



**ZONE
DIRECTORS'
COUNCIL**

Zone Directors' Council Meeting

June 11th, 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, Mike Dilli, Bruno Darzi, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, Simran Jayasinghe, Lara Robertson, Bob Staab, Thomas Ugast, TJ Walsh, Nicole Zhang

Staff: Jane Grosser, Joel Shinofield

Absent: Brianna Elliott, Scott Shea, Jack Swanson, Hadley Wartner

Mr. Toothman called the meeting to order at 8:02 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 Mr. Darzi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Approval of [April 21st Minutes](#)
 - a. Mr. Ugast motioned for approval and Ms. Caruso 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. Mr. Staab shared that the Central Zone will be hosting their Open Water Championships this upcoming weekend and will have representation from all Central Zone LSCs.

- b. Zone Appointed Delegates for HOD due 7/15
 - i. Mr. Toothman reminded the Council that HOD delegate submissions are due July 15.
- 6. Ongoing Business
 - a. Junior Officials Membership Update- Feedback Task Force Creation (Zach/Jack)
 - i. Mr. Toothman discussed plans to gather feedback from LSC officials' chairs on the Junior Officials program. He invited Mr. Shinofield and Mr. Darzi to join the feedback survey effort.
 - b. CEO Search Task Force Update- Jamie
 - i. Mr. Platt provided an update on the CEO task force, noting they are continuing the interview process to find a great leader for the role. The group discussed the timeline, with no specific end date provided.
 - c. LSC Leaders Survey- Jamie
 - i. Mr. Platt and Mr. Shinofield discussed the upcoming release of the LSC leader survey results, targeting a September release after a meeting between Mr. Shinofield and Mr. Christian of Intellisport.
 - d. Block Party Task Force Update- Bob
 - i. Mr. Staab reported no major updates as the task force continues gathering information. Mr. Shinofield shared that nearly 28,000 unique athletes have participated in Block Party meets, with 21% being first-time competitors, 44% of whom have already advanced to regular sanctioned meets. The initiative appears additive, increasing overall meet volume by 12–13% without displacing traditional meets. These simplified, sanctioned meets average 85 minutes and can be officiated by non–USA Swimming officials when needed; however, full USA Swimming crews allow the meet to count for OTS credit. Ms. Caruso inquired about using Block Party meets for Junior Official training and the two-year athlete requirement; Mr. Shinofield will follow up. Ms. Hellervik-Bing confirmed data will be shared with LSCs and asked about officiating credit, which Mr. Shinofield clarified can

be adjusted post-meet. Mr. Ugast and Ms. Hellervik-Bing noted their usefulness for recruiting new officials. Mr. Dilli requested LSC-level data, which Mr. Shinofield confirmed is accessible via internal reports. Adoption varies by LSC, with high-saturation areas like Colorado and North Dakota showing less use, while others use the program to expand officiating capacity.

e. CAC Liaison Update- Tom

- i. Mr. Ugast shared that the CAC will propose requiring at least four coach representatives on the board, plus one from Steering. The council focused on boosting coach attendance at the Annual Business Meeting and discussed scheduling an in-person meeting at ABM. Mr. Lawrence gave a brief update, and Mr. Shinofield presented Block Party data, which the CAC supports. Mr. Ugast also suggested coordinating “Meet the Candidates” efforts with USA Swimming, and Mr. Toothman confirmed ongoing discussions with Ellery Parish, Manager, Business Affairs.

f. Mobile App Stakeholder Task Force- Bruno & Zach

- i. Mr. Darzi reported that the latest, detailed survey provided valuable insight into user needs, especially regarding times, events, and user interface expectations. He praised the team’s progress and noted the app’s evolving user-friendliness for coaches, athletes, and parents. Mr. Shinofield added that coach feedback, including from Nationals, has shaped development, and rollout is expected in the fall. Mr. Ugast emphasized the importance of a quality launch, referencing prior issues with early website release.

