



Eastern Zone Swimming Athlete's Meeting Minutes

Saturday, February 20, 2021

5:00pm 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), Claire Michalik(CT), Kristy Barry(ME), Christina Cappola(MA), Ellie Soska(NE), Sam Brabeck(NE), Isabelle Hiller(NE), Wesley Tseng(NJ), Suzanne Sokolowski(NI), Sophie Elliott(PV), Jack McCann(VA).

Missing: AM, MR,

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:03pm by EZ Senior Athlete Director Aaron Zhu.

2. Social Media

Aaron reviewed the plans for the Eastern Zone social media accounts for the next few months. The goal is to spotlight the work LSC Athlete Rep's are doing.

3. Consent Agenda

See attachment

4. Consent Agenda Items pulled

Aaron and Gavin provided a Technical Planning report that detailed the EZ Sectional Meet planned for March. The Spring Age Group meet has been cancelled and is replaced this year by a virtual leaderboard which is posted on the EZ Website and EZ Athlete Website. The EZ Sectional Meet will be held at one location (Christiansburg, VA). There will be two sets of dates for the meet, everyone will enter for Meet A (03/26-03/28). Overflow entries will then be assigned to Meet B (03/23-03/25). The meet will be conducted as Timed Final. Official meet announcement and order of events will be posted on EZ website shortly. The bonus structure will allow athletes to swim at least 4 events. Qualifying period 11/01/18 to entry deadline.

Nicholas Poulos pulled his report(National Times and Recognition) and discussed questions regarding the Scholastic All-American Program. The committee is currently looking for input on the academic standard used (3.5GPA). Nick asked for athletes on the call to email him feedback regarding the academic standard used.

5. Athlete Engagement/EZ Workshop Discussion

Aaron asked for feedback regarding a future Eastern Zone Workshop. The consensus was to do the workshop in a single session rather than spread over multiple days. There was support to open the workshop up to other athlete reps (Ex: A LSC committee athlete rep), this will provide opportunities that are not normally available. Two topics that were suggested to be included in the workshop were Finances and Project Planning. Aaron and Gavin will send out a google form in the coming weeks to determine concrete details.

6. New Business

None

7. Adjournment

Aaron adjourned the meeting at 5:29PM ET.

Next Meeting: TBA

Respectfully submitted,
Marco Greico



Consent Agenda for EZ Athlete Meeting

Saturday, February 20, 2021

5:00pm EST via Zoom

LSC Reports

a. ADIRONDACK (submitted by Emma Lindecke and Abigail O'Donnell)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

Most teams are returning to practice in some fashion. Lots of teams are in new pools and for shortened hours then normal but overall almost everyone is getting some pool time. There haven't been any LSC competitions or dual meets outside of intersquad meets. I think at this point there have only been 2-3 teams that have had any type of time trials.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

We have been working on creating a group me with 2 athletes from each team in our LSC as a way to stay connected on swimming, meets, and practices. We also wanted it as just a way to connect everyone even if it's about non related swim things. We are planning on meeting soon to discuss the end of the season and the upcoming season. We are looking at the logistics and possibility of running meets or other events.

b. ALLEGHENY MOUNTAIN (submitted by Topher Bishop)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

We are happy to report that our LSC is back in the water! Most of our clubs have a pool to practice in, with most of our high schools allowing sport practices. Club meets are still pretty much on hold in AMS, as we do not really have a venue large enough to accommodate a large scale meet. We hope that in the near future, we can start up smaller meets again and work out a way to get back to bigger meets.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

Currently, we are not working on any big projects. With high school season in full swing, this is a really busy time for us and for all of our athletes. We are beginning preliminary discussions on our leadership summit, which you can read about in the question below!

c. CONNECTICUT (submitted by Claire Michalik and Thomas Dupont)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

The ban on youth team sports in CT was lifted as planned on 1/19/21 so we are now back to team training. The only training restrictions we are facing from the state are that we are limited to 4 swimmers per lane. While the state guidelines are now much less restrictive, certain facilities are taking more conservative approaches based on their own or local guidelines which may lead to some disparities in the return to training throughout the LSC, however, we have made a lot of progress overall in terms of getting back to team practices.

In terms of competition, the public high school league is having in person dual meets and the prep school league is having virtual meets only. For club swimming, the CT swim board has outlined a RTC plan and is currently allowing intrasquad meets. However, not all facilities are allowing meets due to more strict local or facility guidelines which is again leading to some disparities in the return to competition throughout the LSC.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

The athlete reps are interested in gathering resources to help our athletes who are looking to swim in college navigate the recruiting process during this unorthodox time. Details TBD.

d. MARYLAND (submitted by Sarah Nelson)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

The status of our LSC regarding training is really determined on the facility... the local health departments are determining who is in the water. Teams are making the most with what they have regarding pool times and accessibility (teams that have pool space are in the water). All teams are required to social distance and follow the guidelines posted by our COVID taskforce. In regards to competitions, Maryland Swimming is not hosting in-person meets but virtual meets can occur.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

- The Maryland athletes just finished our annual “Jaelynn’s Joy” service project... we held a competition called “Sock it to COVID.” This was 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 was to see which team can donate the most pairs of socks. Below is a picture of the results from the competition.

