



## Eastern Zone Swimming Athlete's Meeting Minutes

Friday December 18th , 2020

6:00pm EST via Zoom

**Present:** Aaron Zhu(EZ Sr Athlete Director), Gavin Formon(EZ Jr Athlete Director), Marco Greico(AD-National Rep), Nicholas Poulos(MD-National Rep), Emma Lindecke(AD), Abigail O'Donnell(AD), Topher Bishop(AM), Isabella Donato(AM), Claire Michalik(CT), Sarah Nelson(MD), Dylan Cellamare(MR), Sam Brabeck(NE), Isabelle Hiller(NE), Tamsin Formon(NJ), TJ Walsh(NJ), Molly Kennedy(PV), Jack McCann(VA).

Missing: ME, MA, NI

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by EZ Senior Athlete Director Aaron Zhu.

### 2. Consent Agenda

\*See attachment\*

### 3. Consent Agenda Items pulled

#### Eastern Zone Tech Planning Report:

Aaron and Gavin provided a Tech Planning Committee update. The last tech planning meeting was in October, no new developments since then. The committee is working on evaluating the situation in each LSC so an informed decision about Sectionals and Age Group championships can be made. Aaron will distribute information as it becomes available prior to the next meeting.

#### Eastern Zone DEI Committee Report:

The DEI Committee has met twice since the last Athletes Meeting. The committee plans to continue pushing for DEI chairs to become voting members of each LSC BOD. Plans for the next EZ DEI Summit are also in the works. Aaron recognized Thomas(MR), Emma and Francesca (NJ), and Bobby and Katie (NI) for sharing their athlete work related to DEI in their respective LSC's.

#### Zone Directors Council and Athletes Executive Committee Update/Report:

The ZDC has been meeting monthly to discuss developments within USA Swimming at the National and Zone levels. The ZDC is reviewing the Zone Administrative Policies and discussing policies to make sure members are abiding by COVID regulations. The AEC is currently working on athlete driven projects. Be on the lookout for more information to come.

### 4. New Business

Aaron congratulated the athletes of the Eastern Zone who were selected for a National Committee Position.

**5. Adjournment**

Aaron adjourned the meeting at 6:26PM ET.

Next Meeting: TBA

Respectfully submitted,  
Marco Greico



## Eastern Zone Swimming Athlete's Meeting -- Consent Agenda

Friday, December 18, 2020

6:00pm EST via Zoom

1. Call to Order
2. Social Media
3. Consent Agenda (Block 2)
  - a. LSC Updates
  - b. Recap of 18&U Championships and US Open Meets
  - c. Committee Updates
    - i. EZ DEI Committee
    - ii. EZ Technical Committee
    - iii. AEC/ZDC Updates
    - iv. National Committee Athletes
4. New Business
5. Other
6. Adjournment

### **Block 2: Consent Agenda**

Adirondack: **Abigael O'Donnell**

Allegheny Mountain: **Topher Bishop and Meredith Reese**

Connecticut: **Claire Michalik**

Maryland: **Sarah Nelson**

Maine: **Kristy Barry**

Metropolitan: **Thomas Cho**

Middle Atlantic: **Christina Cappola and Sofia Pejdic**

New England: **Samantha Brabeck**

New Jersey: **Gavin Formon**

Niagara: **Suzanne Sokolowski and Alex Switalski**

Potomac Valley: **Molly Kennedy and Sophie Elliot**

Virginia: **Jack McCann**

National Reports: *No Reports -- see addition*

/MJG

### **I. Adirondack (Abigael O'Donnell)**

The majority of the Adirondack LSC does not have access to any training facilities, and we are not sanctioning meets as an LSC at this time. There are several teams who have been able to secure limited pool time either in the early morning or late at night, and these teams are facing drastically increased rates due to the limited availability. There have not been any new restrictions implemented yet, but the positivity rate for Covid-19 has been trending upwards statewide, with the implication that there may be new restrictions, either statewide or by region. Currently, our athlete representatives are working on assembling an Athlete Committee, with a goal of bringing in at least one member from each team onto an Adirondack GroupMe.

