



KEEPING ATHLETES FIRST



STATE OF THE SPORT • 2022

KEEPING ATHLETES FIRST • STATE OF THE SPORT 2022



As I reflect on the past year, I am humbled by the resilience of our athletes, coaches, volunteers, and staff at USA Swimming as we celebrate a complete return to operations, competitions, and impressive membership numbers two years after the start of an unprecedented global pandemic. The changes we have experienced are monumental: some strategically planned and others the result of surprising external factors. What we have not compromised on, though, is our unshakable commitment to ensuring our athletes are our top priority. What started with a \$5 million investment project from our board of directors titled “Keeping Athletes First” has evolved into utilization of that mantra as the starting point for every strategic decision we make. Since this time last year, we managed uncertain competition calendars, developed new policies to ensure our sport appropriately balances equality and fairness, and invested significant resources to improve the technology that enables us to run the best competitions in global sport. And never once during that time did our commitment to keeping our athletes first waver.

We recently completed a mandated, comprehensive audit from the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee in which every National Governing Body was evaluated based on athlete protection and rights, governance and compliance, financial standards and reporting, sport performance, and operational performance. The nearly 400,000 members of USA Swimming should be proud of your contribution to us receiving the highest score of the NGBs audited. I will say that again: USA Swimming scored *highest in compliance across all categories for all NGBs*.

We aren't just best in medal counts, we also take seriously our commitment to athletes, performance, operations, and of course, financials. Sometimes the competition extends beyond the pool, and in this case our staff and volunteers worked relentlessly to ensure we scored highest in transparency and excellence in operations.

As the custodians of two separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, USA Swimming and the USA Swimming Foundation, we have enormous financial responsibility to our members, donors, sponsors, and fans. What you will see in the below charts is the delicate balance of financial forecasting through the course of an Olympic quadrennial cycle and the unexpected complications of us operating under a five-year “quad” ending in 2021. Through extreme cost-cutting measures, we finished 2021 with a \$1.8 million operational surplus as we strategically and prudently navigated through the uncertain times of the Tokyo quad. We made material, vital non-operating Board-approved reserve investments to ensure we could build programs for the future. In the Tokyo quad we also partnered with the USA Swimming Foundation to distribute an unprecedented \$3 million to member clubs. We are not built to operate with continuous surpluses, and you'll note the investments made in 2022 return immediately to our membership with operating spends such as a fully staffed Sport Development team and a full slate of national-level events, returns to camps and clinics, and many other programs.



RESULTS & FORECAST: 2017-2024



The chart below shows how we attribute revenues (inner ring) to the investments we make (outer ring). We continue to drive opportunity for new revenue so we can provide newer, better, and important services to our members.



REVENUE & INVESTMENT BREAKOUT: 2017-2022





In the vein of providing more services for the betterment of our sport, this year marked the launch of USA Swimming’s largest digital transformation to date: a multi-faceted upgrade to our membership database and all of the interfaces needed to usher in the innovation worthy of the world’s best member-serving organization. We are currently deep in the implementation and adoption phase, relying heavily on key volunteers, coaches and club administrators who make up the army of influencers assisting us through multiple complicated projects.

Included in this historic digital transformation:

• **SWIMS 3.0 Database Upgrade**

- ♦ Fully modernized data protection and cybersecurity: our commitment to the safety and integrity of member data continues as we implement the highest level of safeguards.
- ♦ Online Member Registration: allows individual members to input and edit their own USA Swimming member information, freeing LSCs and teams of the time and burden.
- ♦ Online Meet Entry: a platform that has long been due for a major overhaul, OME will relaunch on October 15 with better functionality for those hosting and registering for meets.
- ♦ Safe Sport Recognition Program and Safe Sport Compliance.

