

**To: Members of the Central Zone**  
**From: Jack H. Swanson, Central Zone Athlete Representative**  
**Re: 2018 USAS Convention Report – Jacksonville, Florida**  
**Date: Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

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Hello! For those of you who I have not yet met, my name is Jack Swanson and I serve as the Central Zone Athlete Representative and as a member of the USA Swimming Athletes' Executive Committee. I am from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I am a senior majoring in biology and politics at Pomona College in the Los Angeles, California area. I have represented Aquajets Swim Team (Eden Prairie, Minnesota), the Rochester Swim Club (Rochester, Minnesota), SwimAtlanta (Atlanta, Georgia), and the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens (Claremont, California) as a mid-distance and distance freestyler.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Central Zone membership an update on my activities as Central Zone Athlete Representative and a member of the USA Swimming Athletes' Executive Committee (AEC) since the 2017 USAS Convention. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have prior to convention, or ask me any questions you may have while we are in Jacksonville.

### **Projects I've Worked On**

The past year, I have had the opportunity to work on the following projects and committees related to my service as Central Zone Athlete Representative and an AEC member:

- **Athletes' Executive Committee Restructuring Task Force:** I played an integral role in restructuring the AEC to allow for more efficient operations of the committee, and to separate the roles of Board of Directors athlete representative and AEC Chair and Vice Chair (which was necessitated by the Board of Directors restructuring that passed at the 2017 United States Aquatic Sports Convention). The restructuring will take effect at this USAS Convention; more information can be found on the USA Swimming webpage. The restructured committee will consist of 10 At-Large Members elected by the Athletes' Committee, 1 Athlete Member of the Board of Directors elected by the Athlete Board Members, the National Team Athletes' Committee Chair, and the USOC AAC Representative. The AEC will elect its own officers from among the 10 At-Large Members. The Zone Representatives will move from the AEC to the newly formed Athletes' Leadership Committee.

In my role as a member of the AEC Restructuring Task Force, I was responsible for *outlining the restructured committee's structure, authoring the committee's bylaws, and authoring and facilitating communications with USA Swimming athlete and non-athlete members regarding the restructuring.*

One particularly exciting feature of the restructured committee is that *all AEC members will be responsible for mentoring and communicating with athlete representatives from a "cluster" of 4 or 5 LSCs.* This will allow for AEC members to have a better idea of the needs of the 340,000 USA Swimming athlete members that they are tasked with representing on the AEC.

- **Athletes' Leadership Task Force:** The Athletes' Leadership Task Force planned for the inaugural Leadership Summit, which was held in Houston Texas. Our task force aimed to develop a curriculum for the Summit which *developed leaders in the LSC governance structure, on swim clubs, and outside of swimming.* We hired the Forward Progress Athletics Consultants to co-develop and execute the curriculum, based on our task force's vision.
- **USA Swimming LSC Required Bylaws Task Force:** I served as an athlete representative on the LSC Required Bylaws Task Force, which met at least monthly from July 2017 to April 2018. The task force revised the LSC Required Bylaws to make them *"simple and flexible."* The bylaws will be discussed on Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1 PM, and voted on at the House of Delegates on

Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the proposed bylaws!

- **USA Swimming Governance Committee:** The Governance Committee has been fairly inactive since the 2017 USAS Convention. The Committee has been sunset and will cease to exist after the 2018 USAS Convention. The Governance Committee was asked to review the proposed LSC Bylaws for feedback, and took on several other smaller projects.
- **Central Zone Athletes' Committee:** Central Zone Athletes' Committee members have provided feedback on several projects, including potentially bringing back a Senior Championship meet for Central Zone athletes. I hope to increase the role of the committee in the next two years, in whatever role I am serving in. I think the new athlete governance structure I mentioned earlier in my report will allow the Central Zone officers to be more focused on Central Zone-level issues, rather than juggling their Board or AEC hat and their Zone hat.

### **Events I've Attended and Presented At**

I had the opportunity to attend the following events as a Central Zone Athlete Representative and a member of the AEC:

