



Latin American & Caribbean Masters Championships "LATyCAR"
a non profit association
Campeonatos Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Natación Master
"LATyCAR" asociación sin fines de lucro

Calle Internacional # 15 cruce c/av. Victoria Urbanización Las Acacias,
Caracas, Venezuela Telefax 58-212-632 8110
latycar@latycar.org

July 20, 2003

Mr. Chris Smith
VP of Masters Swimming Canada
Via e-mail

Hi Chris;

So much to say... yes, I can shed some information on getting the first Pan American Masters aquatic championship off the ground and "into the water".

GENERAL

The "correct" format for a PanAm Masters Championship should include all five sports: swimming, synchro, diving, polo and open waters.

There are currently four countries on the American continent that could host this championship today IF held in one country: USA, Canada, Mexico and Brasil and frankly it would need to include FINA/UANA member Federation effort.

With some creative thinking, several countries could host a different sport the same week and achieve success, but that's subject to other analysis.

FINA rules Masters world (remember MSI?) and UANA is its "arm" in the America's...

ASUA

<http://www.asua-uana.org/>

UANA or ASUA (its English acronym) currently lacks a Masters Committee, although the late Jerry Olson was busily trying to put it together and had made it one of his objectives for the end of his tenure which was to be next month, however, everything he had planned was lost due to his untimely death.

His Presidency was taken over by Carol Zaleski (USA Swimming , http://www.usswim.org/media_services/template.pl?opt=news&pubid=3486) who has been "under the gun" with the DR PanAm Games coming up and all the unexpected problems with the swimming venue, and of course catching up with everything else!

So a Masters Committee under such adverse circumstances is not on ASUA's priority list.

Ms. Zaleski is only an interim President and Mr. Orban Mendoza (from PR and currently its Secretary) is slated to be the next ASUA President. He is from an old generation of thought. He's in his 70's and not Masters oriented. He is currently CCCAN President...

Jerry Olson and LATyCAR (represented by me) exchanged extensive communications including personal meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. The goal was a strategic alliance between ASUA and LATyCAR in order to assist in implementing a Masters Committee and get the PanAm Games under way in all aquatic sports. (Thus LATyCAR's budding experiences with polo and diving besides swimming and open waters).

USMS

<http://www.usms.org>

USMS also initiated an interest in the PanAm's and actually put some good effort into it (Phil Whitten, Mani Sanguily, Myriam Pero, June Krauser and others I do not know in the International Committee, in fact I seem to remember that even Stu Marvin and I think Mel Goldstein put some hours into feasibility study way back).

I understand that the International Committee has now focused their efforts into bidding for the 2006 World Masters Championship. I would assume that the PanAm's are on a back burner.

As far as I've been able to conclude –and this is a subjective opinion- USMS is reluctant to push harder for the PanAms due to their independence and in order not to dilute their yearly short and long course championships... also the issue of the other sports that it doesn't handle.

The Pan Pacific Masters championship was most likely victim to this also. My opinion.

Bottom line is that USMS would be fundamental in supporting any PanAm effort.

As you may know, I helped put together the Masters program in Venezuela back in 1987 thru the sponsorship of the Sports Committee of the Venezuelan American Friendship Association <http://www.avaa.org/eng/> and was successful implementing a quasi USMS format, having experienced Masters swimming in the US back in the late '70's and knew what it was all about. June Krauser was my bouncing board on questions. At that time FINA member federations were totally disconnected from Masters, only MSI existed.

It became an independent non profit organization <http://www.triplecorona.org/> similar to USMS, in 1990. Presently it works in harmony with the FINA member Federation. In any case its been a success story thanks to having had that example to follow.

LATyCAR

<http://www.latycar.org>

LATyCAR was born in 1991 much the same way, before any of the continental regional championships had arisen, but that's another story.

Suffice to say that its main objective of fomenting Masters south of the Rio Grande has been achieved with big events –and experiences- having been celebrated in Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Mexico, Costa Rica and “somewhat” in Cuba.

