

March 3, 2010

To: Virginia Swimming Board of Directors
Re: Refund of money to LY

Dear Mary et al.,

I am writing to you regarding the fees that the Lynchburg YMCA Swim Team paid for their Approved, closed YMCA invitational in January. While I was under the impression that I only owed the sanction fee and the rental fee for the timing equipment based on discussions last year with VSI about the same meet in January of 2009, the board believed I owed full fees as though I had run a USAS Sanctioned meet. I sent the full fees to Bill Geiszler and am now writing to ask that VSI refund the additional \$1,665.05.

I understand that language in the P & P was amended in the April and October HOD meetings to reflect that both approved meets and sanctioned meets must send in meet financial reports. Unfortunately, I was not present at either of those meetings and so I did not interpret these changes to mean I had to pay for an Approved meet at the same rate as a Sanctioned meet. I only interpreted them to mean that VSI wanted to look at my financial statement at the end of my meet. When I submitted my budget to my YMCA last spring for this year, I did not budget to pay Sanctioned meet costs for my Approved January meet.

As evidenced in conversations via email with board members, I do not believe this change was clear even to those of you on the board. Prior to the meet, I was issued an invoice for the timing equipment by Bill Geiszler – something that wouldn't happen in a regular USAS Sanctioned meet. When Bill did get back to me post-meet, after receiving my meet financial form, he requested further fees, which I, of course, questioned. Mary's explanation to me about where the P & P spelled out I had to pay directed me to the change requiring financial forms be sent for approved as well as sanctioned meets and to a section about Closed Invitational Meets. Steve Hennessey's explanation, on the other hand, said that Closed Invitational Meets are irrelevant to the discussion. Ultimately the explanation was that because I must send financial forms behind the meet, the inclusion of a check for regular sanction fees was implied by the P & P. It seems clear to me that the policy is not clear!

Meanwhile, if it is VSI's intent to treat Approved meets in the same manner as Sanctioned meets, I believe they are wrong. Sanctioned meets and Approved meets are two distinct entities and should not be treated the same. Swimmers who are not members of USA Swimming compete in meets that are Approved, and they should not be taxed by USA Swimming when competing in a meet for their member organization. The purpose of the Approval is to support swimmers in the meet who ARE USA Swimming members.

In North Carolina, teams getting an approval for their meets pay a flat \$10 fee. In Potomac Valley, teams getting an approval pay a flat fee of \$200. In Ohio, teams pay a flat fee of \$100. In the Mid-Atlantic region, fees range from \$10 - \$25 per day. Maryland has a weird structure of getting a flat \$100 fee and then \$2 per swim for those times submitted to the database – coaches are very selective about which swims they have submitted because this fee can get quite expensive. Nowhere have I found an LSC that just says Sanctioned meets and Approved meets will be dealt with in the same fashion. If I ran my meet in North Carolina, I pay \$10; if Ohio, I pay \$100; if Potomac Valley, I pay \$200. But in Virginia it costs me over \$2,000 to run an Approved closed YMCA invitational. Doesn't seem right somehow.

It is only in the last few years (three?) that the YMCA of the USA decided to use USA Swimming rules to govern their competitions. Prior to this, closed YMCA meets that wished to have times submitted to the SWIMS database would have asked to be Observed. In Virginia, Observed meets pay no fee. Is it right that because the YMCA now runs its meets under the technical rules of USA Swimming that the fees should be so inflated? USA Swimming allows LSCs to charge “reasonable” fees for sanctions and approvals. I do not think it is reasonable to charge the same amount – these meets are not serving the same body of swimmers.

I know that there are all kinds of scenarios that one can come up with imagining certain teams taking advantage of our system. I don't think the business of VSI should be managed on projected situations. I am certain that there are teams who currently take advantage of the system in place. LY is not one of those teams. The Lynchburg YMCA Swim Team uses the request for an Approval in the manner that I believe USA Swimming intended them for. We want USA Swimming members who participate in our closed YMCA invitational to have their times count toward their USA Swimming. As a YMCA team who is also a USA Swimming team, we serve two masters and do our best to fulfill our obligations to each of them. We are not trying to cheat the LSC out of money. In fact, our team runs four meets a year, only one of which is a closed YMCA meet. Our three other meets support our team and this LSC.

It appears to me that Virginia Swimming wants to dictate the profits of teams running meets. I do not believe this is the business of Virginia Swimming. Whether teams make money or lose money on their meets is a matter for the team to deal with and not for Virginia Swimming to try to manage through their fee matrix system. I also believe that when I am doing business for my team as a YMCA team, I need to be able to do that within the YMCA system without USA Swimming, or its representative, VSI, taxing me for it.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and your patience in continuing to broach this subject. I appreciate that you all are volunteers working hard for all our swimmers.

Respectfully,

Lisa Liston
LY Swimming
LisaLListon@aol.com
1240 Krise Circle
Lynchburg, VA 24503
434-384-6338

PS. I believe the P & P should contain a separate section dealing with Approvals – not just fees for approvals, but also the issuance of approvals. This would be a good way to make clear that VSI is not going to approve Y dual meets, for example, but only Invitationals and end of season championships.