

Vice President Olympic International  
2024 Convention  
Tempe, AZ

The journey began many years ago, as part of the rebuilding process the goal which was hard to imagine appeared to be out of our reach. Myriam Glez began with a simple, but much unliked, LTAD program. The goal she set out was to build the basics outside of the water to lead us back to the Olympics in 2024 and to the podium in 2028. Yes 2028.

Four years ago, the goal was so close. We missed returning to the Olympics in the team event by oh so slim of a margin. Then in the 2023 Pan American Games again we missed out by oh so slight of a margin. This was not the end; we still had 1 more chance, the World Championships in Doha. We qualified for the Olympics!!!!

There were multiple club options competitions in 2024, those clubs also returned to the podium and medaled. Last year at the Youth World Championship we had a World Figure Champion. The building blocks were in place and the dream was closer.

Under the vision and creative mind of Andrea Fuentes, qualifying for the Olympics happened, but she had a better vision. Returning to the podium; yes, the podium. What seemed so unlikely in 2016 and 2020 was close, oh so close. We began to medal at multiple World Aquatic World Cups. Yes, medal!!!

So, with fingers cross, an army of supporters traveled to Paris. Could it, would it happen? Technical team, MJ, swam, the Moonwalk became an TV and internet viral sensation, but was the dream dead? We were 7<sup>th</sup>.... Wait, no! After an appeal, we were 4<sup>th</sup>! The cheering got louder, and Free team was next... We were second, yes, second at the Olympics. This would have guaranteed us a Silver Medal in 2020. However, World Aquatics changed the way we choreograph and judge this sport, and a new 3<sup>rd</sup> event was added: the Acrobatic Routine. We went into the final Team event in second. The crowd at home in the US watching on TV, and the crowd in Paris held their breath. The scores were posted, but it was only the Acrobatic Score, even the coaches and athletes were not sure.

It happened four years earlier than expected, we were back!!! Silver Medal!!! The dream of returning to the Olympics was true and four years earlier than planned oh so long ago, back on the Podium. The future looks bright for 2028 in LA

It took a lot of people to reach this goal, our coaches, our staff, our CEO Adam, and every one of us who were there in the background. The USA is back, and no longer followers, we're leaders.

It is with great sadness, that when you are leaders, your coach, Andrea Fuentes, is sought after. For Andrea, the journey with the US has ended. Andrea and her family are moving back home; home to Spain where her family lives, and where Victor returns to Gymnastics-his dream, and Andrea as the head coach for Spain. No words can say what she injected into the USA. We Believed and it happened. While

we are happy for Andrea, we are sad to lose her and Victor. The future is still bright as the torch is being passed to Tammy McGregor. Tammy, our 1996 Olympic Gold Medalist, our 2000 Olympian, our 2008 Olympic Senior National Team Coach, and our current Junior Team Coach. The future still looks bright, and we welcome Tammy with open arms.

So, the story is not ending, it is continuing with an unexpected twist. Please join us in congratulating Andrea on her new venture and Tammy in her new adventure as our Senior National Team Head Coach.

Now, please refer to the World Aquatic report by our World Aquatic representative Betty Hazle. Betty is ending her tenure as our International Relations Chair. I could not have done my job as your VPOI the last 4 years without her. Her wealth of knowledge is beyond belief. She will truly be missed!

To all our National Team Coaches and personnel, thank you for your hard work, and I appreciate what you have done for the US. We believe is not only our motto, but our way of life now.

With this convention I end my 4 years as your VPOI, I appreciate all the support and guidance I received.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Hawes