

President's Annual Report 2024

By Karen Thullner

The USOA membership has been steadily growing in the past few years. As of 4 October 2024, the membership is as follows: 748 USOA Members; 102 Foreign Registrations; 39 Clubs/Councils. The number of Instagram followers is 918.

USOA was again able to provide uniforms to all our Nationals Teams in Fin Swimming, Spearfishing, Underwater Hockey and Underwater Rugby. It has been great to work with our vendor, Podiumwear, and have the uniforms made in the USA. They were able to accommodate some last minute changes and distribute on time. We worked with EQ Swimwear for suits. Unfortunately, the budget did not allow USOA to cover the suits as well. Hopefully for the next cycle!

USOA handled several harassment complaints over the past year, including hiring an investigator to assist in one. There is now a form and process online to file complaints. The Harassment and Sexual and Molestation Policies have been updated to be more in line with the SafeSport Training and Guidelines. SafeSport Training is available through the USOA website. Please be assured that it is okay and necessary to contact the proper legal authorities in case of injuries and mental health crises.

USOA looked at several potential new membership and website platforms, but decided to table the issue for the next administration. The directors assist in keeping the information and calendar up to date with their respective sports and Wendy and Kurt have done a lot of work over the last few years keeping the site running smoothly, but it's clear that we do need to replace the existing platform with something more suited to our needs.

USOA has also spent much time and effort over the past few years to ensure that the insurance program has remained in place in what has been an incredibly tough insurance market. This is a vital element for our sports teams to be able to continue to practice and hold tournaments. We not only kept the program going, but *improved* the coverage and *reduced* costs for clubs with multiple venues.

USOA has also retained the services of a non-profit accountant and non-profit attorney. This has greatly improved the amount of work for the treasurer. The attorney has provided guidance in a number of matters for USOA as well.

Since I took over 4 years ago, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with a lot of great people. It has led me to various adventures along the way. I am so grateful and thankful for the experience. USOA is now in the black financially and in a much better position to provide support for things like national team uniforms, scholarships and legislation that preserves our marine environments. More importantly, there are systems and processes in place that didn't exist previously.

Thank you to everyone for their continued support and participation in USOA.

Karen