Biggest Team Category		
1st	Fredrick Area Swim Team	342
2nd	Eagle Swim Team	254
3rd	Monocacy Aquatic Club	94
	Annapolis Swim Club	68
	Naval Academy Aquatic Club	5
	North Baltimore Aquatic Club	4
Medium Team Category		
1st	Loyola Blakefield Aquatics	106
2nd	Calvert Aquaticcs Club	71
3rd	Bel Air Athletic Club	24
Smallest Team Category		
1st	Talbot County YMCA	40
2nd	Greater Mills Aquatic Club	5
3rd	Southern Maryland Aquatics	1
Total Number of Socks Donated		1014 Socks

- 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
- 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 DEI committee athletes are working with the DEI committee to develop a DEI award for the LSC (developing the criteria now).
- The athletes are organizing an "Athlete Townhall" that will be hosted in March where we will have an athlete-to-athlete open discussion.
- Worked to have items posted on social media for Black History Month

e. MAINE (submitted by Kristy Barry and Ali Bragg)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

Our community sports guidelines classify individual swimming as a “low risk” sport and team swimming as “moderate risk.” With these classifications, different levels of play have been allowed. Starting January 4th, team swimming has been able to hold in-person competitions between teams from the same geographic area (same county/counties in the same cohort). There are still restrictions on the amount of people that can be on deck at a time, so intrasquad meets have been much more common than duels. It is definitely challenging to host a meet with another team when we can only have 30-50 people on deck (including timers, officials, coaches, administrative officials, etc.) Several swimmers have traveled outside of Maine for competitions as unattached athletes as well. Our athlete registration is down about 45% right now, however we are expecting more YMCA’s to register in the next few weeks.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

Our Athlete’s Committee has continued our Instagram Takeovers, gaining great interest from athletes across the state to share their days and how their practices have changed since the pandemic. We are also starting to work on planning our Leadership Summit, which we applied and received a grant for. We are planning to have the summit this fall, around the same time as the Swimposium.

f. METROPOLITAN (submitted by Dylan Cellamare)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

Currently the majority of the teams have stable practice times but still limited with pool space and competitions go one but mostly virtual single team meets.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

We are working on forming an athletes committee for our lsc.

g. MIDDLE ATLANTIC (submitted by Sophia Pejdic and Christina Cappola)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

Most teams are able to practice right now, with some teams holding intrasquad or invitational meets.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

Not at the moment, though we are meeting with our Athletes Committee very soon to discuss ideas for athlete engagement.

h. NEW ENGLAND (submitted by Sam Brabeck)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

All four states of our LSC are back in the water practicing. Some teams are still struggling to find pool time; however, all four states are open for practice and competition. Meets are few and far between. NES has decided to not hold “championship meets” since the LSC is nowhere near on an equal playing field. We have created a leaderboard that will be open approximately a month and a half. Any sanctioned meet will count towards the leaderboard. Other rules are below.

End of Season Leaderboard Format:

- All swims from sanctioned meets between Friday, February 12th and Sunday, March 28th (“competition period”) are eligible for the leaderboard.
- There is no limit to the number of events an individual swimmer can post for the leaderboard, but only the best time earned in an individual event during the competition period will be used (only one time per event per swimmer).
- Leaderboard will be for Short Course Yards times only.
- A swim’s placement in a specific tier is determined by best times from the “qualifying period” of September 1st, 2019 through February 11th, 2021.
- Tier placement is based on an individual swim, if a swimmer has a Gold time in the 100 Freestyle and a Silver time in the 200 Fly, those swims are placed in each corresponding tier.
 - Times from the “competition period” do not move from one tier to another; i.e. if a swimmer qualifies for the Gold tier in the 100 Freestyle, but swims a time slower than the Gold standard, it remains in the Gold tier. If a swimmer qualifies at the Silver level in the 100 Freestyle but swims a Gold tier time, it will remain in the Silver tier.
- The leaderboard is separated into three tiers based on the USA Swimming 2021-2024 Age Group Motivational times:
 - Gold: “AA” times
 - Silver: “BB” times
 - Bronze: All other times

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

NES has recently created our first ever DEI Athlete Sub-Committee. We had our first meeting on February 13th. We are looking to dive right into projects in numerous different areas; we are dividing our sub-committee into groups to work on multiple projects at one time. This committee is new, so we are just getting started.