### **II. Allegheny Mountain (Topher Bishop and Meredith Reese)**

Unfortunately, AMS is not doing great right now in terms of in water practice. On Thursday, December 10th, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf announced a 3 week suspension of all youth sports, including high school sports, until January 4th. All of our athletes are currently out of the water, and our high school season has been delayed. This move is obviously devastating to the spirit and training buildup of our athletes. No one wants to be out of the water that long. In better news, the athlete reps are working on a Holiday Scavenger Hunt for all of our athletes. We will post an item on our Instagram and, everyday, athletes will dm pictures of themselves with that item. We have a points system worked out considering speed and bonuses. The top 3 point getters after 10 days will win a prize. We hope this will engage athletes, especially during our 3 week break. Finally, we did not host an 18 & under championship. Our teams were supposed to attend meets at WVU and Spire Institute, but those options became unavailable due to new Pennsylvania COVID-19 restrictions. We have a small number of athletes competing in Carlisle, PA, at Mid-Atlantic's meet. We are looking forward to coming back better than ever on January 4th!

### **III. Connecticut (Claire Michalik)**

#### Status of LSC

CT has suspended all youth team practices from 11/23/20 through 1/19/21, and lap swimming is restricted to one person per lane. Some teams are still training in groups of 4 or less (a group that size doesn't count as a team and so is not restricted in the governor's mandate), many teams are just having their swimmers lap swim, and some facilities have closed completely. Our LSC is currently not granting meet sanctions until a date TBD, and the public high school league in CT suspended all winter sports training and competition indefinitely which includes boy swimming.

#### Athlete Projects

The athlete reps are working with the senior committee to get some posts up to try to keep our swimmers engaged. Details TBD right now.

#### 18&U Champs

The initial plan was for each club to run a time trial at their own discretion at their usual training facility, but due to the governor's mandate, CT was not able to have any 18&U winter championship events.

### **IV. Maryland (Sarah Nelson)**

#### Status of LSC

A survey was sent out last month to collect data on the teams... 36 teams replied:

- 32 of those teams were practicing (about 88%)
- Total athletes for the LSC are about 75% of last year's numbers.
- Access to facilities is all over the place...
  - The majority of teams have the same or more pool time but with restrictions still have less practice time per swimmer.
  - About 25% of teams have less pool time.
  - One team is practicing completely outside.
  - We have at least 4 teams who have no access to a pool.
- It appeared that almost half of the swimmers in the LSC were going to be USA Swimming Registered in December. Many teams waited as long as they could before submitting registrations.
- In Baltimore and Howard Counties they have reduced the number of athletes allowed in a practice. Teams had to create smaller group sizes so swimmers don't have as much practice time.
- The status of our LSC regarding training is really determined on the facility.
- In Maryland Swimming, we are following all local, state, and federal guidelines with an emphasis on the local guidelines because they are looking at the numbers to determine what we can and cannot do
- The local health departments are determining who is in the water
- The regulation on "Youth Sports" is being interpreted and handled differently by each county
- All teams are required to social distance and follow the guidelines posted by our COVID taskforce

### Athlete Projects

- The Maryland athletes are currently working on "Jaelynn's Joy" service project...

Jaelynn Willey was the victim of gun violence at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's, Maryland in March of 2018. Jaelynn's joy was competitive swimming, caring for her family, and caring for other people. The Jaelynn Willey Foundation, founded by Jaelynn's family and friends, has a mission "to continue Jaelynn's legacy of service to others and to promote awareness of dating violence against young women." Jaelynn's Joy© is a service project organized by the Maryland Swimming Athlete Committee to continue doing what Jaelynn cannot: care for one another.

