**CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE COMMITTEE HANDBOOK AND GUIDELINES**

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**Updated October 2016**

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Table of Contents:

I. CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE COMMITTEE

            Organization and Objectives

Mission Statement

Vision

II. CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Duties of Athlete Representatives

Central Zone Athlete Representative

Appointed Member Definition

III. GUIDELINES

**I.** CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE COMMITTEE

**Organization and Objectives**

The Central Zone Athlete Committee is a subcommittee of the Central Zone. It conducts business through regular emails, semi-monthly conference calls and annual meetings at the United States Aquatic Sports (USAS) Convention, typically held in September or October.

The Central Zone has several main objectives, including conducting Zone and Sectional Championship meets, and establishing a Zone Board of Review and a meet sanction appeals panel. More broadly, the Central Zone is responsible for aiding and assisting “USA Swimming in the promotion, development, and conduct of amateur swimming in the United States” (Central Zone Bylaws 1.1.1).

The main focus of the swimming community is the athletes. In order for the Zone to fulfill its obligation to the swimming community, the Zone must cater to the needs of athletes and represent the athletes in a holistic and complete manner. Therefore, the mission of the Central Zone Athlete Committee is as follows:

**Mission**

The Central Zone Athlete Committee is responsible for representing Central Zone athletes of all ability levels in a holistic and complete manner. It strives to ensure that the athlete voice is heard on all Central Zone committees and in the Central Zone’s annual meeting. The Central Zone Athlete Committee aims to promote knowledge among athlete and non athletes regarding the Central Zone’s policies, procedures, and championships.

The Central Zone Athlete Committee initiates intra-LSC communication to promote partnerships between LSC athlete representatives. The sharing of ideas between LSCs is often overlooked by athlete representatives. The Central Zone Athlete Committee serves as a tool to help athlete representatives develop relationships with athletes from outside their own LSC.

Finally, the Central Zone Athlete Committee aims to provide a sustainable process to recruit and train new athlete representatives.

The long-term vision of the Athlete Committee focuses on task oriented steps and measurable goals to provide continuity and long-term sustainability of the committee’s mission.

**Vision**

* Intra-LSC cooperation and communication between athlete representatives of the Central Zone at the USAS Convention and throughout the year.
* 20% Athlete Representation on all Central Zone committees, and the annual Central Zone meeting.
* Semi-monthly newsletter with contributions from athlete members and non-athlete from various LSCs in the Central Zone.
* Non-athlete members understand the value of the unique perspective that athlete members bring to the table

**II.** CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Duties of Athlete Representatives**

* To serve as the liaison between the athletes who are members of the Central Zone.
* To undertake activities delegated to them by the Central Zone directors, or other USA Swimming and Central Zone Committees
* To make decisions that best serve the athlete members, the Central Zone, USA Swimming, and the sport of swimming.

**Central Zone Athlete Representative**

* Serves as a liaison between the LSC athlete representatives and the general athlete population, the Central Zone officers and delegates, and the Athletes Executive Committee (AEC).
* Elected biannually in even years at USAS Convention.
* Leads all Athlete Committee meetings, and is responsible for facilitating discussion and initiating change that improves the athlete experience for Central Zone swimmers.
* Vets applications for Appointed Members of the Central Zone Athlete Committee and other committees at the request of the Central Zone officers.

**Appointed Members**

* Attend all Athlete Committee meetings.
* Strongly encouraged to attend USAS Convention.
* Encouraged to serve on other Central Zone committees, National committees, LSC committees, the National Board of Directors, and their LSC Board of Directors.

**III.** GUIDELINES

**ARTICLE 100 – APPOINTMENTS AND TERMS**

100.1  DEFINITIONS

.1  Athlete means any swimmer registered as an athlete member of USA Swimming. Athlete members must meet be eligible pursuant to USA Swimming, Central Zone, and LSC Rules and Regulations.

.2  Athlete representative means any athlete elected or appointed to serve as a representative to the Zone. An athlete representative must be an athlete at the time of election or appointment.

.3  Athlete Committee means the athlete representatives elected or appointed to serve as representatives for all athletes competing within the Zone.

100.2  ATHLETE COMMITTEE

.1  The Central Zone Athlete Committee will be comprised of the Central Zone Athlete Representative, who serves as the committee chair, the immediate past Central Zone Athlete Representative, and at least five (5) appointed members from LSCs within the zone.

1. The Athletes Committee may establish written criteria for the internal

governance of the Committee.

100.3 APPOINTMENTS

.1 The Central Zone Athlete Representative shall appoint athletes, who shall be the officers of the committee, to the following positions:

1. At least one 5 members from Central Zone LSCs to the Central Zone

Athlete Committee.

1. Athlete representatives to each Central Zone committee, such that at least

twenty percent (20%) of each working committee consists of athlete representatives.

1. At his or her discretion, the Central Zone Athlete Representative may appoint additional leadership positions, such as Vice Chair or Secretary, on the Athlete Committee.

100.4 TERM OF OFFICE

 .1 Central Zone Athlete Representative

1. The Central Zone Athlete Representative shall be elected biannually in even years at the United States Aquatic Sports Convention.
2. The term of the Central Zone Athlete Representative shall end at the conclusion of the Central Zone Meeting at USAS Convention in all even years.
3. The Central Zone Athlete Representative shall be elected by secret ballot.
4. The Central Zone Athlete Representative is limited to two (2) consecutive

two-year terms in this position.

