



**ZONE
DIRECTORS'
COUNCIL**

Zone Directors' Council Meeting

October 14th, 2025 - Minutes

8:00 PM ET/5:00 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, Bruno Darzi, Tristan Formon, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, Simran Jayasinghe, Louis Roux, Bob Staab, Sally Taggart, Thomas Ugast, TJ Walsh, Hadley Wartner, Nicole Zhang

Staff: Joel Shinofield

Absent: Mike Dilli, Brianna Elliott, Bridget McGann, Lara Robertson, Scott Shea, Jack Swanson

Mr. Toothman called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM ET.

1. Additions to Agenda
 - a. There were no additions to the agenda.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Mr. Ugast motioned for approval and Ms. Caruso seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Approval of August 18th Minutes
 - a. Mr. Ugast motioned to table and Ms. Hellervik-Bing seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
 - a. No conflicts of interest were declared.
5. Announcements
 - a. Zone & Staff Updates
 - i. Ms. Hellervik-Bing shared that the Southern Zone has new leadership in place and thanked Mr. Darzi for his prior service. Mr. Ugast

reported that the Eastern Zone is currently searching for a new Southern Sectional host. Mr. Staab noted that the Central Zone is finalizing meet updates and working to confirm 2027 hosts. Ms. Taggart said the Western Zone has secured hosts for 2026 and begun planning for 2027.

- ii. Mr. Shinofield reported strong Summit attendance and record-setting fundraising at Golden Goggles. He noted continued efforts to expand Summit scheduling, shared that National Select Camps are underway, and confirmed that Team Services will conduct visits across all LSCs over the next year.

b. Welcome New Zone Directors! Thank you Outgoing Zone Directors!

- i. [ZDC Policy](#)
- ii. Mr. Toothman welcomed the new Zone Directors and thanked the outgoing members, noting that this meeting marks the transition between groups. He invited brief introductions from the new directors. Mr. Foreman introduced himself as the newly elected Southern Zone Coach Director and shared prior service roles across multiple committees and zones. Ms. Taggart introduced herself as the new Western Zone Director, outlining her leadership experience in Colorado and California-Nevada, as well as her long involvement as an official. Mr. Roux introduced himself as the new Southern Zone Junior Athlete Representative from Louisiana, highlighting his recent service and accomplishments within Louisiana Swimming. Mr. Toothman also noted that the new Central Zone Junior Athlete Representative, Ms. McGann, will join future meetings. Mr. Toothman concluded by directing new members to the linked ZDC policy and encouraged them to reach out with any questions.

6. Ongoing Business

a. CAC Liaison Update- Tom

- i. Mr. Ugast reported that the CAC met last week and is beginning its new year by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and priorities. Members

appreciated the recent in-person summit and expressed a preference for more in-person meetings. Mr. Shinofield added that the committee met its new 75-minute time limit and is aiming for more focused, action-oriented discussions, returning to developing concrete initiatives as in past years.

- ii. Mr. Toothman noted the positive progress and reminded the group that Mr. Raykovich is the CAC liaison, with Ms. Prindle as the Board liaison and Ms. Parrish and Ms. Grosser supporting from USA Swimming staff.

b. The Summit Programming & Discussions

- i. Mr. Toothman opened the floor for feedback on Summit programming and zone meeting timing. Ms. Hellervik-Bing noted guest speakers extended the agenda, and the 90-minute zone meetings were “just barely” sufficient; she recommended keeping that length rather than reducing to 75 minutes. Mr. Shinofield emphasized focused meetings and occasional flexibility. Mr. Ugast and Mr. Staab highlighted challenges with meet-bid discussions and suggested either one longer meeting or two shorter meetings on separate days, preserving informal discussion time and considering programming for LSC staff. Mr. Formon supported two meetings for deeper offline discussions. Discussion included ensuring full LSC participation, identifying attendee roles, and expanding educational tracks. Age-group development and retention past age 12 were noted as key coach priorities. Mr. Walsh shared New Jersey Swimming’s broad-attendance approach as an example of effective participation across multiple tracks. Mr. Staab proposed, and Mr. Shinofield supported, forming a ZDC Summit working group to coordinate future programming, replacing the former Convention Education Committee. Mr. Shinofield concluded by noting planning for next year will begin in three weeks following Girls Select Camp.

c. ZDC Winter Board of Directors Update

- i. Mr. Toothman noted the final board update for the winner is Monday, December 1 at 12:30 p.m. Eastern via Zoom. Mr. Platt encouraged all zone directors to request the link to observe and stay informed. Mr. Shinofield confirmed the meeting is online and is a standalone board meeting.

7. New Business

- a. 2025-2026 ZDC Annual Calendar Review & LSC Leaders Survey & Boots on the Ground Working Groups
 - i. [2024-2025 ZDC Annual Calendar](#)
 - ii. Mr. Toothman introduced agenda items A and B and turned the discussion over to Mr. Platt to review the annual calendar and how the Boots on the Ground working group will fit into it for 2025–26. Mr. Platt noted that last year’s calendar largely remains, with minor updates such as renaming the ABM to Summit. Survey results are available on the summit page, and three upcoming PULSE surveys will further inform needs. ZDC members are asked to review the calendar and survey results, identify key issues, and prepare ideas for Boots on the Ground programs. Mr. Shinofield highlighted five primary challenges for clubs: membership growth and retention (43%), facility constraints (35%), coaching recruitment and development (33%), financial pressures (25%), and overlapping challenges. Discussion emphasized addressing these at the local (club/LSC) level. Next steps include reviewing past accomplishments, survey results, and proposed programs, then providing feedback via email ahead of the November meeting to finalize goals and focus areas.
- b. Co-Chair Elections
 - i. Mr. Toothman reviewed the rules: only voting members, athlete, coach, and non-coach directors, could vote, and junior athlete representatives were ineligible.

- ii. Mr. Toothman made a motion for Mr. Shinofield to serve as election chair, with Mr. Darzi assisting. Ms. Caruso seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- iii. The first general election included nominations for Mr. Platt, Mr. Formon, and Mr. Walsh, with each candidate given a brief opportunity to speak. After voting, a tie between Mr. Platt and Mr. Walsh prompted a runoff, which Mr. Platt won.
- iv. The second election, restricted to members outside the Eastern Zone, produced three nominees: Mr. Staab, Mr. Formon, and Ms. Jayasinghe. Each candidate delivered brief remarks before voting, resulting in Mr. Formon being elected.
- v. Ms. Caruso made a motion to destroy the ballots and Ms. Hellervik-Bing seconded. Ballots were subsequently destroyed, and the council congratulated Mr. Platt and Mr. Formon as the new ZDC co-chairs, ready to lead the group over the next two years.

8. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Ugast motioned for adjournment and Ms. Hellervik-Bing seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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