

Loretta Blaut
USATF Annual Meeting Report | 2019
Reno, NV

This past weekend, I had the privilege of representing the Ohio association at the Annual Meeting. It was my first meeting of this kind and attending the workshops and informational sessions was extremely enjoyable. Sitting in a room full of past and present Olympians, World Champions and individuals who have etched their names in the record books was very humbling.

While attending the AAC meetings, we got to hear presentations from many speakers who explained changes and improvements that are being implemented for the 2020 Olympiad. One change that is being implemented is that once athletes qualify at the trials, there is a one stop shop for team processing. In previous years they mentioned athletes would have to travel to a different state to fully be processed. I think this helps the athletes a great deal because now they can spend more time training for the biggest competition of their lives at the Olympics rather than worrying about traveling to get registered.

One aspect that I am going to research more deals with life after sports. There were a few presenters that spoke on topics about when our career ends, and how USATF is helping athletes grow their skill set, provide job shadowing in addition to resume help and career coaching. This program is called ACE and it interests me particularly because the speaker mentioned USATF offers a certification in digital marketing and data analysis. My first job out of college is in digital marketing, which started back in May after graduating from Graduate School with an MBA. It since has bloomed into a career that I see myself in for a while. I have been looking for different certifications in digital marketing to ensure I never stop learning. I think it

is amazing that USATF is doing things to help athletes when they retire. As I have heard many times- but don't want to believe- you can't be a professional athlete forever.

I want to take a moment to thank the people who made my trip possible. Every time I travel with USATF I feel like it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I met world record holders this weekend and athletes that I have looked up to since the last Olympic Trials. It was a great experience and being with fellow athletes, past and present, is a place where I feel like I fit in most. I want to continue to be involved in USATF even when I retire from high jumping.