Notes from USMS Relay 2025 by Liz Margherio: October 24-26

1. Technology Tools for Coaches
-Artificial Intelligence (AI) Glasses to video record swimmers
-Smart Goggles/Smart Watches, using 'FORM' app to collect real time data
-Bone conducting headsets/technologies, ex. 'Zygo' headset, 'SONR Coach' to communicate in water (can listen to music, or receive instructions from coach, etc.)
-Equipment: 'LightningX' to gather immediate metrics, GMX7' for resistance training, Bluetooth Pace Clocks (can be programmed from phone)
-Performance Forecasting: 'Athlete Analyzer' to anticipate expected times/distances
-Training Management: 'Phlex', 'TritonWear', 'CommitSwimming' to measure and track results on phone/watch; AI workouts (use 'ChatGPT,' 'Gemini' etc) to generate & analyze workouts)
-Technique: AI human modeling with 'Aspiricx', Video analysis using 'Onform', 'Dartfish'

2. Swimmer Video Analysis Demo
-When critiquing swimmers, use sandwich approach (compliment positives, suggest room for improvement, complement positives)
-Use underwater recording device technology like 'GoPro', and 'Onform' to analyze videos

3. Supporting Local Coaches
-Coach Communication: Reach out to coaches regularly (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.)
-Coach Education: local, national, virtual, certifications
-Skills Development: shadowing, mentoring, inviting other guest coaches to run practice or observe, observing other practices
-Finding Coaches: use training athletes, current swimmers, summer league coaches, school/college coaches/athletes
-Celebrating Coaches: coach or volunteer awards, Coach of the Year, newsletter shoutouts, breakfasts before meets, etc.
-Preventing Burnout: themed practices/workouts, substitute coaches when main coach needs a break, celebrate Nation Coaches Day (Oct. 6), provide Coaches Newsletter

4. Leveraging USMS Programs and Sub-Brands
-Why it matters: maximizes local impact, creates synergy among national and local programs
-Grown-Up Swimming: a fun league for adults, usually a social component after practices
-USMS Education Initiatives: certifications for coaches, clinics including how-to, stroke, and National Coaches Clinic, LMSC Scholarships, ALTS Programs (Adult Learn To Swim)
-USMS Development Grant Programs: College Club Swimming: university clubs, community colleges; USMS/CCS (College Club Swimming) Collaboration: promotes early exposure to Masters swimming, collaborate for mutual benefits, ex. Shared pool space

5. Fostering Participation and Loyalty
-Getting to know your team: know why they are swimming, have a process for setting/chasing goals (know why they swim, assess their strengths, plan the work using SMART method (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound), execute the plan, praise and recognize accomplishments
-How to keep people coming back: create a shared identity, foster team pride, offer team merchandise/logos/posters/stickers etc., participate in traditions, rituals, and events

-How to communicate purpose and connection: find common ground, use natural connectors (ex. Have a lane leader or an outgoing swimmer paired with new swimmers
-How to invite people to Masters: team events, meets/relays, mention social kicking (when swimmers chat while kicking with their heads out of the water)
-What reduces participation: loneliness, embarrassment, self-consciousness
-Camaraderie: Social kicking, events after practice, using natural connectors (more outgoing swimmers), foster a sense of belonging
-Community Outreach: serve local communities (ex. Food drives), use programs like ALTS (Adult Learn To Swim) to bring swimming to the community and make it accessible (ALTS programs are a sort of precursor to Masters swimming), encourage parties and bring non-Masters friends, Create a business relationship with a venue (ie: bike shop, brewery, etc.) to host swimmers and exchange sponsorship

6. Running Workouts for Varying Abilities
-Ways to make all feel comfortable: swimmers all warm up starting and ending at the same time, announcements that include upcoming events, new swimmer introductions, and celebrations
-Modifying workouts: arrange swimmers in lanes based on ability levels, keep same interval but change distance per lane (ex. Swimmers can do 50s, 75s, or 100s all on a 1:30 interval), keep time the same but change reps and interval per lane (ex. 6x100 on 2:00 or 4x100 on 3:00, both total 12 minutes), wear equipment so everyone can stay on the same interval
-Lane etiquette solutions: before sprint set remind swimmers to move away so all swimmers can finish, teach/coach proper technique for flip turns with multiple swimmers in a lane, before a distance set remind swimmers how to pass or touch someone's feet
-Lane order solutions: coach picks a swimmer to lead the lane, coach picks the order swimmers in the lane, teaching swimmers to wait 5 seconds or until swimmer gets to the flags
-Following Instructions: use your coaching voice to explain sets, use whiteboard for workout to help explain, have lane leader(s) help explain
-Keep having fun: fun sets can include all ability levels, birthday swims, social kicking, relays or games at the end of workouts, themed workouts (ex. July 4th, charity swims, Football Championship), include fun music playlists
-Conclusion: there is no wrong way, be creative, have fun when coaching, do what is comfortable for you

7. Swimmer Safety and Wellbeing
-In-water safety: safety training for coaches and CPR certification, review emergency skills annually, recognize signs of cardiac arrest/stroke/heat related emergencies, promote safety awareness across all lanes
-Staying alert on deck: coaches engaged and scanning at all times, swimmers report if they feel unwell, lane leaders help monitor others, lifeguards protect; coaches observe first
-Prevention and swim readiness: encourage self-assessment before practice, warmups and cool downs to prevent injury, adapt your training for pre-existing conditions or recent injuries, open water sessions
-Emergency Action Plan (EAP): know your facilities' EAP and access points, assign roles for calling 911 and guiding EMS, practice scenarios quarterly with coaches, ensure AED/First aid kit/rescue gear are accessible, keep updated emergency contact info on all swimmers

-Incident and tragedy response: stay calm and take control of the scene, call EMS immediately and give clear details, respect privacy when sharing info, offer emotional support to teammates
-After the Incident: keep a record of facts including time/actions/outcomes, identify what went well and what didn't, update training and protocols, share lessons learned with coaching staff and volunteers
-Key Takeaways: safety is everyone's job, preparation prevents panic, calm action saves lives, recovery includes emotional support

8. Creating Local Coach Development and Mentoring Programs
-Local support from your LMSC: financial scholarships for coaches include USMS coaching certification Levels 1-3, USMS stroke development clinics, USMS clinic course for coaches, USMS National Coaches Clinic (in even years), USMS adult learn-to-swim certification
-Coach Mentoring Program: pair new coaches with experienced mentors, set clear goals and track progress, train mentors in feedback and support, encourage shadowing opportunities, host regular roundtables or video reviews, offer scholarships or travel support, recognize mentors and mentees publicly, notate mentors annually, gather feedback after each cycle, star success stories.
-Local support from your LMSC: stipends for coaches that want to attend events, monthly coaches conference call by Coaches Chair, reimburse USMS certifications, annual swim clinic to provide social & work experience for coaches, help sponsor USMS Coach of the Year
-Support from your Team: budget for training, send coaches to USMS events and other meets for opportunities to learn, contact and provide help with other local teams, network with local teams, bi-monthly or weekly training meetings, get in the water – we learn by doing.

9. USMS Coach and Club Resources
What resources are available for coaches?
-Education: certification courses, ALTS (Adult learn-to-swim) certification, clinic course for coaches, USMS National Coaches Clinic (even years), SWIMMER magazine, community forums, peer-to-peer webinars, STREAMLINES for Coaches magazine, USMS.org,
-Workout library: high intensity, stroke and IM, limited mobility, high volume, open water, basic training, triathlon training
-Mentorship: club and coach services, mentee requesting help from a mentor, ask your LMSC for help, stand on the deck of another coach.

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