



**POTOMAC VALLEY**  
**SWIMMING**

Reports from  
**USA Swimming Workshop**  
Denver, CO  
April 20-23, 2023



## USA Swimming Workshop April 20-23, 2023, Denver CO General Chair's Report

This report is a summary of my experience at the USA Swimming Workshop. If you have questions or want additional details about any of the topics, please contact me at [GeneralChair@pvswim.org](mailto:GeneralChair@pvswim.org)

### Thursday, April 20

**USA Swimming Board Meeting** - I was invited to attend the USA-S Board Meeting as one of the co-chairs of the Zone Directors Council (ZDC). The other co-chair and I presented the status of the ZDC and our plans for the near future. Other significant topics at the board meeting included:

- Discussion of how to get better coach participation in the USA-S HOD
- Recap of what went wrong with the SWIMS 3.0 rollout and strategies for fixing it
  - Redoing the Learning Module Interface
  - Getting a new vendor for the Reporting Module
  - Better oversight of the entire project from a project management standpoint
- Discussion of how to rebuild and retain membership
- Announcing Kathleen Scandary as the Meet Referee for 2024 Olympic Team Trials

**Keynote Address** - A very interesting presentation was made by Matt Barany, Head Coach of the University of Richmond swim team. His talk was about the importance of sleep and sleep consistency. He presented study data showing the correlation between increased sleep and improved performance both in the pool and the classroom.

### Friday, April 21

**Zone Meeting** - The Team Services Representatives for the Eastern Zone, Beth Winkowski and Nate Chessey made a presentation of their road map for serving the Eastern Zone. Their roadmap document is below.

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#### PVS Mission Statement

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#### PVS Vision Statement

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**USA SWIMMING TEAM SERVICES**



**2023 EASTERN ZONE ROAD MAP**  
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE EASTERN ZONE

**EASTERN ZONE MISSION**

SHARING RESOURCES THAT EMPOWER MEMBERSHIP  
MEMBERS USING RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

**STRENGTHENING LSC RELATIONSHIPS**

**ZONE MEETINGS/LSC BOD & HOD MEETINGS**

- IDENTIFY KEY ISSUES
- CONNECT WITH STAKEHOLDERS
- FACILITATE SOLUTIONS

**STRENGTHENING CLUB RELATIONSHIPS**

**EZ MEETS & EVENTS**

- ATTEND LSC FLAGSHIP EVENTS
- ATTEND TECHNICAL MEETINGS

**EVENTS**

- May 4-7th National Diversity Select Camp  
Colorado Springs, CO
- May 18-21st EZ Zone Select Camp  
Philadelphia, PA
- June 8-11th EZ Regional Diversity Select Camp  
College Park, MD
- June 8-11th EZ Regional Coaching Clinic  
College Park, MD
- June 27-July 1st Phillips 66 National Championships  
Indianapolis, IN
- July 26-29th Futures  
Richmond, VA
- August 2-5th EZ LCM Age Group Championships  
Richmond, VA
- August 3-6th EZ LCM Senior Championships  
Richmond, VA Buffalo, NY

**LSC PROGRAMS**

**SWIMPOSIUMS**  
ADIRONDACK - MAY  
VIRGINIA - SEPTEMBER

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EZ**

- SOCIAL MEDIA



BETH WINKOWSKI - BWINKOWSKI@USASWIMMING.ORG NATE CHESSEY - NCHESSEY@USASWIMMING.ORG

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**LSC Open Water Programming** - This session discussed how to create open water opportunities in the LSC. Planning for OW events is much different than pool events. Safety is a major consideration, with weather and water conditions being factors.

It was suggested to make use of local resources (i.e. those that run non-sanctioned open water events or triathlons) as they have the experience and equipment needed. There is a [USA Swimming form](#) used for sanctioning. Additional sources of information are on the [USA Swimming website](#) and the [Western zone website](#).

