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TO: National Team Athletes & Coaches  
FROM: Chuck Wielgus, Executive Director  
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This has not been a good week for “The Big Three” in American sports. The NFL, NBA and MLB are each dealing with extremely difficult issues that are tarnishing the reputation of their sports.

- NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is wrestling over what to do with Michael Vick and the allegations related to dog fighting.
- NBA Commissioner David Stern is confronted with a huge issue involving the credibility of officials and gambling.
- MLB Commissioner Bud Selig has finally come out after months of hemming and hawing to indicate that he will be in attendance when the controversial Barry Bonds breaks Hank Aaron’s home run record.

And then there is the Tour de France ... an event and a sport whose stock is dropping faster with every new doping allegation and rumor.

It’s a week like this that reminds me how fortunate we are at USA Swimming. But I’m also aware of just how fragile reputations can be. All it takes is one incident to put a crack in the luster of the shine that surrounds our sport.

Swimming is viewed as THE premier Olympic sports program in this country. The most recent evidence to support this is the fact that the International Olympic Committee has changed the competition schedule in Beijing so that Finals will now be broadcast *live* in prime time in the U.S. Likewise, our Olympic Trials will also feature nightly *live* prime time coverage. Additionally, I do not think there is another Olympic sport that is attracting the level of corporate sponsor activity that we are, and this is a clear sign that companies want to be associated with our sport and the values that we represent.

We are also seeing great excitement around the work of the new USA Swimming Foundation. The recently launched *Make a Splash* campaign which is bringing water

safety and learn-to-swim opportunities to youngsters who would otherwise not have the chance to experience swimming instruction is hopefully going to continue to expand the reach of our sport and bring thousands of new swimmers into the athlete development pipeline. New annual fund development and major gifts campaigns are now underway as we seek to raise millions of new dollars to help grow our sport in under-served areas of the country.

The primary reason USA Swimming is experiencing such business success and growth is that YOU are being seen as ideal role models and representatives and this reflects directly onto our sport and USA Swimming. Yes, people are genuinely inspired and taken with your athletic accomplishments and the fact that USA Swimming is the #1 ranked swim team in the world. But what is equally important is that the general public views America's top swimmers as good people ... you are seen as hard working, good natured and respectful. You exhibit the personal qualities that most people attribute to a value system which trumpets honesty, fairness, sportsmanship, good health and positive attitudes.

I've chosen to write this note to you not to implore you to exhibit good behavior ... but rather to THANK YOU for representing your family, your coaches, your team and your sport in such a wonderful manner. You're the best!

THANK YOU!