



**ZONE
DIRECTORS'
COUNCIL**

Zone Directors' Council Meeting

January 26th, 2025 - Minutes

7:30 PM ET/4:30 PM PT- Zoom

"Serving as a connecting link in the USA Swimming Community to build awareness and trust through shared communication and education."

Present: Zach Toothman (Co-Chair), Jamie Platt (Co-Chair), Nicole Caruso, Mike Dilli, Bruno Darzi, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, Simran Jayasinghe, Bob Staab, Jack Swanson, Thomas Ugast, TJ Walsh

Staff: Mitch Gold, Jane Grosser, Karin Olmsted, MJ Truex, Joel Shinofield

Absent: Brianna Elliott, Lara Robertson, Scott Shea, Hadley Wartner, Nicole Zhang

Mr. Toothman called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM ET.

1. Additions to Agenda
 - a. There were no additions to the agenda.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Dr. Swanson motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Darzi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Approval of [December 16th Minutes](#)
 - a. Mr. Staab motioned to approve the December 16 Minutes as presented. Dr. Swanson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
 - a. No conflicts of interest were declared.
5. Announcements
 - a. Para Athletes at Meets- Mike Dilli
 - i. New disability athlete time standards introduced, aligning with USA Swimming time standards (AA, AAA, etc.).
 - ii. Ensures inclusion of disability athletes in USA Swimming meets.

- iii. Some LSCs expressed concerns regarding the four-hour rule, but compliance with parallel standards remains mandatory.
- iv. Information shared with Western Zone officials; other zones encouraged to distribute as well.
- v. Central Zone Response (Mr. Staab):
 - 1. Integrated new standards into LSCs.
 - 2. AAA time standards adopted for para-athletes in zone meets.
- vi. Eastern Zone Response (Mr. Platt & Mr. Walsh):
 - 1. Eastern Zone does not use motivational time standards.
 - 2. Mr. Walsh adjusted sectional meet standards based on relative percentages.
 - 3. Discussion on whether zones have permission to modify these standards.
- vii. Southern Zone Response (Ms. Hellervik-Bing):
 - 1. Variation across LSCs regarding inclusion and time standards.
- b. Block Party Task Force 1st Meeting- February 10th
 - i. First Task Force Meeting: Scheduled for February 10th; survey to be sent to Zone Directors for feedback before the meeting.
 - ii. LSC Participation: Mixed engagement—some use Block Party for growth, while others discourage participation due to restrictive sanctioning policies.
 - iii. Key Data: 5,000+ first-time competitors, 3,600 renewed athletes; positive impact on retention.
 - iv. Sanctioning Challenges: Some LSCs have outdated rules limiting meet approvals; CAC requested a review of these barriers.
 - v. Policy Review: Joel Shinofield & Eric Stimson to analyze LSC sanctioning policies and propose updates.
 - vi. Concerns on LSC Fee Avoidance: No major evidence of widespread misuse; only 400 meets held nationwide.
- c. Zone Athlete Representative Spring Events

- i. The Zone Athletes are planning an LSC Athlete Awards, a virtual athlete workshop (April 6), and two athlete check-in initiatives. Awaiting contact lists from all Zones.

6. Ongoing Business

a. Junior Officials Membership Update

- i. Mr. Toothman proposed collaborative efforts to continue to distribute information. Mr. Toothman then transitioned discussion to Mr. Platt for CEO Task Force and LSC surveys.

b. CEO Search Task Force Update

- i. Mr. Platt shared that the CEO Task Force remains on schedule for Q1 2025 output. He emphasized significant collaboration and multiple meetings conducted.

c. LSC Leaders Survey- Jamie Platt

- i. A national survey is being developed in collaboration with IntelliSource to assess LSC strengths, gaps, and performance metrics. The survey will launch on February 15th, close on March 1st, and undergo three months of analysis, with findings expected in Q3 2025. The final report will be 80-100 pages, including an executive summary. To minimize fatigue, the survey will be comprehensive, with follow-up pulse surveys as needed. Concerns were raised about delays in implementing findings, prompting discussions on integrating “boots on the ground” initiatives. These efforts will continue alongside survey distribution and analysis, with further planning in the next meeting.

d. [ZDC Operating Policy Fall Updates](#)

- i. Zone Athlete Representatives Responsibilities Edits (Blue)
 - 1. Mr. Walsh made a motion to accept the edits as presented. Dr. Swanson seconded. The group entered discussion.
 - 2. Mr. Toothman highlighted the need to define athlete responsibilities to improve cross-collaboration. Mr. Platt suggested enhancing onboarding for new members, while Mr.

Walsh emphasized clarifying coach and non-coach director roles. Mr. Ugast noted the lack of a formal onboarding document, and Ms. Hellervik-Bing stressed elected representatives' accountability to their zones. The group agreed on the need for an onboarding document but debated the level of detail required. Mr. Staab called for a vote, but Mr. Walsh withdrew the motion due to unresolved concerns. Ms. Hellervik-Bing proposed integrating athlete director responsibilities, with further discussion planned for the next meeting.

7. New Business

a. Product Manager & ZDC Collaboration- Mitch Gold

- i. Mr. Gold acknowledged ongoing internal challenges with document storage and servers.
- ii. Further updates will be provided as issues are resolved.

b. CAC ZDC Liaison

- i. Proposal to appoint a ZDC liaison to CAC for meeting attendance and reporting.
- ii. Mr. Platt nominated Mr. Ugast. The nomination was accepted unanimously.

c. Zone Directors SWIMS Access

- i. Discussion Led By: Mr. Bob Staab
 1. Concerns raised about zone directors lacking access to LSC-level reports.
 2. Past requests for broader data access yielded limited responses.
- ii. Data Access & Reporting Enhancements – Mr. Joel Shinofield
 1. Ongoing efforts to expand LSC report availability.
 2. Past misuse of mailing lists has led to access restrictions.
 3. Integration of new reports into the Data Hub.
- iii. New Reports Available

1. LSC retention and performance reports now live.
 2. Future updates to include advanced filtering options.
 - iv. Data Hub Demonstration – Mr. Joel Shinofield
 1. Walkthrough of Data Hub features.
 2. Noted technical difficulties due to system maintenance.
 3. Planned upgrade to a modern data warehouse.
 - d. Club Dues Legislation Collaboration
 - i. No specific discussion noted; ongoing tracking and updates as needed.
8. Adjournment
- a. Mr. Staab motioned for adjournment. Mr. Ugast seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Toothman adjourned the meeting at 9:08 PM ET.