**Governance Committee** - This session was a discussion of how to improve governance in the LSC. Some specific ideas presented were:

- Create an LSC Annual Calendar or required tasks
- The Nominating Committee needs to do a more thorough job of advertising and searching for candidates. One LSC set up a recruiting table at their LSC Championship meet.
- Make sure there are Job Descriptions for each board position and committee chair
- Board Orientation should include:
  - How parliamentary procedure works
  - Strategic Planning
- Hold orientations for each committee

**Meet 360: Safe Sport** - This session was a discussion of how the [Meet 360 resources](#) should be used by meet hosts. It was suggested that a link to the Meet 360 resources be sent to hosts as part of the sanctioning process. The required "Quality Control System" is still undefined, but we were assured that what we currently do is compliant. The Meet 360 document highlights those requirements from the U.S. Center for Safe Sport.

It was noted that several LSC now require that a club be a Safe Sport Recognized Club in order to host a meet.

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**Saturday, April 22**

**Legislative Review Session** - As was done in 2022, a session was devoted to discussion of potential legislation for the 2023 House of Delegates. Copies of the proposed legislation are available on the [USA Swimming website](#). A few of these are:

- Extend the current HOD structure through September 2024
- Slight modification to the Development Competition Program (remove “10 week sessions”)
- Clarify the difference between “accommodations” and “modifications” in Article 105
- Require LSC HOD to take place within the LSC territory
- And the option of a 2nd Senior Zone meet

It was noted that World Aquatics (formerly FINA) can now make rule changes at any time instead of a scheduled cycle. This has happened twice already this year. Any of these out-of-cycle changes that are not in the printed rulebook will be posted on the [Rules page](#) of the USA Swimming website.

**LSC Communications** - This session discussed both the USA Swimming communications strategy and ideas for creating an LSC communications strategy. The use of all different forms of communication as part of the strategy were reviewed. This includes email, website, social media, and word-of-mouth. The method of communication depends on (a) the timeliness of the communication, and (b) the lifetime of the information. Maintaining a consistent communications style (brand recognition) was suggested.

Use of Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) can be a powerful communications tool. High quality, consistent posting and style, and the use of #hashtags help keep the membership, and potential members, engaged. Some of the useful tools mentioned were: Constant Contact, Google Drive Suite, Adobe Express (free version), and Canva.

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USA Swimming has collected over 600,000 email addresses in SWIMS 3.0 and was a key driver in the Digital Transformation. Using Salesforce Marketing Cloud, they are able to communicate to specific constituencies within the membership.

USA Swimming has also updated their [Marketing Toolkit](#) with resources for LSCs and clubs.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Action** - This lively discussion led by Leland Brown III (USA-S DEI Director) and Wade Atkings (Chair, USA-S DEI Committee) focused on the three tenets of connect, accept, and provide.

Methods of engaging the community, the LSC Board, and the LSC athletes were discussed. It is important to engage all these entities for a successful LSC.

## **Sunday, April 23**

Kelly Rowell and I met with USA Swimming staff members Patrick Murphy, Eric Stimson, and Denise Thomas to discuss the current status and plans for SWIMS 3.0. They listened to our concerns and suggestions.

Tim Husson  
General Chair  
[GeneralChair@pvs swim.org](mailto:GeneralChair@pvs swim.org)

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**Cberlynn Venit**  
**Administrative Vice Chair**

Attending the USA Swimming Workshop in April was informative, motivational and enlightening. As the current Admin Vice Chair and incoming General Chair, the networking opportunities were most helpful. Being able to talk to other people in the same positions from across the country provided a great foundation and insight into the workings, pitfalls and success of other LSCs. It provided the opportunity to brainstorm and find new ideas. The workshop also provide excellent opportunities to learn more about the individuals that are a part of our current board and listen to their ideas and concerns.

The keynote speaker, Matt Barany, was engaging. His discussion revolving around heart rate variability, sleep cycles and the use of wearables (like an Apple watch or Fitbit) to track these key factors for athletes (and all people) was interesting. His talk would be a great Swimposium topic as a seminar for mental health and how our sleep decisions play a factor in our own mental health!

The Board of Directors Panel provided a wide variety of information regarding the drop in membership numbers (not just COVID related; it's been happening since 2008), the importance of engaging the community through outreach programs and how critical DEI is to our growth, the exciting Club experiences being offered for Olympic Trials in 2024, the offering of the USA-S Network (the 1<sup>st</sup> NGB to offer this for Free!), our ever-changing Swims 3.0, information on how NILs are hurting NGB sports, and much more!