LATyCAR has accomplished much. You see LATyCAR swimmers regularly attending and winning at World's, in fact a not much celebrated achievement by a “Latycareña” is having won seven (7) golds in Sydney... Cuco Rivera from Venezuela.

Brasil already had an ongoing program and in fact had hosted a Masters World Championship... you may even remember that adventure !

PHILOSOPHIES

There are several points that have been fundamental in all our Masters efforts: volunteering, non-profit orientation and implementing Masters wishes (vs. the age group elite vision that exists in FINA member federations). Definitely there are marked differences between age group philosophy and Masters.

In Latin countries volunteering is not the norm, so implementing it has been difficult.

As far as profit oriented events, organizations must generate them in order to continue for the benefit of the collective Masters program. For a culture that is lacking in volunteering spirit and expectant of governmental subsidies for sports programs, keeping individuals from expecting to make money has been rather “abstract”.

Parameters must first be set forth if a PanAm program is to be adopted; ie.: LATyCAR had already worked out everything last year in Dominican Republic for our 2003 event including extensive meetings and personal site and venue visit with Danilo Vicioso (a superb Master swimmer) -and with Federation President with all details finalized- only to be informed, days after our visit, that he expected \$US 20,000 for his directorship.

Again, orderly parameters must first be set forth, objectives, mission, vision, timetables, etc.; if the project warrants it, then it can be budgeted, but no room for guess work or even risk dealing with inexperienced people –or organizations- though their intentions be good.

With all the above having been said, there are ‘some’ basic questions that must be considered.

As for hosting the event, there is one set of questions all of which can be answered readily, and experience already is out there. Go ahead and do it. But what about next time?

My concern is long range, what plan or follow up is there for the second, the third and so forth... thus the importance of ASUA taking it officially under its wing. And this was the focus of our dealings with Jerry Olson.

As mentioned before, few countries have the capacity of doing a good job, unless the USA or Canada mentor it for a decade. But will the country’s Masters ruling bodies approve? It’s a lot of effort and responsibility.

PRESENT

Yes, after LATyCAR (bi-annual since ’91) proved to be a success, the South American Championships were born, first in long course format then short course format and just this year the CCAN championship was born also <http://www.ccanmasterpr.com/English/HomePage.html>

Personally I believe that we have fallen into too many regional championships already.

Given the idiosyncrasies –and financial restraints- of Latin Americans and the Caribbeans, I think best to hold a regional long course every two years with a short course in between: it would lead to much better planning, better results and a homogeneous all around effort.

Each country can organize their own ‘open’ championships accordingly, after all, it’s their responsibility to their own Masters.

LATyCAR would be lost? Perhaps but to an evolving –greater- cause. Let CCCAN and CONSANAT deal with their elite age group development, that’s their main goal.

Everyone would win.

As Jerry Olson had envisioned it ASUA would be the organization to implement a focused regional Masters program of events in the Americas: with the help or strategic alliance with those who have repeatedly already been successful in Masters programs, albeit USMS, Canada, LATyCAR.

There’s too much experience out there now being lost because of lack of one body accumulating it... thus any expected success can only be achieved thru ASUA because thru it we would be able to funnel all experiences in order to implement it.

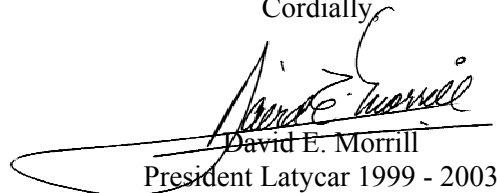
Quick example: USMS has a Rules Book... does Canada, FINA, LATyCAR? Let’s multiply present resources in order to come up with success. (If not now, it’ll be eventually!)

CONCLUSION

If a renewed effort is put forth for a PanAmerican Masters Aquatic program, only people and organizations with a proven championship organization track record should be included in its round table discussions in order not to re-invent the wheel. We should shy away from individuals who have a vested interest in one championship, they can be contacted later, after the income and championship parameters have been set.

Chris, I hope this answers some of the questions you asked last night, please feel free to share them with anyone you like. See you in Super7-Barbados next month,

Cordially



David E. Morrill
President Latycar 1999 - 2003