

## **USA Swimming National Team Steering Committee Minutes**

### **September 26, 2025 / Hybrid Meeting**

**Present:** Ron Aitken, Bob Bowman, Frank Busch (Chair), Carol Capitani, Natalie Coughlin-Hall, Todd DeSorbo, Bruce Gemmell, Lilly King, Matt Kredich, Caitlin Leverenz-Smith, Rachel Levitsky (Staff Liaison), Melanie Margalis-Fink, Greg Meehan (Staff Lead), Anthony Nesty, Ginny Nussbaum, Andrew Wilson

**Absent:** Chris Plumb, Danny Mistry (ex-officio), Jaime Lewis (ex-officio)

**Guests:** Billy Doughty, Brendan Hansen, Kevin Ring, Michelle Steinfeld, Yuri Suguiyama, Bob Vincent, Kim Williams

**Call to Order:** Greg Meehan called the September 26, 2025 meeting of the USA Swimming National Team Steering Committee to order at 8:04 AM MST

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Committee members were asked to disclose conflicts of interest by raising their hands if 1) they have an athlete(s) on the National Team or National Junior Team, 2) they are an athlete currently on the National Team, and/or 3) they have a spouse on the National Team.

Pursuant to the direction of the USA Swimming Ethics Committee, the following coaches raised their hand to acknowledge that they coach one or more current National Team or National Junior Team athletes: Ron Aitken, Bob Bowman, Carol Capitani, Todd DeSorbo, Matt Kredich, Anthony Nesty, and Ginny Nussbaum. The following athletes raised their hand to acknowledge that they are current National Team athletes: Lilly King and Kieran Smith.

#### **Agenda:**

- **Approval of Past Minutes**
  - Motion to approve minutes from the June 18, 2025 meeting was approved unanimously with no discussion.
- **LA28 Site visit update**
  - Mr. Meehan shared an overview of National Team Department's most recent site visit, including the pros and cons of staying in the village vs. a hotel.
  - Discussion included changes to the games structure with swimming competition in the second week, the opportunity for all athletes to participate in the Opening Ceremonies, recommendations from the USOPC, and non-negotiables for an outside-village lodging plan to work (VAPPs, security, etc.).
  - When discussing the Village experience, the committee was concerned about the nature of UCLA functioning as a village while still maintaining operations for college students, as well as the hilly nature of the area and unknowns around the transport mall.
  - Conversation around how this potential change will be messaged to the athletes was considered, including creating opportunities to ensure athletes feel a part of the Olympic movement and adding experiences in 2026 and 2027 to connect to SoFi Stadium. It was recommended to socialize this years in advance, as proposed.
  - There was concern surrounding costs, and it was noted that there is already momentum from donors to support hotel costs.

- Preferred hotel will be announced at a later date, but there is potential to share with other blue-chip NGBs at a property that is very well prepared to support high-end sports teams, with a focus on security, a relaxed environment to lessen stress, and streamlined transportation to SoFi, plus a small pool for loosen swims. Would also secure a training facility nearby, which is highly recommended, clean and well-run.
  - Athlete members of the committee asked if there would be opportunities for team members to visit the village at all, which is still being considered given timeline. It was also recommended to recreate the experience of moving into the village, with branding, swag, etc.
  - Backstroke sightlines at SoFi were brought up as a concern; noted that LA28 has not yet placed the pool, but this conversation will continue.
- **Trials to Games planned calendar**
  - US Olympic Team Trials, June 10-18, 2028 @ Lucas Oil Stadium
  - June 19, 2028 – Team Practice and Meeting
  - June 20-July 5 – Training @ home; optional altitude camp @ COS (16 days @ home)
  - July 5-13 – Staging camp @ Irvine, CA (9 days)
  - July 13 – morning workout + drive to LA. Check-in to LA hotel.
  - July 13-21 – Taper camp (8 days)
  - July 14 – Opening Ceremonies
  - July 22-July 30 – Swimming dates – GO USA!!!
  - It was noted from the group to consider the staging camp be open to personal coaches, if the right expectations of team culture can be set: personal coaches are assistants to the team coaches and maintain group unity. Athletes noted that collaboration from this summer was appreciated and felt part of a full team, so would not want to take that away.
- **Olympic Games Qualifying (50's of Stroke)**
  - Recognition of the recently published SwimSwam article on qualifying for 50s of stroke, which is not confirmed by World Aquatics and unclear how it will be put in place.
  - National Team Division staff is thinking about how to write selection procedures here, but will not put anything in place until World Aquatics announces more information.
  - Exercising caution until full announcement is made by World Aquatics, but preparing for all scenarios.
- **Steering Chair:** Michelle Steinfeld, Secretary & General Counsel, presented the following motion to the Committee:
  - *Motion:* Following National Team Steering Committee (the "Committee") member removal and appointment by the CEO, motion (1) to confirm Frank Busch as an ex-officio member of the Committee, with voice no vote, and (2) to elect Billy Doughty as Chair of the Committee, for a three-year term.
  - The motion was approved unanimously.
- **2027 World Championships**
  - July 10-18, 2027 @ Budapest Hungary (now a 9 day meet with an Olympic Games format)
    - ♣ Qualifying meet is Nationals (Indy) June 8-12, 2027