The Eastern Zone meeting stressed that each LSC needs to ensure that coaches who are appointed as delegates for the HOD remember to attend and vote!! The Athlete Leadership Retreat was also discussed and well received by all LSCs.

Another interesting session revolved around LSC Open Water Events where we heard about the Open Water subcultural that already exists and how we should build and leverage those relationships. We learned that USA Swimming has stricter guidelines than the everyday open water swims and heard about how to make sure we offered fun and safe events for swimmers of all ages. The session left the PVS, MD and VA delegates discussing a tri-LSC approach to learning the ropes of submitting open water sanctions and possibly creating an open water circuit of meets between the three LSCs.

The Activating the LSC Governance Committee session focused on the importance of letting the Governance committee help lighten the load of the Board so that the LSC Board could focus on strategic planning. A governance best practices pamphlet was offered to all in attendance. The session also stressed the importance of the Board's orientation process and the importance of sharing information through a system, possibly using google drive that is shared with checks & balances.

Liz Hahn presented the Meet 360: Safe Sport Requirements for Running a Meet. The group broke into groups to show how Safesport is being implemented and used by the LSCs at meets. SafeSport will develop a one-pager of what is required whereas the Meet 360 document provides best practices and requirements.

The Legislative Review session provided a glimpse of the legislation that will be voted upon at the HOD in September. It was a great opportunity to hear what the proposals are, the reasoning for them, and for USA Swimming to obtain feedback from the LSCs. We were told that off-cycle rule changes may come up more often due to World Aquatic changes. These will be updated on the website under officials and should be checked prior to each meet for any immediate updates. Disability swimming was

discussed and the new forms for accommodation and modification requests. How to handle Disability DQs was a hot topic. Two options are currently being proposed: MR vets all calls to see if Rule 105 overturns any OR brief S&T officials to know which exceptions are allowed per athlete with accommodations and modifications.

The session regarding Effective LSC Communication also created a lot of offline discussion. Using Active (Email), Passive (website) and Word of Mouth options are all necessary. Important information about utilizing content calendars for posting was presented and discussed as well as the importance of looking at your analytics (open rate, click rate, day & time factors). Advice was given to monitor comments due to bots, to post consistently and interact with followers by asking questions/posting polls. Content ideas were provided as well as possible tools to use. I believe that PVS can work to up our game in the social media realm by working smarter and implementing several of the ideas presented!

The final session I participated in was the LSC Connecting, Accepting and Providing for their Members session. Leland definitely made the presentation interactive, fun and thought-provoking. This would be another great option for a Swimposium presentation. The suggestion was made to survey clubs to see what they need and then start with ONE program/goal for CAP in the community of that team. Team building exercises were recommended for people to get to know each other personally and professionally. The importance of trusting and empowering your people was also a focal point. Interesting note: giving away power = more power (it multiplies)!

Finally, I would like to thank PVS for the opportunity to represent us at the Workshop this year! I am hoping that the workshop was equally beneficial for all who attended and hope that there are many ideas that we can all bring forward as a starting point for next year with a new and renewed excitement!

Respectfully submitted,

Cherlynn Venit



## **USA Swimming Workshop Report**

April 20-22, 2023

Denver, CO

Aaron Dean, PVS Coaches' Representative

It was not clear to me what the purpose of the workshop was before committing to attend. I went into the event with an open mind and came away with stronger knowledge of what USA Swimming is seeking to provide its members through the increase in staff and services it has. The gathering was an attempt to solicit ideas, network with LSC leaders and serve face time for USA Swimming staff to better aid the swimming community. Additionally, the workshop was a gateway to elicit discussion on the proposed legislation in hopes to streamline the process next fall during convention. I stayed in the coaches' track throughout the weekend event.

The keynote speaker, Matt Barney, shared studies, and results regarding sleep more for more success, better performance, better grades, etc. 7.5 hours is ideal to go through the five cycles. Fun Fact: Swimmers at Division I level have an average of 3.6 gpa at NCAA Championships (girls) and 3.5 boys.