This year we are continuing Jaelynn's Joy through a new competition called "Sock it to COVID." This is a friendly competition between all the teams in our LSC to see who can buy the most socks from the Bombas Sock Company (this is the link to their website <https://bombas.com/>). When you buy a pair of socks from Bombas, a pair of socks is automatically donated to someone in need, so the goal of this is to see which team can donate the most pairs of socks. In order to keep track of the number of socks each team has donated, I have created a Google Sheets where the team reps can input how many pairs of socks their teammates have purchased and therefore donated. This competition is still

running, it started November 1st and will end December 31st. The top 3 teams with the most amount of socks will be awarded the Golden Sock Award (first place), the Silver Sock Award (second place), and the Bronze Sock Award (third place).

- The MD Senior and Junior athlete rep are currently working on the MDSI Scholarship program for this year

MDSI awards 10 applicable senior swimmers a \$1,000 if they meet the following criteria:

- ❖ Applicant must be graduating in the current year class (that be 2021)
  - ❖ Applicant must have a 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) or better
  - ❖ Applicant must have been involved in Maryland Swimming for four (4) consecutive years prior to high school graduation
  - ❖ Applicant must have competed in at least four (4) meets per year in the 4 years prior to applying for this scholarship
  - ❖ Applicant must not currently or in the past be enrolled in a post high school college institution as a full-time student, or ever represented a college institution in competition
  - ❖ NOTE: Applicants with scholarships totaling more than 25% of their tuition may not be considered for the MDSI Scholarship
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- The Senior and Junior athlete representative are working on a proposal to create an Athlete Executive Committee in Maryland Swimming
  
  - MD athletes are investigating a third option to the bylaws regarding the athlete's position on the board. We want the option for annual athlete board positions within the bylaws.
  
  - Athletes are part of a task force that are looking at how performance and end-of-year awards will be given out this year.
  
  - The athletes run a senior recognition "program" that will start up in the spring... senior athletes are recognized on our social media platforms.
  
  - The Safe sport committee athletes are putting together a video "What Does MAAPP Mean Now That I Have Turned 18" to explain how 18 year old athletes are affected by MAAPP guidelines
    - The SafeSport committee has been hard at work... Maryland is #1 in the nation for safesport recognize teams 69.5% of all out teams are safe sport recognized

- There was no financial or other incentives provide to get our teams to become safesport recognized
- The DEI committee athletes are working with the DEI committee to develop a DEI award for the LSC (developing the criteria now)

\*\*This year Maryland Swimming has 25 athletes involved in different committees outside of just the athlete committee. This allows us to meet the 25% athlete involvement requirement on all committees

### 18&U Champs

Maryland swimming did not have pools that would support an LSC 18&U championship so we did not have champs.

### **V. Maine (Kristy Barry)**

-For the past month, our community sports guidelines have restricted our LSC from any form of team training but we have been able to participate in lap swim.

-Our community sports guidelines were recently updated and now allow teams to train together in official practices with coaches as long as the team is located in a “green” county. Teams within “green” counties can also hold competitions either in-person or virtual.

-There are a few teams that do not have access to facilities and swimmers have been transferring to different teams for pool time.

-Our Athletes’ Committee has started putting together Instagram takeovers. We have athletes who have not previously had much involvement in our LSC governance show interest in participating in these takeovers.

-The Maine Athletes’ Committee and LSC team representatives came together to draft a letter to the Governor of Maine requesting the reconsideration of the restrictive community sports

### **VI. Metropolitan (Thomas Cho)**

Currently majority of teams have been practicing at an indoor facility and some teams are converting from an outdoor heated pool to an indoor pool as most pools are in operation currently. There was a big change in regulations from the time of convention as then majority of indoor pools weren't open for team use but now majority of indoor pools are open for team use. There has been many opportunities for competition among teams as there has been many virtual meets, dual meets and other competitions taking place. Sadly some meets have been canceled due to rising cases in a

specific area. But as time progresses Metro fears restrictions may be placed on new york like our neighboring state new jersey and can hinder swimming for many swimmers.

