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Clubs of USA Swimming:

Last month, the USA Swimming House of Delegates approved important legislation enhancing existing safeguards for the Safe Sport Program. Two of these pieces, Articles 305.3.6 and 305.3.7, require clubs to implement (1) an action plan to address bullying and (2) a policy guiding electronic communication between adults and athletes, respectively.

The Safe Sport Committee was charged with developing models to satisfy the requirements of 305.3.6 and 305.3.7, which clubs could adopt in their entirety or adapt based on the needs of the club. The resulting model documents are attached to this email. Both are also posted in the Safe Sport > Policies & Guidelines section of the USA Swimming website (www.usaswimming.org/protect).

As part of this legislation, the House of Delegates approved a deadline for implementation of these policies of 90 days after USA Swimming's models are published. Based on today's date, clubs will be required to adopt policies to satisfy Article 305.3.6 and 305.3.7 by Monday, January 14, 2013. If a club chooses not to, or is unable to, create its own policies, the attached documents will become the default for that club, and the club will be expected to implement these. Once a customized policy is developed and approved by your club, the default will no longer apply. Each member club has the responsibility to approve and implement its own policies.

Bullying

In the two years since the Safe Sport program was created, we have had frequent reports of bullying between athletes at clubs. At the 2011 USAS Convention, the House of Delegates passed Article 304.3.6, prohibiting the bullying of any member by any other member. As we have handled bullying complaints in the past year since the rule has been in place, we have learned the best intervention for bullying between athletes happens immediately and directly by an adult known and trusted by the athletes involved. We have also learned that the best way to combat bullying at your club is to have a clear policy against bullying and an established plan for how to handle bullying if it does occur.

The attached *Model Action Plan to Address Bullying* was developed using guidelines from www.StopBullying.gov, the joint initiative of the US Department of Education, US Department

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of Justice, and US Department of Health and Human Services. It is a comprehensive approach to assist clubs, coaches, and parents to address bullying when it occurs at the club and do so in a compassionate and responsible way with the intent of preventing it from reoccurring in the future.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. There is not a better time to take a stand against bullying at your club!

Electronic Communication

USA Swimming recognizes the prevalence of email, texting, and social media in today's world and that many of us use these as our primary method of communication. It is important to recognize that while such technology has a wealth of positive benefits; it also provides a new mechanism for an adult with bad intentions to achieve privacy with an athlete. It best protects athletes and adults when a club has a clear policy and expectations about using electronic communication between adults and athletes.

The attached *Electronic Communication Model Policy* was developed by incorporating resources from our education partner, Praesidium, Inc., the USOC's Safe Sport initiative, and the experience and approaches of member clubs who already have such a policy in place.

If you have questions on this or any component of the Safe Sport Program, please do not hesitate to contact us at athleteprotection@usaswimming.org. Thank you for your commitment to keeping our kids safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Stratton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce Stratton
President