- ♣ 27 days in b/t Nationals and Worlds (LA28 = 33)
  - 13 days at home, 9 days at camp, 3 days pre-comp (given AQUA's schedule).
  - Qualifying for Worlds, WJRs, WUGs, potentially Pan Ams as well at this Natls.
- o Staging Camp considerations
  - ♣ Length – 9 days
  - ♣ Location – Europe with an indoor/outdoor climate and low humidity, and a time zone close to Budapest
    - Croatia – aerators and more indoor training; an Opatija hotel instead of Rijeka given cost. Other than last year's heat wave, athletes liked Croatia.
    - Vichy – 50m outdoor, 25m indoor – highly regarded as pre-London training camp, great food with a quaint town. Team was welcomed in 2012. From Bob's 2024 experience, pool space had to be massaged but can totally make it work.
    - Vittoria-Gasteiz – fly in and out of Bilbao, had nice outdoor pool and village had a good set up but hotel wasn't great.
    - London – not great facility options.
    - Canet – considered when looking at Vichy, have a Mare Nostrum stop there. The hotels aren't great, and have been drawbacks in the past .
    - Tenero – outdoor options similar to the Training Center vibe, with housing, dining and swimming all in one spot.
    - Samorin – also has a Training Center that was built recently.
  - ♣ Committee members added the importance of an easy travel day to Budapest, and the consideration around the political climate in any destination.
- **2026 Short Course World Championships** (December 1-6, 2026 @ Beijing, China)
  - o Team Size has varied a lot over the years, typically smaller teams. Slightly larger team in '26. Max roster size would be 26/26.
    - ♣ Propose 18/18 (2024 was 15/15)
    - ♣ The committee noted athletes want every opportunity to race the best in the world, and this is a huge money-making opportunity. Getting used to strict competitions is important practice.
    - ♣ Athlete workload, NCAA season timing and size vs strength of team were noted as considerations from the committee.
    - ♣ There was interest from the committee for a qualifying meet, but given the timing this is not possible for 2026. Highly possible for 2028, 1-2 weeks after NCAAs, which would change the timing of PSS meets.
  - o Selection procedures
    - ♣ P1 = #1 ranking in each Olympic event on the US NT on 9/1/2026;
    - ♣ P2 = #2 ranking in the 100/200 Free on the US NT on 9/1/2026;
    - ♣ P3 = NTD discretionary selections based on performances in SCY, SCM, and LCM
      - Potential emphasis on sprint events
- **Junior Pan-Pac Qualifying**

- Selection to come from Nationals in Irvine due to timing for nomination deadlines; proposing “Featured” 18 & under qualifying heat that prioritizes racing for place vs. trying to beat a time from a different heat.
  - ♣ Format = JPP qualifying, A final, B final, C final (B&C might be in 2<sup>nd</sup> flight)
  - ♣ Eligible athletes will have opportunity to opt in/out of 18 & under heat - building in as much flexibility as possible.
  - ♣ This only comes into play for 2026 given that there is no Sr team selection in 2026 (since Pan Pacs roster is already set).
  - ♣ Goal would be for these finals to be on TV, to really hype them up as selection finals, and then intro the JPPs team at the end of the meet with a t-shirt and lap around the pool.
  - ♣ Committee members appreciated that this creates reps around how athletes handle selection procedures and prepares them for the senior level. While the ideal scenario would have been for JPP qualifying to be at Jr Nationals, the timeline didn’t work out given team nomination deadlines.
  - ♣ Committee is interested in trying the creative 18-and-under final; Senior Development Committee is decision-maker here.
- **Pan-Pacific Championships**
  - Looking back at selection procedure – athletes qualified from all five meets. Committee recommends not including Pro Summer Champs moving forward.
  - Timing: most of the team will not swim at Nationals. There will be an optional camp in LA, but anticipate non-Nationals swimmers to come in on the 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **Pro Swim Series Racing Schedules**
  - Creating opportunities for athletes to race more events: not just prelims and finals, and for distance swimmers to race in P/F format. The goal is for athletes to get the reps of racing in and be comfortable with their race plans.
  - Prelim/Semi/Final format (by distance) and one distance event P/F
    - ♣ PSS #1 = 50’s P/S/F; 200 IM P/S/F; W. 800 P/F
    - ♣ PSS #2 = 100’s P/S/F; M. 800 P/F
    - ♣ PSS #3 = 200’s P/S/F (no IM); W. 1500 P/F
    - ♣ PSS #4 = M. 1500 P/F
- **NT Site Visits**
  - Staff will visit 53 Athletes by 12/31 and provided an update for the group: Austin next week. Delivering on public communication that NTD staff will be in person with every NT athlete during their term.
  - There was discussion around if the visits will be where the athlete is currently training, or where they made the team. While the site visits prioritize where the athlete is training, further discussion can be had to support the club who put that athlete on the team.
- **One Head Coach Model (Greg/Yuri/Kim)**

- Knowing that a USA Swimming lead is a coach, this structure will complement that. Committee members noted it worked well in summer 2025 and brought the team together more. Allows for a clear approach to relays, streamlined decision making.
- **Closing Remarks and Open Discussion**
  - National Team Division will be hiring in the next 6 weeks, looking forward to the opportunity to grow the team.
  - Committee members discussed the concern about future of the sport and youth market, as well as increasing popularity of other sports. The opportunity to use National Team athletes to generate interest and the input from athletes to feel more engaged was discussed. While the topic falls outside the purview of the Steering Committee, the committee supports and encourages this from athletes.

**Adjournment:** Greg Meehan adjourned the September 26, 2025 meeting of the National Team Steering Committee at 11:49 AM MST.