Recently, we hosted an AEC Starts and Turns Clinic. It was a success, but we reached a very limited audience. Sam has reached out to numerous teams across the LSC to host clinics in the future. She has solidified pools in RI and MA. She is still reaching out to teams in NH, and VT is interested at a later date (restrictions are especially difficult). We are looking to partner the NES AEC with the DEI Athlete Sub-Committee to run these clinics to reach our diverse athletes.

i. NEW JERSEY (submitted by Gavin Formon and Tamsin Formon)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

At this point in time, just about every team except a few teams (we have a task force trying to figure out solutions for this) is back in the water which is good news. However, the degree of in water practices depends on the team. Some teams only have just gotten water in the last few weeks/months while some have been lucky enough to have access since the early summer. Currently, many teams are only able to run swim practice for their senior athletes because

there is just not enough water for everyone. Many people rely on high school / college facilities and have been shut out so far for the most part. We did lift the ban on sanctioning in NJ a few weeks back and teams have been running a few meets mainly intrasquad however. Also it is important to note that last time we heard that only 3.5k athletes are currently “registered with USA Swimming” with that number being nearly 10k pre covid. The hope is people/teams are trying to save money and that our rate of attrition isn’t as high as the numbers show currently but only time will tell. Overall, the good news just about everyone except a few teams are in but at varying amounts of time.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

We are currently working on putting together an athlete leadership summit. (We were approved for the grant) Our athlete committee is relatively new so another project is the formation of subcommittees: Events/Planning, Social Media, Safe Sport, Team Reps Task Force. The goal of these committees is to do all we can as athlete reps to give our constituents the best experience possible. The hope is to build a very active social media account, which we already have ~930 followers on and use this platform to engage with our athlete population. And for the other committees to provide education as well as planning of educational events.

j. NIAGARA (submitted by Suzanne Sokolowski and Alex Switalski)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

More things are opening up, and there is an increase in competitions. Our LSC recently hired an advocate to aid this process.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

We successfully applied for the LSC Leadership Summit grant, so we are working on that.

k. POTOMAC VALLEY (submitted by Molly Kennedy)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

Potomac Valley has not had many setbacks recently. More meets have been happening within the LSC and cases have been going back down after the holidays. Additionally, some counties have gone through with having a high school swim season. Senior and Junior Championships are scheduled to happen in March at reduced attendance.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

Currently we are still hosting meetings over zoom monthly for the athletes to attend and to get a better understanding about what new developments are happening around the DMV area. We are also hosting a writing contest for the athletes to include in our newsletter! For black history month we are spreading awareness via social media and having a discussion with the athletes at our February meeting.

l. VIRGINIA (submitted by Jack McCann)

i. Status of LSC (return to water, practices, competitions, etc.)

All of Virginia Swimming's teams are back in the pool practicing and competing. We are in the midst of championship season. 12&u districts are happening this weekend and we move into 13&u districts/regions this upcoming weekend. High school meets are also occurring with most state meets later this week making the swim environment in VA competitive and full of adrenaline.

ii. Any projects you are working on in your LSC as athlete reps?

No active new projects but we are in the review process of our 2021 Scholarship.

National Reports

a. EZ DEI COMMITTEE

- February is Black History Month! Get your athletes/LSC communities/DEI initiatives engaged and active during it
- Beginning to plan for DEI summit/camp
- Athlete/LSC work in DEI is highly shared in the committee -- get active in it!

b. EZ TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

- Spring Sectionals format (tentative, official announcement and order of events still to come):
 - Timed Final, 2 3-day meets at Christiansburg, VA with multiple sessions per day (Tues 3/23-Thurs 3/25 and Fri 3/26-Sun 3/28), open to entire EZ
 - Meet Standards will be USA Swimming's MAX Sectional Standards
 - Bonuses: all athletes swim at least 4 events
 - Times considered from 11/1/18 until entry deadline

c. AEC/ZDC UPDATES

- AEC Mentorship Workshops are underway! Last one was on February 2 hosted by Ryan Gibbons, SZ Athlete Director, on Self-Advocacy and Relationship Building -- Ryan did a fantastic job of kicking off the series! If you missed it and still want to check it out:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceY708XdwQ8&feature=emb_logo
- Next workshop in the series is Sunday, March 7 @ 6pm EST hosted by Aaron Zhu on Leadership Styles & Strengths. Registration link to come later
- Nothing new from ZDC -- had a strategic planning session where we better defined and understood our roles as the ZDC in USAS

d. NATIONAL COMMITTEE ATHLETES

i. TIMES & RECOGNITION (submitted by Nicholas Poulos)

Our main project at the moment is working on getting the 2020-2021 Scholastic All-American program up and running. We are soliciting feedback from athletes on the standards (particularly the academic side) for this season's SAA program. How are grades being administered in your state/area? Do you still think a 3.5 GPA is a fair measure of academic excellence for the program given the varying gradings processes across the country? Do you have any suggestions for other methods to evaluate academic excellence? (An application process is not viable.)