- ♦ Better reporting tools and greater access to data for clubs on performance, retention, and other information asked for by coaches to improve club performance.
- ♦ Find-a-Club: improved tool to connect new families more easily to USA Swimming member teams.
- ♦ Swim-a-Thon: enhanced platform for clubs to stage fundraisers.
- **Coach Education - Built by Coaches, for Coaches**
 - ♦ USA Swimming University launched Coach Education as our first step in improved educational resources and national certification for our members. As a coach member myself, I am especially interested in the opportunity this provides us to recruit and retain the best leaders for our athletes.
- **Officials Tracking System**
 - ♦ In the coming months, we will add a pathway for officials to utilize the same platform built for Coach Education to make training and national certification much easier for those working the pool deck.
- **USA Swimming App**
 - ♦ This new mobile application puts membership information at the user’s fingertips. Deck Pass and Deck Pass Plus apps have been phased out in favor of this more modern interface.
- **USA Swimming Website**
 - ♦ We continue to enhance the new website we launched in 2020 to ensure optimal usability and search functionality, which has been hampered by our reliance on legacy technologies and will be solved by SWIMS 3.0.

While I know this has been a long process with many challenges, I am confident that these positive changes were necessary for us to remain the best in the world while always looking to the future. We hadn't made significant updates to our information technology and data architecture in more than 20 years, and we needed to stop making temporary fixes. Rather than continuing to patch the pipes and build additions to our house, we realized we had to tear it down to the studs and rebuild. The construction of this legacy project hasn't been easy, but it will reap great rewards in data security and usability, and training and certification accessibility. We are immensely grateful to the athletes, coaches and volunteers who have given more than just time to help us get this right.

Speaking of athletes, coaches and volunteers, the House of Delegates created two new committees this year: the Athletes' Advisory Council and the Coach Advisory Council. The AAC members were elected by other athletes over the summer, and the CAC members were elected by their coaching peers last winter. The CAC aims to ensure that all USA Swimming member coaches, from coaches with athletes at the grassroots level to those with athletes on the National Team, are represented and have their voices heard in the USA Swimming governance process. The AAC works closely with the Athletes' Executive Committee to address the needs of all athletes, and three AEC members have ex-officio seats on the AAC. As these committees evolve and work together their communication will benefit the sport, as we are stronger when key stakeholders engage in close collaboration.

We supplemented these volunteer committee additions by fully staffing the pool deck to ensure in-person education and club/member support with two Team Services staff members per zone, each with specific LSCs and clubs to serve as the first point of contact for those entities. See the full team here: [Team Services \(usaswimming.org\)](https://usaswimming.org). Further, we introduced the USA Swimming Workshop in April, and we look forward to hosting this national conference again where we collaborate on legislation, activate new ideas, share best practices, and foster a community conversation around bettering the sport. We continue to host the Annual Business Meeting in September for key volunteer leadership, and we have returned to in-person Regional Coach Clinics, Leadership Development, and Athlete Select Camps.



Over on the dry side, our Commercial team is focused on finding creative ways to drive revenue in areas other than membership to ensure our long-term growth. One thing we learned over the course of the last couple of years is that traditional partnerships in the sponsor and broadcast space have changed dramatically as businesses struggled through the pandemic. We embraced the change and the challenge and are relentless in finding new paths to better commercial opportunities. You will discover a new way to watch USA Swimming in the coming year, making it easier for you to find, create, and enjoy all content related to the sport. Look for a formal announcement in the weeks to come. Further, we signed a partnership with USA Track & Field to onboard a

global sales agency to drive new sponsorship revenue for both world class NGBs. Important to note here is that the unique financial agreement with the sales agency ensures this comes at no out-of-pocket cost to USA Swimming. We will also enhance our eCommerce and retail offerings in the next year so you can more easily and proudly display your pride in the sport. [You can find your USA Swimming gear here.](#)

The Commercial team has enjoyed a closer integration with the Technical Events team to enhance our national-level meet offerings, and we were proud to announce in April that we're heading to Indianapolis in June 2024 for the next U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Swimming. What is unique in this iteration of the Trials is that we are building competition and warm-up pools on the surface of the football field at Lucas Oil Stadium. For the first time ever, our biggest meet of the quad will be a nine-day program in a stadium set that holds 30,000 people. We will run the most technically flawless swim meet while building a spectacle aimed to attract more young athletes and fans to the sport. And most importantly, 25% of our membership can drive to Trials in Indianapolis in less than eight hours.