Over the past few months, our Metro's DEI Committee has been coordinating a college knowledge fair for diverse swimmers. Even though there have been a number of successful swimmers in the recruiting process among our lcs, we hope to reach out to swimmers who may not be equipped with the same opportunities or knowledge. We initiated a 3 part program, each a month apart, to hit each part of the recruiting process. For the first session, we are inviting a guest speaker to discuss the recruiting timeline, how to find the right fit, and how to contact schools. The second part of the program is a coaches panel, where local coaches have been invited to answer questions with potential athletes. The third part is an athlete's panel where former metro swimmers are invited to speak about their college swim experiences. Overall, it is a really amazing program to help motivate and teach swimmers about the recruiting process.

N/A-As of right now, there have not been any news of championship meets, but there have been a number of sanctioned meets.

## **VII. Middle Atlantic (Christina Cappola and Sofia Pejic)**

### Status of LSC

- All PA team practices and competitions are paused until January 4 due to the governor's new restrictions on youth sports, which has been in effect since December 12
- The same goes for NJ, whose restrictions took effect on December 4 and will last through January 2
- DE teams are still allowed to practice and compete
- Before the new restrictions, MA teams were doing pretty well - most teams back in the water, some intrasquad meets/smaller meets taking place

### Athlete Projects

- None at the moment

### 18&U Champs

- Held at 2 venues - an NJ site for NJ teams and a PA site for PA and DE teams
- How it was run: Small number of people, PA meet compacted to two days (12/10-12/11 because of new restrictions on 12/12), so no prelims just timed finals, Time trials cut
- What went well: Separating boys and girls, Mask wearing regulated well behind blocks before swims
- What could be improved upon: Masks not as strongly regulated when teams sitting together further from eyes of officials, warm up should have been lane-assigned by team - on wall within 6 ft of other girls from other teams.

## **VIII. New England (Samantha Brabeck)**

### Status of LSC

- In general, training is increasingly limited due to either state regulations or availability
- Vermont mandate newly stated no team practicing or training
  - Some teams have rented out pools for solely their use (i.e renting out a workout club for their own team, preventing workout club members from using the pool)
  - Athletes are mainly training on their own during local lap swim times or doing dry land

- Rhode Island was shut down starting Nov. 30

#### Athlete Projects

- In the midst of athlete takeovers on our instagram (@neswim)
- Food drive at 18 & Under Champs sites
- Mental health working group has been created (BoD members and athletes)
  - Still working on details-- no solidified plan yet
- NES DEI Athlete Subcommittee
  - A new DEI Chair was just announced
  - Goal: to work with her to create a new subcommittee for our athletes to work together

#### 18&U Champs

- Initially, there were supposed to be three 18&under sites (MA, NH, VT- a pool could not be established in RI)
- VT shut down, but MA and NH ran as expected
- Only MA teams could compete in MA-- created strictly MA site due to guidelines, while the NH site was combined MA and NH athletes
- Both sites hosted Friday (distance), Saturday (timed finals), and Sunday (timed finals)
- Both sites: 4 kids per lane for warm up, 5 min break in between each heat
- MA site:
  - Ran two sessions with half the teams in one session and the other half in another
  - 50+ warmdown after races
  - Established bullpen
- NH site
  - All teams that attended had split training locations (1 in MA, 1 in NH)
  - Ran a boys session and then a girls session (all teams in both)
- Lots of best times and lots of very fast swimming!
- Athletes were appreciative of the opportunity to race

#### **IX. New Jersey (Gavin Formon)**

-Starting last week, we began our indoor sports ban so lap swim is the only way people can swim right now. There are no competitions and no organized practice. Right now, we are limited to lap swimming and virtual dryland. The indoor ban is until Jan 4th but could be easily extended.