- **2018 USA Swimming Leadership Summit – Houston, Texas:** The 2018 USA Swimming Leadership Summit was held in Houston, Texas April 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>. I served as the *Head Athlete Facilitator* for the Leadership Summit. The task force responsible for putting together the Leadership Summit, included me, Joe Gazzarato (Michigan), Van Donkersgoed (Wisconsin), Janelle Nguyen (Southern California), Ceallach Gibbons (Southern California/Minnesota), and Alexis Keto (Coach - Illinois). The workshops were planned by Forward Progress Athletics Consulting.
- **2018 Central/Western Zone Meeting – Denver, Colorado:** The Central Zone Meeting was held in Denver, Colorado April 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018. I had the opportunity to deliver two presentations to the Central Zone and Western Zone General Chairs. I presented the proposed LSC Required Bylaws to the General Chairs, and fielded questions from them. I gave a short presentation on the USA Swimming Leadership Summit, and explained how General Chairs and non-athlete leaders can help their LSC athlete leaders to put the lessons learned at the Leadership Summit into practice in LSC governance. I also participated in a workshop on LSC governance with the other Zone Meeting attendees.
- **2018 USA Swimming Athletes' Executive Committee Meeting – Fort Lauderdale, Florida:** The USA Swimming AEC meeting was held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida May 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The AEC discussed and approved the restructuring, which will take effect at the 2018 USAS Convention. The AEC also worked with representatives from FINA, UANA, USAS, USMS, USA Water Polo, USA Synchro, USA Diving, FINA Brazil, and several other NGBs and governing bodies to ensure that the athlete voice is strong throughout the international aquatics community.
- **2018 Iowa Swimming Leadership Summit – Cedar Rapids, Iowa:** The Iowa Swimming Leadership Summit was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. I co-developed the curriculum for the Iowa Swimming Leadership Summit, and *presented on the athlete voice and athlete leadership at all levels of swimming governance*. Iowa Swimming athletes Andrew Rottinghaus, Gillian Kay, and Anya Koenigsfeld presented on values and leadership, leadership styles, club leadership, and many more exciting topics. Iowa Swimming staff member Marie Koenigsfeld also attended, and was crucial in planning for the Iowa Swimming Leadership Summit. Over 30 Iowa Swimming athletes attended.
- **2018 Oklahoma Swimming LSC Wide Practice Day – Stillwater, Oklahoma:** The Oklahoma Swimming LSC Wide Practice Day was held in Stillwater, Oklahoma on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. I co-developed the curriculum for the LSC Wide Practice Day, and *presented on values and leadership, and leadership styles*. Oklahoma Swimming athletes Annie Kramer, Kayley Henderson, Rachel Brown, and Erin Carter presented on leadership in the LSC governance structure, leadership on clubs, and leadership in the community. Oklahoma Swimming non-athletes Ali Baker

and Michelle Brown also attended, and were crucial in planning for the LSC Practice Day. Over 30 Oklahoma Swimming athletes attended.

### **The Future of the Central Zone**

We are at an exciting (and maybe scary) time in USA Swimming governance. The Central Zone Directors will no longer serve on the USA Swimming Board of Directors, and the Central Zone Athlete Representative will no longer serve on the AEC. The individuals elected to hold the roles of Central Zone Athlete Representative and Central Zone Non-Coach Director will have the responsibility to redefine their roles to help shape the new governance structure. Remember, we, as members of USA Swimming are responsible for setting the culture of *our* organization. I am confident that USA Swimming will continue to be a volunteer driven, welcoming, and inclusive organization and community.

Going forward, I think it is very important that the Central Zone Athletes' Committee be active. This will be both a crucial communication tool for the Central Zone Athlete Representative and the Zone Directors.

I urge the new Zone Directors to form a task force to discuss holding a Senior Zone Championship Meet in the Summer. The Central Zone is the only Zone that does not have a Senior Zone Championship Meet. Four years ago, when the Senior Zone Championship Meet was last held, the Zone used National AAAA qualifying times – which are similar to NCSA, and now Futures Time Standards. The Western Zone and Southern Zone, which run very successful Senior Zone Meets, use National AA qualifying time standards. With National AA Time Standards, the Central Zone Senior Championship would target swimmers without Futures cuts, and more importantly, teams who want a meet many athletes from their senior group can attend.

On the AEC side, I think it is crucial that the new AEC continue to support the Leadership Summit and similar events. However, I think there are two key improvements that could be made. First, I would like to see events that are more clearly linked to LSC governance, particularly at the national level, as the Central Zone Meetings were in 2017. Second, I would like to see the AEC and USA Swimming support events similar to the ones I mentioned were held in Iowa and Oklahoma. The Leadership Summit in Houston was an excellent event, but it only directly reached 150 out of 340,000 athlete members. By intentionally developing curriculums for LSC Leadership Summits (and potentially other existing events, such as Swimposiums and House of Delegates meetings), we can reach many more participants than the national Summit at a fraction of the cost.

### **Conclusion**

It has been an honor to serve as the Central Zone Athlete Representative the past two years. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Central Zone and USA Swimming, and I look forward to continuing to represent the 340,000 athletes of USA Swimming in whatever way I am able to going forward. I am an at-large candidate for the restructured AEC, and would be honored to be elected to serve. Please contact me with any question, comments, or concerns that you may have!

Respectfully Submitted,

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Central Zone Athlete Representative

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