



# BAHAMAS SWIMMING FEDERATION

## 2009 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### 2007 Elections

The Executive Team elected in 2007 has continued the mandate started in 2003 – to increase the profile and results of Aquatics in The Bahamas through a swimmer friendly Federation, that is focused on ensuring that every person who wants to maximize their potential in swimming or water polo has a positive and swimmer friendly Federation that supports this dream. A key phrase adopted in 2003 that is still a widely held belief: *Swimmers/Athletes first, Federation Second, and Parents Third!* continues to be the mantra of the Federation's executives.

Throughout the past 2 years, I have had the pleasure to continue to work with John Bradley (First Vice President), Sheena Deveaux (Second Vice President), Kathy Dillette (Secretary), Valerie Lowe (Assistant Secretary), and Ken Bain (Treasurer). We have been focused on our commitment to develop the Federation into an efficient organization, aimed at providing increased avenues for Bahamians wanting to swim as well as opportunities for swimmers already in the Federation's program.

### BSF Rule Book . Athlete Policy, and Constitutional Proposals

The Rule Changes adopted in 2005 were one of the most important changes that supported the Federation's focus on creating a more swimmer friendly organization. The revised rules that removed the majority of punitive conditions that did not positively build our Federation and throughout the past 4 years, we have reviewed the Constitution and Rule Book and are proposing additional changes to make the Federation more swimmer friendly and equally more focused on ensuring that the Constitution is current with the requirements imposed by FINA and by extension the IOC.

The Athletes Policy adopted last in 2006 was a major accomplishment – this policy streamlined the National Team selection process, the requirement to represent the Bahamas at the International level for subvented athletes, and the additional requirements for all subvented athletes and those intending to represent The Bahamas internationally, to participate in the National Championships. A similar policy is being adopted by the Bahamas Government for athletes receiving Government subventions as there has been a trend in other Federations for subvented athletes to opt out of participating in some regional and even international competitions. We have strictly enforced this policy and unfortunately, have had to not recommend a few swimmers for International meets for not participating in our National Championships.



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**Focus**

The current economic conditions have had some effect on our fundraising initiatives and success in reaching across Corporate Bahamas.

Cable Bahamas continues to broadcast our National Championships at no cost to the Federation and the Royal Bank of Canada has committed to continuing sponsorship of our National Swimming Championships. In 2009, though, we saw a significant decline in Royal's financial contribution and had to look for other sources in order to maintain the high standard of this annual meet. During the 2009 Nationals, we introduced BSF Scholar Awards and recognized outstanding swimmers who were also outstanding students.

Again, due to lack of funding, we have not been able to maintain an open office at the BKKAC. We hope to correct this during the next 2 years and our success will largely be based on our ability to attract the required funding. We estimate that approximately \$50,000 per year will be required to achieve this objective.

Another area of focus will be providing our qualified athletes with more international competition opportunities as well as retaining senior athletes in the program. Often times, when athletes graduate from the Carifta program, their focus on swimming at the senior or even masters' level decline. In most cases, this is attributed to a higher level of regional and international competition at the senior level as the age group is "open;" however, going forward, through the Senior National Team Administrative and Technical Coordinators, we will continue our program to develop stronger linkages with these athletes progress, ensure compliance with Federation's rules and policies, maintain data base current, and equally as important, ensure that these athletes are maximizing competition opportunities even if the Federation has to sponsor these.

As communicated in 2007, we are not seeing a significant growth in the water polo team and this is in part due to the competition for pool time. Unfortunately, water polo players have been relegated to practicing after swimming and this has resulted in a challenge in balancing academics and the sport. Naturally, academics rank as a higher priority and notwithstanding this challenge, Coach Lotti has been able to maintain the base of the program and position water polo for medium term growth through his foundational initiatives that are now ongoing.

Kathy Dillette, Dwayne Mortimer, Andy Knowles, Nancy Knowles joined me on a national Learn to Swim Program initiative that was sponsored by the Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture. The goal was to introduce swimming in every primary school and the National Committee has provided a recommendation to the Bahamas Government to provide opportunities to primary school students in New Providence and Grand Bahama. Appropriately, Swift Swimming and YMCA Swimming currently run two very successful National Learn to Swim Programs and the model introduced to the



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Government will in part, follow the format already in place at these two clubs. Until the National Initiative has been launched, it has been agreed that Swift Swimming's program would be expanded within the club's constraints, to more schools in New Providence and we would support the growth of the YMCA's program in Grand Bahama.

