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Swimming Coach Accused Of Molestation At North Baltimore Aquatic Club

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Wednesday, October 03, 2012
Tim Joyce, Real Clear Sports/WBAL.com

Editor's note. Due to the serious nature of this story, WBAL news removed Tim Joyce's story from the website earlier Wednesday to allow us to do our 'due dilligence.' After personally interviewing unimpeachable sources who corrborated the information Tim wrote the decision was made to return the story to the web with absolutely no changes. Merrie Street, WBAL AM News Director.

In a series of jarring allegations from several sources, it has been discovered that a former high-level coach with close ties to the North Baltimore Aquatic Club (NBAC) - home to Michael Phelps and other Olympians - was accused of molestation and other inappropriate behavior towards some of his female swimmers while he was coaching elite athletes over a period of decades.

Upon hearing one such complaint in October of 2011 of the once-celebrated coach engaging in sexually abusive activity, NBAC immediately relieved him of his duties and

followed the correct protocol. The club representative, John Cadigan, informed the alleged victim that the police would be contacting her and that USA Swimming would be called and an investigation would ensue from Colorado Springs.

Calls made to Cadigan for comment on this article were not returned. The attorney for the club, Steve Allen, spoke for Cadigan and the club, stating, “for privacy reasons we do not make any comment about former and present employees and coaches, period.”

According to other sources with direct knowledge of this story, the police were in fact called and that USA Swimming was indeed made aware of this complaint. NBAC apparently did what clubs are supposed to do: alert the authorities immediately and then inform the national governing body of the incident. In terms of whether or not NBAC heard rumors of prior abuse and didn't act, there is no evidence yet to state such a claim.

In what has tragically been the standard operating procedure of USA Swimming, there was no follow-up investigation from Colorado Springs. Not one phone call or email was sent to the alleged victim who came forward. Additionally, this same victim approached USA Swimming months prior but was told nothing could be done because she wished to remain anonymous (USA Swimming has apparently changed that policy and now accepts anonymous reporting).

For USA Swimming not to investigate such a serious charge, especially since it involved a coach associated with this most famed club is staggering – and made even more astounding considering that NBAC acted in such swift fashion.

NBAC is the literal and symbolic home of United States Swimming athletes. Michael Phelps is the face of the sport and in addition, several other Olympic medalists have trained at the club, among them – Theresa Andrews, Anita Nall, Beth Botsford, Katie Hoff and Allison Schmitt.

Additionally the club at the time was - and currently is – co-owned by Phelps and his coach Bob Bowman (Bowman is currently taking a leave from coaching to work with TSE, a powerful consulting firm that was profiled in an earlier article in this series -- <http://www.wbal.com/article/93308/12/template-story/>).

Just as in the cases I've uncovered at much smaller clubs in the Midwest and Alaska, and at major swim center likes FAST in Fullerton, California USA Swimming chose to ignore the charges. I give USA Swimming credit for not discriminating between a large or small club – the organization seems to ignore complaints from all concerned.

But one does have to wonder - if NBAC, arguably the most respected swim club in the world, contacts the national organization to tell them of a former coach's actions and doesn't get a response, then what would incite Colorado Springs into action?

This is an ugly situation. To reiterate, USA Swimming, after being notified of a serious allegation didn't act. And like all of the other columns in this series of stories about USA Swimming, the important point is not to "out" an abusive coach. Rather, this is entirely about accountability and the sinister, arrogant and dangerous disregard for victims that is displayed by USA Swimming.

Like I've repeatedly said for weeks – this scandal only will get worse.

The operative question – when is enough enough? Now that this cancer-like scandal has spread to the most important swim club in the country, will there be calls for the entire leadership of Colorado Springs to step down? Will it finally trigger the kind of federal investigation that has long been warranted?

The victims of abuse are waiting.

Award-winning columnist Tim joyce is providing exclusive coverage of the USA Swimming scandal to WBAL. He can be reached @ joyce.timothy@gmail.com. Or follow him on Twitter at [TimJoyce4](https://twitter.com/TimJoyce4).



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This "background communications document" Was sent to WBAL from a member of USA Swimming addressing Tim Joyce's article about the North Baltimore Aquatic Club

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