

Athlete Committees in Pacific Northwest Swimming

Athlete Representative, Victoria Truswell. Email athleterep3@pns.org with questions.

Have you ever wondered how Pacific Northwest Swimming is run?

USA Swimming is one of the smoothest running sport organizations in the United States, and that's largely due to its division of power. PNS is one of the 59 "local swimming committees," or LSCs, that are overseen by USA Swimming. We are governed by our House of Delegates, which is where representatives from our teams come together and vote, and our Board of Directors, people elected to positions by the House of Delegates. The Board of Directors consists of 16 non-athlete representatives, from our general chair who runs the meetings to our coach representatives, and 4 athlete representatives. Together, we make most of the decisions concerning affairs within Pacific Northwest Swimming.

What is an athlete committee? What does it do?

Many of the representatives on the Board of Directors are the chairs of committees that oversee more specific affairs within PNS. For example, our Officials Committee has its own chairman who manages the committee with their discussion of running various clinics and other issues. An athlete committee works with the athletes themselves and bring problems directly to the Board of Directors. Athletes on the athletes committee will serve on other committees as well to give more athlete representation within our LSC. We would also work to bring more resources to the athletes. For instance, in many other LSCs, the athlete committee would run an LSC-wide swim practice or camp.

Why do we need a stronger athlete committee?

Right now, our "athlete committee" has four people to represent six thousand swimmers. Furthermore, athletes are supposed to hold at least 20% of representation on every committee, which we don't have. We need smart athletes who simply love the sport of swimming to help expand our committee because we want to be able to represent *all* our LSC and be an influential, driving force of progress in PNS. With an athlete committee, we can promote direct athlete involvement in the affairs of our LSC.

What would you do as an athlete on the athlete committee?

Just like when practicing, the workload of the athlete committee will depend on the effort that you put into it. We will have bimonthly meetings and voting athletes (Each team will have one "voting" athlete; other athletes from that team may attend and offer opinions at meetings, but they don't have a specific vote) will be required to serve on at least one other committee, which is a relatively low time commitment. Other than that, everything is based on how often you volunteer for work. The primary focuses this year will be recruitment, solidifying the position of the committee, and brainstorming ways to keep it sustainable; however, next year, we hope to expand the committee's goals to include an LSC-wide athlete activity.