There are a lot of staff for USA Swimming, and they seem eager and willing to help clubs navigate the challenges that we face. Don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions. Outside of PVS, our primary contact is Beth, and she is ready and willing to help direct you to the answers you seek through her or any other staff.

USA Swimming's Swim Network had a big launch this spring. They are very proud of and shared that this is the galvanizing piece of the overall plans for upgrading technology around the foundation of Swims 3.0 and in keeping up with NIL revenue opportunities within swimming communities.

There were two educational presentations, one on parent communications addressing three levels of pre-season meetings to parents of 12U, to parents of 13O and the overall team culture that parents bring to a team. The other on mental health and the importance of understanding a coaches' role. Main take away for the mental training is to get Mental Health First Aid training to help coaches learn the process of attending to mental health needs that come up. Additionally, [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) is a resource for referring athletes to needed mental care.

The Coaches Advisory Committee is asking for more coaches to attend meetings and learn more about the committee priorities as they are discussed. Meetings are posted under the USAS events.

The only major legislative proposal was the guidelines for officiating swimmers with disabilities. The takeaway for coaches is that you are the advocate for your athletes and notice of any disabilities that need to be considered for accommodation or modification will need to be provided during event entry to the meet referee. The meet referee will be trained to determine the needed adjustments to be made to officiating swimmers with disabilities.





**Andrew Char**  
**At Large Athlete Representative**

USA SWIMMING SPRING WORKSHOP

- Future Opportunities
  - Potomac River Clean Up
    - The other reps and I thought of a Potomac River cleanup idea where basically we offer community service opportunities to athletes, students, and parents to help clean around the river. Some clubs require parents to fulfill a certain amount of volunteer hours (timing and volunteering at meets etc) these hours could also contribute to those requirements (up to the team).
    - This clean up will also open up a cleaner space for open water opportunities.
  - Suit Drive
    - Another LSC thought of this but I think it's a great idea. For underprivileged areas and such, swimmers could donate gently used or new suits and these could be passed out to communities that might need them.
  - Donate medals
    - Another LSC is doing this but it's a fantastic idea. Swimmers would be able to donate their old medals back to an award making place where they could be melted down and reuse the material for new medals.
  - Leadership Summits
    - Although we have a leadership summit coming up soon, I heard of maybe doing leadership summits for younger kids as well. They think that leaders need to start young and by creating these opportunities for the younger kids then they could develop these skills at a younger age.
- Other Notes
  - I thought that the seminar about sleep and such was an amazing talk. If we would be able to bring him out to Potomac Valley and have coaches come listen to his talk I think that would be immensely beneficial. The coaches could bring that information back and try to form their training regiment around it.
    - Prioritizing sleep is important and sleep improves overall health
  - There is a lot that ZARC wants to change about this sport and every little increment is still a step towards the change
  - Membership revenue is the main source for most swim clubs
    - Total membership is down 7% and athlete membership is down 9%
    - Need to figure out how to bring kids back to the sport
    - Need to change membership quantity in the future
    - Need to figure out how to minimize risks now so then there will be funds in the future
- Questions to think about
  - What can we do to ensure the future success of swimming?
    - How can we continue to thrive as a sport?
  - How can officials better support athletes and club teams?

- Is it possible to include a third party to help with tech review?
  - IT infrastructure
- More Notes
  - Create more LSC Select camps
    - Women select camp?
  - Teams in the same LSC need to learn how to share resources because everyone has connections of their own and when we all work together then that will definitely overall improve the LSC
  - It is too difficult to get new coaches certified
    - The training is too rigorous
    - It is also way too expensive
      - Especially if it is a young adult that is just seeing if they enjoy being a coach
    - Provisional Coaching License
      - Easier to attain
      - Cheaper
      - For first time coaches
  - Refresh the safety course
    - Coaches that have been coaching for a long time have been doing the same exact training course for a very long time
    - The course is more directed towards newer coaches and experienced coaches don't feel the need to be reminded of these things every year
  - Need more coaches to vote in the house of delegates
    - Barely any coaches vote and then complain afterwards about how things are
    - More participation is necessary
  - Without the HOW then there is no WHAT
  - Communication is key between LSCs and between the other athletes
    - Post more on LSC instagrams
  - How to communicate with others
    - Know your audience
    - Use correct tone based off of who you are speaking to
  - First Impressions
    - Walk the Walk
      - Body language
      - Way you talk
      - Way you look
    - What sets you apart from the crowd
    - Think about your message and the audience
- Project Planning
  - WHAT is it, WHO is it, WHEN is it
    - Key steps to planning a project