Our Female Relay team that won our FIRST Pan AM Medal, a Bronze in 2007, fell short of our goal to represent The Bahamas at the 2008 Olympic Games. We certainly believe that we have the talent and with continued focus and increased opportunities, and of course, expanded funding, The Bahamas will one day have a relay team at the Olympic Game Level.

At the 2008 Olympic Games, the Bahamas had a small but powerful team. Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace qualified in two events – the 50 and 100 freestyle events, Alana Dillette qualified in the 100 backstroke, Vereance Burrows qualified in the 50 freestyle and Jeremy Knowles qualified in the 100 and 200 fly, as well as the 200 IM. All team members swam personal best times and in the process, set many national records.

On a more positive note, our Female Relay Team did compete at the 2009 World Championships and set several National and Caribbean Records. It was certainly a proud moment to see Arianna Vanderpool Wallace, Alana Dillette and Alicia and Teisha Lightbourne swim against the best relay teams in the world and compete very respectably and in turn, set National Records. It was also a treat to witness Vereance Burrows set 3 National Records at the World Swimming Championships and at to his delight, earn the title as the fastest Caribbean sprinter. Vereance broke Alan Murray's 13 year old 50 free record and Jeremy Knowles' 100 fly and 100 free records. Equally outstanding, Alicia Lightbourne broke her own 100 breast record and Arianna Vanderpool Wallace set the bar extremely high for future female swimmers as she smashed her own 50 and 100 free records and also swam a personal best in the 100 fly. Alana Dillette also set two National records in the 50 backstroke and 50 fly events. This small but powerful team did the Federation and The Bahamas proud at the 2009 World Championships!

We regretfully again gave up the right to host the 2009 Carifta Swimming Championships at the request of the Government – we were advised that the work at the National Stadium would have made it impossible to host these championships without significant difficulty. Aruba again accepted our request to host and we will focus on hosting in the short term and as soon as the stadium is completed. As will be highlighted later in this report, our success at the Age group level has been outstanding. A goal has to be to convert this success to excellence at the senior level. The Federation will be challenging its Senior National Administrative and Technical Coordinators with this challenge and will provide the resources required to make this goal a reality.



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Our relationship with the Government at the BKKAC remains strong and we were very fortunate to benefit from Desmond Bannister's experience as a former Federation President and as the Minister of Youth, Sports, and Culture. Minister Bannister made the organizing of the 2009 Carifta and CCCAN teams, as well as the 2009 World Championship Team relatively easy for the Federation – his Ministry served as these team's largest sponsors and it was evident during his term as Sports Minister that he understood sports and was willing to personally extend himself and his Ministry to ensure that quality National Teams were not denied the opportunity to represent The Bahamas. Minister Bannister has transitioned to the Ministry of Education, and we are also pleased that his deputy, Minister of State in the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture, will now assume the leadership role of the Minister with direct responsibility for Sports in The Bahamas.

We are very proud that we have more Bahamians qualified as International Judging Officials than any other local Federation. Algernon Cargill, Mancer Roberts, and Kathy Dillette are FINA Referees and Starters and will be seeking to expand the pool of Bahamians serving at the FINA level during the next 2 years. Mancer Roberts and Algernon Cargill attended an important USA Swimming Officials Workshop in San Antonio in October 2009 and immediately afterwards, Mancer Roberts held another clinic to pass on the knowledge gain and simultaneously recruit more judging officials.

### Membership

Swimmer Membership has grown each year as well as the number of registered clubs and paid BSF members.

A summary is as follows:

	Swimmer Registrations	Masters	BSF Registered Clubs
2003	?		6
2004	387		7
2005	478		9
2006	514	25	8
2007	538	38	8
2008	601	42	8
2009	663	48	10



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The Abaco Swim Club and Blue Marlin Aquatics were registered during this period and this has increased our member clubs to 10 registered clubs. The Growth in swimmer registration is also positive and speaks to the extended reach of our program.

**International and Regional Competitions**

The following tables show The Bahamas' representation in international championships and medals won/best performances.

MEDAL SUMMARY							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
CARIFTA	35	33	65	65	79	50	49
CISC		30		52		42	
CCAN	3		8		22		10
CAC				5			
World U.	1						
Pan Am						1	

2003 G S B T				
CARIFTA	18	7	10	35
CCCAN		1	2	3
WORLD U			1	1

2007 G S B T				
CARIFTA	42	17	20	79
CCCAN	7	6	9	22
Pan AM			1	1

2004 G S B T				
CARIFTA	13	12	8	33
CISC	10	9	11	30

2008 G S B T				
CARIFTA	22	18	10	50
CISC	15	17	10	42

2005 G S B T				
CARIFTA	24	20	21	65
CCCAN	1	3	4	8

2009 G S B T				
CARIFTA	18	17	14	49
CCCAN	2	3	5	10

2006 G S B T				
CARIFTA	19	24	22	65
CISC	27	12	13	52
CAC		3	2	5

We continue to enjoy considerable success at the Junior levels and are continuing to focus our strategies on translating this success to the international senior level.



