



ZONE DIRECTORS' COUNCIL

Zone Directors' Council Meeting

October 22, 2023 - Notes

8:00 ET/5:00 PT via 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), Tim Husson (Co-Chair), Mike Dilli, Bob Staab, Bruno Darzi, Dana Skelton, Ellery Parish, Gavin Formon, Jack Swanson, Savannah Gurley, Jackson Fouras, Keith Moore, Jamie Platt, Megan Braman, Melissa Hellverik-Bing, Pam Lowenthal, Simran Jayasinghe, Joel Shinofield

Absent: Terry Jones, TJ Walsh, Nicole Caruso, Beth Winkowski, Jay Chambers, Mitch Gold, Jane Grosser, Nate Chessey, Jerry Adams, Ryan Gibbons

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 ET by Zach Toothman and the agenda was approved as submitted.

1. Introduction of New Guest Liaison

Tim Bauer and Jamie Bloom will be joining ZDC meetings, acting as liaisons to the Coaches Advisory Council to help grow a positive working relationship between the two councils.

2. Ongoing Business

a) Zone P&P Updates

The soft deadline to have converted to P&P has now passed. The hard deadline remains January 1st, 2024. The Central Zone is done with their P&P updates, which were mostly housekeeping. The Zone will be voting on them at their Fall Business Meeting. The Western Zone completed their P&P and it was passed by the zone. It has been added to their website. The Eastern Zone has almost completed their P&P and plan to be done around late November or early December. Once the Southern Zone has completed their document, hopefully by the end of November, they plan to send it to the LSCs.

b) ZDC Onboarding Task Force Material

An Onboarding document was sent out to the ZDC prior to the meeting. There was some discussion on how the document did not contain a “purpose” of the council, did not have a

lot of tangible or useful information, and read a lot like a newsletter would. Before the next meeting, all members are to read the document again and it will be redefined at the next meeting.

c) ZARC Athlete Summit Manual

The ZARC Athlete Summit Manual is completed and is ready to be published to the zones.

d) ZDC Junior Officials Implementation and Education Working Group

The Junior Officials proposal was approved unanimously by the Board and the new working group met two weeks ago. There are four educational components to this working group, before the implementation in September 2024. Zach is leading the Power Dynamics component, Josie Uerling is leading the MAAPP Protocol component, Melissa is leading best practices, and Marco Greico is leading the intimidation education.

2. New Business

a) Zone to Zone Discussion

As the ZDC approaches the new year, there was an open discussion between the Zones to discuss defining the purpose of the council and new initiatives going forward. The council will have specific month to month goals, and for the November meeting the goals will be refining the onboarding document and specific issues within the LSCs/Zones. Before the next meeting, Zone Directors should have comments on the onboarding document and topics of concern in their respective zone.

There was also discussion on what the purpose of the ZDC is and how they fit into USA Swimming as a whole. The question was raised of how Zones fit into USA Swimming, as they have been said to “not be a thing” in USA Swimming. Joel helped to answer these questions, from the perspective of USA Swimming governance. He told the committee the following:

The ZDC was critical during the COVID-19 pandemic for gathering information regarding local government updates and how that was affecting clubs and LSCs. Post-COVID, the ZDC has played a role in partnering with other committees, for purposes of increasing governance participation through open discussion. Today, the governance role still plays an important part but the ZDC also has the opportunity to build LSC/Zone strategy around building the sport, increasing retention, and sharing best practices. Based on USA Swimming ends, he provided potential strategies, that read as follows:

1. Are we providing the right kind of performance opportunities and support for our athletes, coaches, and clubs to reach their potential? How do we prevent hindering high performing clubs, while also helping other clubs rise?
2. How do our policies promote growth and retention in our sport? Are we creating barriers to growth and retention?
3. What are we doing in our state to raise the profile of the sport - how do we interact with high school, college, YMCA, etc. to promote swimming, what could we do at the local level to promote the sport?

4. How can _____ Swimming serve as a model for other LSCs?

During the pandemic, USA Swimming lost 600 clubs and almost 27,000 athletes, however, the last two years have shown the most growth than almost any other two year period from the last 12 years. The important question now is how to maintain the growth and retain membership. Given the negative factors impacting growth and retention in USA Swimming, the ZDC has an opportunity to play a key role in collaboration between USA Swimming, LSCs, and clubs on growth, retention, and performance, specifically in reimagining the role of the LSCs in key areas for the 2028 Quad.

3. Non-Athlete Co-Chair Election

Since Tim Husson's term is coming to an end, the council elected a new Co-Chair. Keith Moore was the only nomination and was voted as the new Co-Chair by acclamation.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Zach Toothman at 9:09 ET.