**Two New Membership Categories**

USA Swimming House of Delegates also approved the addition of two new membership categories, including a junior coach membership and a flexible, or “flex” membership. These are the first membership changes since 2005 which included a single meet membership for open water. Both memberships will be available Sept. 1, 2018.

USA Swimming recorded its highest year-round athlete membership to date in July 2017 with 354,036 members and a 15.2 percent increase in membership over 2016. Though promising, USA Swimming has seen a 9.2% decline in new members compared to the 2013 post-Olympic year. The addition of the new flex member category is effort to evolve with the changing youth sports market and attract more entry-level children and families to the sport.

Both memberships will positively impact the introduction of new members in different ways:

The junior coach member category will focus on current or former swimmers ages 16 and 17 who wish to serve as assistant coaches on-deck and at swim meets. Presently, USA Swimming requires coaches to be a minimum age of 18, so the addition of this category will require supervision by a member coach 18-and-over at all times, as well as extensive pre-employment screening.

The new flexible member category (known as “flex membership”) is designed to serve as a more attractive option to entry-level children and families to bridge into the sport full-time for $20 per year with $10 going to the Local Swimming Committee and $10 to USA Swimming. The flex membership will allow teams to get creative with their programs to grow membership long-term with programs such as learn-to-swim lessons, pre-team programs and summer league programs. Those with the flexible membership will receive benefits such as the ability to participate in two USA Swimming sanctioned events each year, USA Swimming insurance coverage and the $20 flexible membership cost will go towards a year-round membership should the athlete member transition within the same membership year.

“USA Swimming has a great track-record of retaining members, but we would like to be stronger in continuously attracting new members into the sport,” said **Pat Hogan,**Club Development Managing Director. “Both new member categories will give us a foothold in the 5- to 7-year-old range with the aim of welcoming the next generation of swimmers. It is our hope that the new member categories will create sustainable, long-term revenue for teams and become a great way to introduce kids to the sport.”

The existing membership categories will remain, and both new member categories will be optional for teams to implement.

USA Swimming will offer education opportunities and promotional tools for swim teams to learn more about the new categories and implement within their communities.

For more information on the new member categories and educational opportunities visit [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org/).