PACIFIC SWIMMING CHAIR REPORT - LEHLA IRWIN

USA SWIMMING: ANNUAL SUMMIT & HOUSE OF DELEGATES

SUMMARY:

- Several LSCs are shifting away from punitive fines and toward incentives, lower costs, proactive outreach, and reinvestment in clubs and meet hosts.
- Membership retention was a recurring focal point, including shorter or more engaging meet formats, leadership development. National membership data showed a decline in year-round athletes and clubs, while Outreach and non-athlete membership increased.
- Board and volunteer development focused on personal recruitment, relationship-building, coalition-building, clear ownership, and recognizing progress rather than relying on mass requests for help.
- Ohio and Lake Erie have merged into one Ohio LSC. At HOD it was announced Maine and New England merged bringing the number of LSCs from 59 to 57 nationwide.
- Futures Championships: Clarification on "New Qualifying Standard (NQS)" after a site has reached its entry cap; a club can satisfy the team entry requirement by starting an entry in SWIMS/OME and entering a club contact, even if the club has zero swimmers entered at that time. A club may do this at multiple Futures sites, allowing the club to preserve the ability to enter a swimmer later under the new qualifying standard (NQS) process if that swimmer achieves a new Futures cut before the late qualifying deadline.
- USA Swimming and LSC leaders emphasized the use of SWIMS data and analytics to understand membership, retention, meet participation, and finances.
- AI and Member Data: USA Swimming does not currently appear to have a specific published AI-use policy. However, its existing privacy and data-protection policies require member/customer data to be protected from improper access when collected, transmitted, stored, or otherwise handled. Clubs and LSCs should therefore use caution before placing identifiable SWIMS or membership data into third-party AI systems. USA Swimming Privacy Policy

SOLUTIONS-BASED THINKING: EFFECTING CHANGE FROM CONCEPTION TO EXECUTION:

- Volunteer recruitment should be personal. Instead of "we need board members," invite someone around an issue they already care about: "You keep bringing this up - come to the next meeting and help fix it." Show the specific problem their voice could help solve.
- Coalition-building: (1) find allies, (2) start small, (3) show up together, (4) share the credit, and (5) use existing channels. Coalitions spread the work, outlast turnover, and are harder to ignore.

COACH EDUCATION, ATHLETE LEADERSHIP & PERFORMANCE:

- ASCA announced that the 2027 ASCA Clinic will be held in Reno.
- Senior Committee: the "Road to Indy Series" is intended to increase opportunities for domestic senior athletes to race at the national level on the path toward the 2028 Olympic Trials.

WESTERN ZONE MEETING:

- 2027 Age Group Zones: DART at North Natomas Aquatic Center, August 4-7, 2027.
- Age Group Zones quad plan: 2028 Elk Grove; 2029 Mt. Hood, Oregon; 2030 TBD.
- Senior Zones: 2028 Las Vegas; 2029 Mesa; 2030 Boise.
- Long Course Zones: 2028 and 2029 Clovis; 2030 TBD.
- Open Water: 2028 Coeur d'Alene; 2029-2030 TBD.
- 2027 Western Zone DEI Select Camp & Summit: University of Nevada, Reno, June 24-27, 2027. Each LSC sends two athletes and two non-athletes; additional athletes may be nominated. Camp capacity is 40 athletes.
- Western Zone election notes: Monica Warren (PC) elected as athlete representative; Lisa Vetterlein as Secretary/Treasurer; Scott Shea as Coach Director.

ALIGNING FOR IMPACT: LSC RESOURCES & USA SWIMMING PRIORITIES:

- Tony Young (IN): grants and Club Recognition are used to support stronger team organizations; Indiana's strongest reported improvement was partnerships. Examples included the Natatorium, high school/club overlap, collegiate programs, camps, coach education, and athlete education.
    - Indiana reported that meet fees are a major driver of its LSC budget and support staff and member services.
        - Collegiate partnerships with Indiana University, Purdue, and Ball State support coach education, athlete education, camps, and broader LSC development.
- Paige Sikkema (GU): Gulf's Board is largely coach-led; staff and the Finance Committee have focused on growing finances and directing resources to member support.
    - Gulf created a subsidized coach clinic (discounted hotel), provided meals/snacks and guest speakers at a low daily registration cost, and pairs an officials clinic with coach education to create both an educational and social event.
    - Created a Coach Assistance Fund after a coach experienced a health crisis.
        - Gulf staff discussed using the LSC SWIMS Dashboard and using/feeding meet statistics into AI/analytics to better understand meet finances and margins.
- San Diego is using financial incentives: year-end recognition for officials with the most sessions worked and recognition for teams with strong retention.
- Pacific presented Club Grant Program, DDEI Grants, Firestorm/Covid Emergency Grants, Travel Support, and MEFAP.

USA SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

- As of August 31, 2026, year-round athlete membership decreased from 318,288 (2025) to 316,184 (2026): down 2,104, approximately 0.7%.
- Outreach membership increased from 8,508 to 8,872: up 364, approximately 4.3%.
- Flex membership increased from 31,720 to 33,890: up 2,170, approximately 6.8%.
- Clubs decreased from 2,711 to 2,642: down 69, approximately 2.5%.
- Non-athlete membership increased from 42,480 to 43,755: up 1,275, approximately 3%.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES & LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

- Foundation Report: grants supporting swim lessons for children and adults, National Team support through the Donor Athlete Partnership Program, Community Impact Grants, and HBCU grants. The Foundation asked members to continue supporting its work.
- Credentials Report: 331 eligible voting delegates out of 350.
- At-Large Board election results: Tom Ugast and Tom Dolan.
- Proposed Legislation: Most items followed the recommendations from Rules & Regulations Committee with exceptions below:
- Motions to Commit:
    - R-1 (12 & under backstroke turn exception): to Age Group Development Committee
    - R-3 (split and 203.3 changes passed) remaining committed to Rules & Regulations
- R-2: amendment changed "approved" to "granted"; amendment passed. R-2 then passed as amended.
- R-7: time-limit language was passed with an amendment to distinguish general Open Water meet-announcement requirements from National and Junior National calculation requirements.

PACIFIC SWIMMING FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Review Pacific and Zone fine structures and consider whether incentives, education, and proactive support could replace punitive monetary fines where practical.