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The declined medal performances at CISC/CCCAN are a direct result of the Bahamas deciding to field smaller teams with only qualified athletes and practically no relays at these championships.

Our goal remains to win the CARIFTA Swimming Championships in both points and medals – we have won in medals during 2006 and 2007 and narrowly lost in the points category.

### **National Championships**

The National Championships continue to grow and the BSF remains grateful to our perennial sponsor, RBC Royal Bank of Canada. 2009 Nationals was a FINA sanctioned meet for the Olympic Youth Games and the 2008 meet was a sanctioned meet for the Olympic Games.

Swimmers seeking to represent The Bahamas internationally and/or swimmers receiving subventions are required to compete in these championships unless they have received a written exemption from the BSF. The Barracudas Swim Club won the championships in 2008 and 2009 by wide margins.

The BSF recorded record attendance at the 2008 National Championships and this was duplicated at the 2009 Championships. During these Championships, the Federations allowed for 8 and under swimmers who previously swam an event in a regular club meet to swim in the National Championships without a qualifying time. This proved to be popular and successful and will be repeated in future years. Specifically, this rule is now being proposed for adoption into the National Swimming Championship rules.

A summary of the RBC Nationals Results (points) from 2003-2007 is below. The data is sorted by the most recent results.



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CLUBS	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Barracudas	1308	1028	1519	1857.5	2006	2197	2153
Sea Bees	434	509	813	1168	1293	967	1369
Swift			1680	1031.5	1529	1447	1326
Dolphins	1128	989.5	966	771	688	681	746
YMCA	163.5	328	395	578	474	688.5	369
FAC	669.5	659	525	275.5	161	96.5	29
Flamingos	106	53			17	4	2
Sea Waves				20	20	48	
Lyford Cay				19			
TPAC	365	303					
	4174	3869.5	5897	5720.5	6188	6129	5993

0



DID NOT PARTICIPATE

### Local/Club Meets

These continue to be the highlight of the year with the larger crowds at the meets where the younger swimmers participate. A special thanks to Mancor Roberts for taking the lead on deck as the Referee at the majority of these meets. Through his leadership, we are developing a fine cadre of officials and I now send a plea out for more parents and supporters to join the small group of volunteers on deck as a meet official.

### Water Polo

A special thanks to Chris Illing and Paul King for providing the financial and technical support to maintain the water polo program. Of course, Coach Lotti, particularly through his aim in rebuilding the program should also be congratulated for his stewardship. The program does require more funding and parental support and the Federation will refocus on building this program as it is critical to our continued development and should not be allowed to falter.

The Water Polo program is promoted as a complementary program to competitive swimming and also an opportunity for swimmers who may not have attained one of the



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top qualifying times to continue to contribute to the Federation by participating in this alternative sport at the international level.

### **Bahamas Olympic Association**

The BOA Election legal battle ended in 2008. Algernon Cargill was elected as one of the BOA's 6 Vice Presidents and Kathy Dillette was elected as Assistant Secretary. Through direct participation at this level, the BSF has now started to receive significant collateral benefits – our teams are now equipped with full Adidas gear, similar to Athletics. Equally as important, Cargill and Dillette will now be able to lobby for increased funding for swimmers at the Olympic Solidarity level.

### **Swim To Empower – Eleuthera**

The BSF partnered with the BOA through the Olympic Solidarity Sport for All Programme and Swim to Empower in a pilot learn to swim programme during the summer of 2009. The STE programme taught learn to swim over 150 children and adults in south Eleuthera. Former BSF swimmers re-located to south Eleuthera for the summer to teach learn to swim with Brenna Hughes, STE founder, Shawn Anderson from USA Swimming and Diversity in Aquatics and six other young people from Eleuthera who had learned to swim in previous summers through the STE programme. It is proposed that the programme will expand in the summers to come by "exporting" the programme into other family island communities.



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I thank everyone for their continued contribution to the development of Aquatics in The Bahamas and will continue to focus on the expansion of Aquatics in The Bahamas and the creation of more opportunities for everyone.

There are many persons who contribute to the success of the program and I thank everyone for their continued support and ask them all for their continued support and shared vision.