-We are currently writing a letter with Middle Atlantic to the NJ Governor to ask him to consider letting Swimming resume. Also we are collecting names of team reps so we can make a functioning athlete committee and get athletes more involved. NJ swimming DEI committee has many initiatives they are working on and they are being led by the athletes. Some things are workshops for athletes, coaches, social media content....

#### **X. Niagara (Suzanne Sokolowski and Alex Switalski)**

-Not all athletes in the Niagara LSC have access to pools. Restrictions have recently become more strict in our region (Western NY).

-One thing we have been working on is our Wellness Wednesdays, in which we promote athlete wellness every other Wednesday using informative articles and posting about them to our social media.

-We plan on hosting an in-person camp, instead of a meet, for athletes who qualified for the 2020 18&U Winter Championships.

## **XI. Potomac Valley (Molly Kennedy and Sophie Elliot)**

### Status of LSC

Our LSC is a bit unique, as geographically we contain areas in Virginia, Maryland, and D.C.. For a while we had our teams in Maryland and Virginia able to practice “full time” (obviously it was a little weird but the teams were able to make it work!), however, we faced a lot of setbacks with the D.C. area and counties in Maryland, as they never really allowed teams to return to the water normally. Unfortunately, in recent weeks there have been rollbacks in Maryland and certain counties in Virginia regarding pool usage, and many teams are unsure of their new practice schedules or are having to operate at reduced times and capacities. In terms of meets and competition, we have mostly stuck to intersquad and LSC only meets (no more than I would say 45-55 people in a session), but we have had PLENTY of them! The larger teams are in a better position to host competitions at the current moment, but the BOD is working hard to begin integrating some of our smaller teams into the fold. Additionally, we have been able to compete for about a month now and there have been no major (or minor, that I’m aware of) setbacks, and no Covid outbreaks! And finally, access to facilities has been pretty good and regular (exception being D.C., but larger teams close to that area have been generous in sharing their pool space in order to get those teams in the water). I’ll keep you guys updated on policy changes, as of right now Virginia is setting more strict parameters again, but they have not affected swimming as of yet. Maryland is taking a more conservative route (to my knowledge, but I’m a resident in VA so it’s a bit hard to keep up with what all of the different counties are doing here and in MD), and starting to cut back on access as of a few weeks ago, but nothing too major has been decided.

### Athlete Projects

Yes! Our athlete’s committee has been meeting monthly to discuss a variety of topics. We have officially rolled out our Athlete’s Newsletter, which informs athletes about advances in returning to competition, mental health awareness, how to avoid microaggressions within the sport, and more lighthearted topics (like polls about what the athletes preferences)! Additionally, we are working closely with the governance committee to revise the Mission and Vision statements and the logo of PV, they have remained the same for years and we wanted to include the athletes in making the new Ones!

### 18&U Champs

We have! The only major change (in addition to Covid mitigation protocols) that was made is that the time standards were closer to futures cuts, which trimmed down the number of people who were able to participate.

## **XII. Virginia (Jack McCann)**

Virginia Swimming has all teams back in the water training. Most teams are on their regular training schedule they have always been on. There have been meets hosted almost every weekend this fall. Just recently, our state made stricter provisions for a curfew and crowd sizes. These don’t affect

swimming because it is exercise which is excluded in the curfew. No spectators are present at indoor meets now, but some teams have live streams and even radio stations to broadcast the meet. No major projects at the moment. We have put together our Virginia Swimming Scholarship committee and sent out information for the scholarship due Jan 31st. Our t-shirt design contest from the summer will be sold at our meets this championship season. We haven't done an official 18&U champs, but we have sanctioned many championship-style meets. US Open ran smoothly and the athletes were well warmed up and rested. The new style of swim meet did not throw off their swimming. At all of our meets, social distancing has been maintained in the warm up pool, behind the blocks, outside in the parking lots, and in the bathrooms. Our athletes have been continuously going lifetime best times and are showing no signs of slowing down despite the covid setback in the spring and summer.