

USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council Minutes

January 24, 2025 / Virtual Meeting

Present: Topher Bishop, Nic Fink, Lilly King, Allison Schmitt, Caitlin Leverenz Smith, Josie Uerling, and Amanda Weir

Absent: Carson Foster, Natalie Hinds, Katie Meili, Olivia Tighe, and Andrew Wilson

Guests: Maya Dirado Andrews, Bryce Elser, Stacy Michael-Miller, Ellery Parish, Michelle Steinfeld

Call to Order: Caitlin Leverenz Smith called the January 24, 2025 meeting of the Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC) to order at 11:05AM MST

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: none

Agenda:

- Hiring updates for CEO & NTMD (*Caitlin*)
 - CEO: Moving forward to final round of candidates interviews at the end of January
 - NTMD: Conversations with stakeholders are complete and were very helpful
 - Strong candidate pool and will move into interviews soon
- Ask for new AAC rep on the AEC (*Caitlin*)
 - Need someone for the AAC seat
 - Meet Thursday evenings
 - Let Caitlin know if interested
- LA Site Visit Debrief:
 - Meeting with Steering and AAC at the same time to debrief both groups
 - Invitation sent via email – Caitlin will post to group
- NCAA Strategy:
 - Working on gathering athlete stories of their NCAA experience
 - More information to come in this group
- Coaching Applications for International Trips
 - Qualification and Criteria for Worlds was just posted for athletes
 - Coach Framework to be posted soon –expanded to include multiple questions
 - If interested in reviewing those please let Caitlin know
- Open Water Athlete Funding (*Bryce*)
 - Bryce Elser provided rationale for athletes who qualify for funding in both disciplines, pool and open water, to receive direct athlete support funding in both categories
 - Ensuring athletes are paid appropriately for twice as much work as they go to pool and open water competitions
 - At this time, anticipated two athletes per funding cycle – will evaluate going forward
 - Open Water needs to be incentivized to see a pipeline grow and this could be a key factor in that process
 - Bryce explained the selection is based on performance. World Championships is 4 men and 4 women, so we are considering funding to mirror that.
 - Want athletes to compete in, and perform well, at World Cups.
 - Discussion regarding timeline for competing in both at World Championships – potentially 14 days between the two going forward.

- Discussed funding time frames being different for pool and open water, while dollar amounts are the same.
- Need to ensure we are allocating resources to our overall medal count.
- AAC members asked a number of questions about open water competitions, travel, etc.
- Worth exploring, will revisit with the entire group.
- OW selection procedures (*Bryce*)
 - Athlete selection for World Championships
 - Proposal that athletes who qualify for 10K must swim in the 10K. If the athlete declines that event they decline the team.
 - Now have 10K, 5K, Relay (2 men and 2 women), and a Knockout event.
 - For team culture, want athletes who qualify in the Olympic event should swim that event rather than going for fun and shorter events.
 - Shorter events are the way to bring athletes into the open water culture and then work to 10K.
 - Confirming that we can send a relay only swimmer in open water.
 - Group agrees that this makes sense to set us up for success in 2028.
- Finalize committee placements (*Caitlin, Ellery*)
- Approve meeting minutes

Next Meeting: February 2025

Adjournment: Caitlin adjourned the January 24, 2025 meeting of the Athletes' Advisory Council at 11:56AM MST.