

# OCBP Chapter of USLA

## Mid-Atlantic Regional Competition

Submitted by: Sgt. Ryan Cowder

Every day that I pass through the 140's on my quad, I see CC Foy's crew working out like maniacs. It is one thing to keep yourself in shape in order to pass our test each summer to recertify, but these guys have more on their minds than that. I can see it in their eyes and faces..."Crew Comps...Crew Comps...Crew Comps".

I think it is a great motivator to match crew against crew in a little, friendly competition, because it is obvious that our guards take a lot of pride in placing in each of those events. I can still remember "North, North, North...South, South, South!!" It is a big deal and something to strive for. I also have a hard time getting motivated to workout hard unless I know that I have signed up for a race and I need to prepare.

Rick and I spent a lot of time this summer brainstorming about how we can take our guards to the next level in terms of competition. It is definitely not because we lack the talent, that's for sure. I simply think that summer is so busy with numerous events packed into every week, that our guards get overwhelmed by working all day and then doing extracurricular events every evening (certifications, additional sporting events, etc.). I'm not proposing that we stop doing all of those, because I do think that they are important. However, I do think that one thing we should put more focus on is showcasing our talent as "Maryland's Lifeguard Team", which is why I became active in the Ocean City USLA Chapter when it was formed in 2005.

When talking with Rick, we both agreed that preparing for the USLA competitions tends to get pushed back until the last minute, then the guards find themselves scrambling to put a team together. It is definitely not anyone's fault that this happens, like I mentioned above. It's just the way that our summer is put together, one week at a time. In fact, Sgt. Falcon did a great job when he was president by having special day forms already filled out for guards, along with doing everything else he could to get people involved.

After this explanation, you're probably thinking the same thing that Rick and I were thinking. How do we put all our talent into an outstanding team and get them all to show up? Our conclusion, just like having pride in your crew for Crew Comps, is to have pride in your USLA team. Easier said than done. But, we have come up with one idea that may help. What if the USLA Mid-Atlantic Regional (Guards from NY to VA) Competition was held on "home turf (I mean home sand)"? There is no greater pride than wanting to defend your own "home". That's exactly what Rick and I decided to aim for.

Ben and I attended a Regional meeting in Bethany, DE in October in an attempt to show Ocean City's interest in hosting this major competition. Rehoboth (they have been doing the competition for the past several years) and Ocean City were the two that showed interest. The next step is to show what Ocean City has to offer, in a presentation format, at the next regional meeting on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> in Cape May, NJ. At this meeting,

Our official Ocean City Beach patrol Chapter Logo created by Josh Giambalvo.



the region will take a vote and the location will be decided.

As you read this article, my goal is that some ideas are jumping into your head about how to make this competition not only happen, but how to make it great! I encourage you to let Rick or I know your ideas, since over the past few weeks we have been meeting with people to try to make this happen. In my opinion, hosting a regional competition is the next step in boosting the "competition morale" among our guards. It will also lead to a stronger USLA chapter. Regardless of whether we host the event or not, we still need to prepare. The competition dates are listed below and in the words of Sgt. Falcon, "The time to train is now!"

July 10<sup>th</sup> – Captain Craig Swim

July 14<sup>th</sup> - Mid Atlantic Regionals (non craft)

July 21<sup>st</sup> - Mid Atlantic Regionals (crafts)

July 24 – 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Lt. Mitch Maiorana Run Swim Run at Surf Ave. in OC, MD

July 26<sup>th</sup> - Mid Atlantic Regionals Junior Guard Championships in Sea Girt, NJ

July 28<sup>th</sup> - National Park Service 26<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Women Lifeguard Tournament in Sandy Hook, NJ

July 31<sup>st</sup> – OCBP Sprint Triathlon

August 7<sup>th</sup> – Crew Competition

August 12-14<sup>th</sup> - USLA National Lifeguard Competition in Huntington, CA

### Captain's Note:

Most of you were not around in the early 80's when Ocean City began hosting the original Mid-Atlantic regionals. In fact much of the equipment, distances and setup were developed in Ocean City for our event and we became the model for all other competition venues. The Ocean City event became so popular that we would have close to 1,000 event entries for the competition and teams would plan family vacations in Ocean City to coincide with the yearly event. Ocean City's event was a class act and even eclipsed the National event in its organization and presentation. Although the current USLA chapter has a huge reputation to live up to, the current members are far more professional and hard working than any group in the past and should have no problem making ours the "The Greatest Show on Earth".