In 2019, the USA Swimming Foundation began an evolution that has included (among other things) the transition to a fundraising board, a permanent partnership with U.S. Masters Swimming, and the integration of Foundation staff into the overall USA Swimming staff, allowing for greater shared resources, lower costs, unified purpose, and a true camaraderie. Three years later, the Foundation's evolution continues, and the results of these efforts begin to come into focus.

The USA Swimming Foundation's mission of Saving Lives and Building Champions remains, and in 2022, the Foundation awarded a combined \$2.33 million to youth swim lesson providers (\$802,000), adult swim lesson providers (\$130,000), USA Swimming member clubs (\$268,000), and the USA Swimming National Team (\$1,130,000). Those numbers include record amounts in learn-to-swim grants, Community Impact grants, and Donor Athlete Partnership Program funding.

USA Swimming and the USA Swimming Foundation introduced the Community Impact Grant program during the pandemic with the goal to increase competitive opportunities by funding USA Swimming clubs to create programs in new communities. Through these grants, we hope to grow the pipeline of champion athletes and to create more opportunities to broaden community access to USA Swimming. In 2022, the USA Swimming Foundation provided grant funding for 27 clubs, including clubs led by women or multicultural coaches, clubs partnering with HBCUs, and clubs creating programming within a community that has an existing pool but limited or no competitive programming.

In May, the USA Swimming Foundation returned to an in-person Make-A-Splash Tour presented by Phillips 66 for the first time since 2019. With stops in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Borger, Texas and Rodeo, California, the USA Swimming Foundation and its Olympic Ambassadors Missy Franklin, Elizabeth Beisel, Cullen Jones, Nathan Adrian and Rowdy Gaines raised national awareness and spread the life-saving message of learning to swim. We shared this important work with children and adults alike and awarded \$24,000 to local clubs and communities, made possible by the generous support of Mid-Atlantic Swimming LSC. [To learn more about the USA Swimming Foundation or to give, click here.](#) I would like to conclude this year's State of the Sport with a focus on performance in the water, as this is at the core of who we are: the preeminent body for the sport of competitive swimming in the United States, and arguably, the world. Our athlete performances over the past year have been nothing short of humbling for all of us who are fans of these athletes and their tremendous achievements. Because of the relentless spirit of our clubs and LSCs, nearly every weekend was marked with varying levels of competitions, from intra-squad exhibition meets to regional and zone championships, as the heart of our sport fought to get our

athletes back in to the pool. In the past year there were 9,075 USA Swimming-sanctioned meets hosted and 269,100 member swimmers registered to swim in those meets; these incredible numbers show the health of our sport after so many months spent out of the water.

And despite so much uncertainty with the FINA calendar and Q1 cancelations and postponements due to COVID-19 variants, we boasted a nearly full national- and international-level competition slate. We saw one world record and two junior world records set by American athletes over the past year. At the 2022 FINA Swimming World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, the U.S. squad crushed the previous medal table record, capturing an astonishing 45 medals, including 37 in Olympic events. Later in the summer, the team headed down under to defeat the Australian squad at the 2022 Duel in the Pool in Sydney. Our Junior Pan Pacs squad won 46 medals (19 gold!) in Honolulu against strong Japanese, Australian and Canadian youngsters, and the American squad finished second on the medal table with four golds in the FINA World Junior Open Water Championships, ahead of perennial powerhouses Italy and Germany. The future looks bright for us in international competition, and we will continue to prioritize resources for athletes and coaches at all levels of the sport to ensure swimming remains the sport of choice for all.

Our commitment remains clear: we will keep our athletes first in all decisions we make, be them financial, operational, or performance based. Our athletes and their coaches and clubs are the backbone of this sport and deserve the attention and focus of all of us fortunate enough to have a stake in their success. As a four-times-per week swimmer, father of three club swimmers, and coach member, I continue to drive harder and expect more from all who work for and with USA Swimming. I am immensely grateful for the perspective the last five years have given me and remain hopeful that the incredible advancements we're making to modernize and innovate will make USA Swimming bigger, better, and more influential in the years to come.

Thank you for your relentless devotion to this sport and the opportunities it creates.



Tim Hinchey III
USA Swimming President & CEO