

Eastern Zone Athlete Report

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Collaboration with ZARC, AEC, ZDC, AAC

With the new restructuring of USA Swimming governance to comply with USOPC, Zone Athlete Reps (ZARC) has been working much more closely with the Zone Directors Council (ZDC) and Athletes Executive Council (AEC), for which Zone Reps now sit on as members without a vote. AEC and Athletes Advisory Committee (AAC) consisting of the 10 Year Athletes are working on creating a stronger collaborative relationship and hope to extend such relationships between the AAC and LSC Athlete Reps. Zone Reps have been working hard this past year to strengthen connections with their LSC Athlete Reps and help effectively mentor this round of athlete reps elected during COVID especially as we transition through Workshop and the ABM in September.

2022 USA Swimming Workshops, Denver, CO (by Gavin Formon)

Overall, we had athletes in attendance from almost all of our LSCs. It was a great weekend and terrific to finally meet our reps in person. We are super excited to work with this amazing group of representatives.



Highlights from Thursday:

- The Eastern Zone had a solid showing in the AEC Athlete Award Ceremony on Thursday night.
- Congratulations to Maine Swimming for winning the breakout LSC award. Ali Bragg and Ethan Schulz are credited with garnering lots of interest in governance in Maine and creating the LSCs first ever Athlete committee which earned them this award.
- Congratulations to New England Swimming on winning the Outstanding LSC award. Samantha Brabeck, Ellie Soska, Kenzie Driscoll, Diya Ackerman-Vállala are credited with the tremendous amount of work they have fronted in their various athlete-driven projects, from Leadership Summits to Starts and Turns Clinics and an All Star Meet this past year.

Highlights from Friday:

- Athletes really enjoyed listening from Robert Leeland III during the DEI sessions – very energetic and engaging
- Diversity = Connect - finding the needs of the other person
- Inclusion = Accept - accepting them for who they are
- Equity = Provide - fulfilling these needs
- Schuyler Bailar was a special guest at the afternoon DEI session and was a interview with Leland as well as a time for athletes to ask questions.
- LSC Athlete Leadership/USADA provided important knowledge about being an effective athlete leader such as being a good communicator and being organized. Also followed up by a short USADA presentation informing athletes on importance of checking what they are taking medicine / supplements etc.
- USADA Resources: globalDRO.com @usantidoping 87232 (anonymous tip line)
- Athletes collaborated with non-athletes from their LSC to discuss the strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats of their LSC and worked together to come up with an athlete-driven project to carry out for the next year! Some of these include AEC and Zone Reps will be checking in with athletes to hold them accountable with these projects

Highlights from Saturday:

- The Legislative Review Session received good feedback all around as it was a session where new legislation for the ABM was presented and discussed.
- Athlete Focused Legislation:
- 105.5.2 - discussed officiating of disability swimmers and notifying of stroke accommodations ahead of time.
- 202.4.1 - requires meet hosts to provide meet announcement which includes description of emergency services available.
- 203.3 (120 Day Rule) - there was a long winded discussion over making changes to the 120 day rule. Overall consensus between meeting and an AEC poll showed many in favor of reducing the window to 30 days for a swimmer to remain unattached when transferring teams.
- Governance Committee presented information about a new set of guidelines the nominating committee would follow for BOD people (skill sets) and shared the BOD SWOT analysis.
- AEC Meeting provided a comprehensive update of AEC achievements (mentorship program, LSC summit resources, LSC Rep survival guide, increase social media) Also discussed ways to stay involved once finished as an athlete rep
- ZDC Meeting : sectional manual is only meant to be a set of guidelines which can be used not must be used to help zones who have sectional planning issues.
- The USA Swimming Liaisons to the EZ are Nate Chessey and Beth Winkowski!
- The USA Swimming Trivia was a lot of fun and an EZ athlete led team (Pot Belly Sandwiches) took 2nd place
- Later that evening, the zone reps / AEC set up a fun night of games at the Athlete social which was much enjoyed all around and a further great event for athletes to get to know each other.

Highlights from Sunday:

- Eastern Zone Meeting: no senior / age group summer zone meet at the moment. CAC is working on more coach education. Maine Swimming Athletes (Ethan Schulz and Ali Bragg) presented an

interesting idea of an EZ LSC Athlete Reps Weekend event. More to come from them at this meeting!

- Town Hall Meeting: Spring workshop will remain in Denver through 2024 and vo

Looking Forward

USA Swimming Workshops was hugely successful for our athletes, and emphasized the importance of meeting with our LSC Athlete Reps in person. We look forward to hopefully continuing and bettering athlete experiences at the next Workshop next year, while also discussing ways we can change how we meet with and develop our LSC Athlete Reps to fulfill their needs. EZ has been discussing changes to our meeting cycle to align better with the Workshop/ABM timeline and having them more in person, and if feasible Zone Reps may ask to have another separate Athlete Workshop (maybe in collaboration with AEC/other Zones?) to have another opportunity for in-person programming – but still largely to be determined.

The ZDC and AEC have been discussing potential new plans to alter the election cycles. For EZ, we believe that our coach/non-coach election cycles are fine, but we may look to alter when we conduct Zone Rep, AEC Rep, and LSC Athlete Rep elections. The rationale is that Workshops is a great chance to mentor especially our new athletes and expose them to the fundamentals of being an athlete rep, and now Workshops is designed to be more of a stepping stone towards the ABM. We may be looking to push athlete elections earlier so that athlete reps are able to experience Workshops then vote at the ensuing ABM (rather than having new athlete reps take effect right before the ABM and asking them to vote when they are new to the position and all the legislation/etc.). Central Zone has recommended that Zones keep the Senior Zone Rep (Athlete Director) on their Zone Boards for an additional year after their term expires as an ex-officio in efforts to standardize all Zones and share identical practices, but we will eventually discuss with the EZ Directors to determine if that is actually necessary.

As shared above, we will also be continuing to check-in and assist our LSC Athlete Reps with the projects they have taken away from the athlete/non-athlete session at Workshops. One particularly of note is the EZ Athlete Reps weekend presented by Ali Bragg and Ethan Schulz (ME) of which we are looking to collaborate on with AEC Reps Topher Bishop (AM) and Marco Greico (AD).

As we look towards September, the Senior (Athlete Director) and Junior Zone Rep positions will be up for re-election – a two and one year term respectively. We look to mentor potential athlete reps interested in those positions and focus more on the transition to the next Zone Reps. We also encourage athletes who are over 18 and have at least one year of National Committee experience to run for AEC elections.

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to Tim and Jerry (EZ Directors), Tristan (EZ Tech Chair), our LSC Athlete Reps, the AEC (especially EZ's own Topher and Marco), and the EZ LSC BOD's for their continued support in the athletes. Our Zone is truly in good hands with our current batch of eager, excited, and advocating LSC Athlete Reps.