**Date-Thursday April 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Topic-Walk of Stars**

Key Points

- Requirements to officiate at higher level meets. Sectionals (1-star/LSC Certifications), Futures (2-Stars/N2 Certifications), Juniors (3-Stars/N3 Certifications) , Pro Series (4-Stars/N3 Certifications) , Nationals, US Open & Olympic Trials (5-Star/N3 Certifications)
- Sectionals, Junior's opportunity for mentoring.
- Application process
- Goal is to provide officials a path to working higher level meets.
- Review information on the USA Swimming website.

**Date-Friday April 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Topic-You Said Yes To Ref...Now What?**

Key Points

- Heavily focused on if you were a MR for a Sectional, Junior or OQM Meet.
- The Role of a Meet Referee
  - Oversee a fair meet
  - Communicate
  - Build a Team
  - Know your resources.
    - Phone a friend
    - Meet Juries
  - Understand the needs of the meet.
    - Age Group vs Open vs 10 & under
    - The meet announcement is the bible

## Topic-Meet Announcement: What's The Big Deal?

### Key Points

- Reference for understanding by all
  - Parents, Coaches, Athletes, Officials, Entry chairs, volunteers and support staff
- Rules by which meet is conducted.
  - All held to the same standard.
  - Any modifications from USA Rules, for example number of events or application of scratch rule
- Framework for decision making.
  - Outside the USA Swimming Rulebook
  - Intent of meet, i.e., championship versus dual meet or small invitational
  - Equity
- Meet announcement is build by the MD, reviewed, and approved by the MR. Any issues or discrepancies should be handled well before the start of the meet.
- Copies should be available for all to review...just in case.

Group Exercise-Dissect what elements are missing or contradict each other in sample meet announcements

## Topic-First Whistle

### Key Points

- Now that you have prepped and planned before the meet...what happens next.
- Be ready for an on-time start! Lots of moving parts.
  - Timers – Do you have enough? Has a timers meeting been conducted?
  - Deck Officials – Has the officials meeting been conducted? Are officials in place?
  - Admin/Computer Operator – Is the timing system ready and in working order? Have all timer sheets and programs been printed and distributed?
- Trust your TEAM to do their jobs – starting a meet on time is too big a job for one person! If needed, give a friendly nudge.
- Be aware of demeanor – you are setting the tone for the meet.
- Remember everyone is a volunteer.

## Topic-Meet Ref vs OQM Mentor. Who is in charge.

### Key Points

- MD/MR are in charge, OQM Mentor is there to mentor not to take the reigns or step out of their lane.

**Date-Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Topic-Officiating in the World of Gray**

Key Points

- Take a step back from the situation and assess the degree of urgency.
- Use your resources.
  - Meet Announcement
  - USAS Rule Book
  - Phone a friend
- What are the ramifications of your decision?
  - Fair for all swimmers?
  - Meet Delay
  - Safety, safety, safety

**Topic-DQ's, Protests & Juries**

Key Points

- Utilize the meet announcement and USAS Rule Book-don't make up rules.
- The decision of the MR is final.
- Larger meets you should have identified a jury (1-swimmer, 1-official, 1-coach)
- Interact with the coaches during the meet...You don't want your 1<sup>st</sup> interaction to be a protest.
- We are here for ALL swimmers.

**Topic-Communication**

Key Points

- Only communicate with those that "need to know."
- Avoid gossip.
- Close the communication loop on all issues.
- Adjust your communication style to the person receiving it
- Be calm and stick to the facts.
- Your tone will set the tone for the meet.