morning at 8:00 a.m. If you can't make the meeting, see Steve or Ginger for this list.