g. Zone Programming for The Summit

- i. Mr. Toothman reviewed prior discussion on summit planning, noting the request for 90-minute Saturday zone meetings and informal topic sharing over breakfast. Mr. Shinofield confirmed both committee and zone meetings will occur Saturday morning, with potential for an additional informal breakfast meeting. A room will be secured nearby

to accommodate this. Sunday morning will feature a foundation-led community event for Colorado athletes, not formal programming. After discussion, the group agreed to hold the Zone Directors Council breakfast meeting on Friday to allow flexibility. Mr. Staab confirmed Saturday's scheduled zone meetings are from 10:00–11:30 AM, preceded by 8:30–9:30 AM committee meetings and followed by the House of Delegates at noon.

h. Club Dues Increase Collaboration

- i. Mr. Platt noted there is no major update; while a rough plan exists, other priorities have taken precedence. He and Mr. Shinofield will revisit the collaboration soon. Mr. Shinofield added that mobile app development has been the top priority due to its urgency, especially with dues collection beginning in 2026. Some reporting features, such as club visit tracking and feedback through SWIMS, are already in progress to meet earlier promises. He emphasized that the app work, which requires the most upfront investment, is moving forward with support from the group.

7. New Business

a. Report #2 to Board of Directors- Legislation Discussion June 25/26?

i. Discuss Date Change

1. The board will meet June 26 at 11 a.m. ET to review LSC legislation concerns. Mr. Walsh noted a conflict with the Eastern Zone Athlete Summit, but Mr. Toothman emphasized the need for zone representation. He will notify Ms. Parish and share the Zoom link.

b. [Legislation Review](#)

- i. The meeting began with a review of proposed legislation, with Mr. Toothman sharing his screen to display items from the USA Swimming page for discussion in priority order. Legislation on starts was introduced with clarifying questions from Mr. Dilli, who had no concerns. The proposal to add 50s of stroke events for older age

groups was briefly discussed, followed by extensive discussion of Maine Swimming's over-entering legislation. Mr. Dilli, Ms. Hellervik-Bing, Mr. Staab, Mr. Ugast, Ms. Caruso, and Mr. Darzi agreed over-entering should be addressed before meets to avoid punitive measures after swims, with Ms. Caruso noting potential gamesmanship and Ms. Hellervik-Bing emphasizing proactive coach contact. Eligibility legislation prompted concerns from Ms. Hellervik-Bing, Mr. Darzi, Mr. Dilli, and Mr. Walsh about disruptions from aligning age eligibility dates with YMCA or World Aquatics standards; Mr. Walsh shared personal experiences and noted the AEC's consensus against the change. A proposal to expand athlete representation definitions to include "actively engaged" athletes was supported after Mr. Walsh explained definitions and Mr. Shinofield described challenges filling 10-year athlete roles, with Ms. Hellervik-Bing voicing support and Mr. Staab reading the rulebook definition. Discussion on LSC geographical boundaries focused on Potomac Valley and Virginia Swimming sharing Loudoun County pools, with Mr. Ugast explaining historical dual sanction agreements and Virginia Swimming's resistance, while Ms. Hellervik-Bing, Mr. Shinofield, and Mr. Staab provided additional context. Brief discussions followed on legislation conforming to World Aquatics rules, disability definitions, and bylaws updates, with Mr. Staab, Ms. Grosser, and Mr. Shinofield noting that the bylaws revisions clarify Governance Committee duties without substantive changes. The meeting concluded with Mr. Staab noting Rules and Regulations Committee review will continue in upcoming calls.

- c. Membership Data Review- Joel
 - i. Mr. Shinofield reported stable overall membership, with expected gains in June and July, slight declines in premium memberships affecting revenue, and increases in outreach, flex, and seasonal memberships. Provisional coach memberships rose from 400 to

nearly 650, bringing total coaches to ~19,500, approaching historic highs. However, officials remain below pre-2019 levels, risking meet capacity. Southern California and Illinois LSCs continue to decline (Illinois partly due to Chicago pool closures), while Potomac Valley reached historic athlete highs. Mr. Staab requested broader reporting access for zone directors; Mr. Shinofield explained upcoming data warehouse upgrades to enable easier Google-based access and invited directors to schedule 1:1 Zooms for data reviews. Mr. Walsh asked about expanded analytics tools, and Mr. Shinofield noted Looker's high costs but affirmed plans for improved user access.

8. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Staab motioned for adjournment and Mr. Darzi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Toothman adjourned the meeting at 9:41 PM ET.