.2 Appointed Members

1. Appointed committee members shall be appointed by the Central Zone Athlete Representative no more than 30 days following the conclusion of USAS Convention.
2. Appointed members serve year long terms which end at the conclusion of the

Central Zone meeting following the appointment.

1. Appointed members may serve an unlimited number of terms, provided they

are eligible under the USA Swimming and Central Zone Rules and Regulations.

**ARTICLE 101 – COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

101.1 CENTRAL ZONE ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE

.1  The Central Zone Athlete Representative must be eligible to serve as an athlete representative, as stipulated under the rules and regulations of USA Swimming.

.2  The Central Zone Athlete Representative is elected biannually in even years at the Central Zone Meeting at USAS Convention.

.3 The athlete members of the Central Zone in attendance at USAS Convention may vote for the Central Zone Athlete Representative. Each LSC is permitted no more than two athletes casting a ballot.

.4 The Central Zone Athlete Representative shall be elected by secret ballot.

101.2 APPOINTED MEMBERS

.1  Appointed Committee members must be in compliance with LSC eligibility as stipulated in article 607.3.5.

.2  Appointment

1. In order to be eligible for appointment, prospective members shall complete

the Central Zone Committee application.

1. Central Zone Athletes Committee members shall be appointed no later than

one (1) month following the last day of USAS Convention.

101.3 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

.1 Ex-officio members must be in compliance with Central Zone and USA Swimming eligibility requirements.

.2 Eligibility

1. Ex-officio Athlete Committee members shall have been elected or appointed as the Central Zone Athlete Representative, and shall not be currently serving in the aforementioned position.

.3 Appointment

1. The immediate past Central Zone Athlete Representative shall be appointed to the Athlete Committee.
2. The Central Zone Athlete Representative may appoint additional ex-officio members to serve on the Athlete Committee at their discretion.

.4 Term of Office

1. The immediate past Central Zone Athlete Representative shall serve a two-year long term as an ex-officio Athlete Committee.
2. Ex-officio members may serve a maximum of two consecutive two-year long terms.

.5 Ex-officio members shall have both voice and vote on the Athlete Committee.

101.4 COLLEGE ATHLETES

.1 College athletes who matriculate to colleges and universities located outside of the boundaries of the Central Zone may serve on the Athlete Committee regardless of their college’s Zone.

101.5 ELIGIBILITY

.1 To be eligible to serve on the Athlete Committee, athlete representatives shall meet USA Swimming’s eligibility requirements.

.2 Athlete Committee members must have served on a LSC Committee, LSC Board of Directors, USA Swimming National Committee, or have attended USAS Convention within the past 3 calendar years to be eligible to serve on the Zone Athlete Committee.

.3 Athlete Committee members shall be current members of Central Zone LSCs to maintain eligibility to serve.

.4 Athlete Committee members shall be current members of a Central Zone LSC.

**ARTICLE 102 – MEETINGS**

102.1 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

.1  The Athlete Committee should meet a minimum three times a year as determined by the Central Zone Athlete Representative.

.2 The Athlete Committee shall meet at least once a year in person at the USAS Convention.

.3 Meetings may take in person, via conference call, via video chat, or by any other convenient medium determined by the Central Zone Athlete Representative.

102.2 FORMAT OF MEETINGS

.1 The most current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall be used to conduct all formal committee meetings.

102.2  NOTICE

.1  Seven (7) day’s notice is required for any meeting. An email sent to all

committee members constitutes notice.

A.  Committee members are responsible for keeping their email address on record current.

102.3  CANCELLATIONS

.1  At the discretion of the Central Zone Athlete Representative, meetings may be cancelled due to lack of agenda or lack of committee availability.

102.4  QUORUM

.1  Five (5) voting members constitutes a quorum if the Central Zone Athlete Representative is present.

102.5  VOTING

.1  In all matters that require the action or recommendation of the committee, a simple majority of those members present will determine the committee’s course of action.

.2 In all matters that require a change of the Athlete Committee guidelines (bylaws), a two-thirds majority will determine the committee’s course of action.

.3 Proxy votes are not permitted. In order to vote, members of the committee shall be present at the meeting.

102.6  ATTENDANCE

.1 Appointed and elected Athlete Committee members shall be present at all scheduled Athlete Committee meetings unless excused by the Central Zone Athlete Representative in order to maintain eligibility to serve.

.2 An absence shall be considered unexcused if an appointed member or elected member fails to notify the Athlete Committee Chair or Vice Chair of their absence prior to the time of meeting. An email sent to the Athlete Committee Chair or Vice Chair constitutes notice.

.3 Barring uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances, three unexcused absences over the course of a term may result in removal from the Athlete Committee and other Central Zone committees.

102.7 REMOVAL FROM COMMITTEE

.1 The Athlete Committee Chair and Vice Chair, may with the advice and consent of the one of the Central Zone officers, remove any appointed member from the Athlete Committee who fails to meet the expectations outlined in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, Zone Bylaws, or the Athlete Committee Guidelines.

**ARTICLE 103 – COMMITTEE DUTIES**

103.1 ATHLETE NEWSLETTER

.1 The Central Zone Athlete Committee shall electronically publish a quarterly Athlete Newsletter. The Athletes Newsletter should be relevant for athlete representatives as well as the general athlete population.

.2 Each Central Zone Athlete Committee member shall contribute at least one story to the Athlete Newsletter each year.

.3 Committee members may write their own stories, or delegate that task to another athlete or non-athlete member of their respective LSC.