

U.S. Masters Swimming

Committee Name: Recognition & Awards

Committee Chair: Charis Anderson McCarthy

Minutes recorded by: Sally Dillon

Date/time of meeting: January 17, 2021 – 6:30 pm

Actions Taken:

1. Approved: none

Number of committee members present: 14

Absent: none

Guests: none

Committee members present: Marcia Benjamin, Richard Burns, Nadine Day, Barbara Deschler, Sally Dillon, Jack Groselle, Michael Hillemonds, Charis Anderson McCarthy, Michael Moore, Ray Novitske, Beth Nymeyer, Ginger Pierson, Nancy Ridout, Laura Val, and Ed Coates (VPLO, ex officio)

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm ET.

1. Introductions: Attendees shared information about their LMSC and/or committee involvement-
2. Committee Overview
 - a. Purpose: Charis noted that that the committee promotes recognition of volunteer service to USMS and it encourages awards at both local and national levels. Proposals for new national awards must be approved by the R&A committee.
 - b. Communications (website forum, email, etc.): Charis asked for opinions regarding committee communication. Nadine likes the ability to download documents to the forum but understands that its format may be changing. Ed clarified that Beta testing is going on with a new “community” platform. He believes it might be ready after the first quarter of the year. Email seems to work well for most of the members. As new tools come online, we will see how they work for the committee. Rich asked where the committee policies were posted and Sally explained that the version revised in November was sent to the USMS Secretary and is posted on the USMS website. She will send a copy with the meeting minutes. For future reference, the pathway to the R&A Committee Policies starts at www.usms.org, scroll down to Volunteers > BOD & Committees > National Committees > Committee Operating Guidelines > Recognition and Awards.
 - c. Conference call schedule: Charis would like to meet more frequently early in the year and suggested every 6 weeks. Ray agreed and said more frequent calls are preferable to infrequent, long ones. Charis will distribute a Doodle Poll soon for a meeting 6-weeks out.
3. Subcommittee Participation: Committee members were asked to submit their subcommittee preferences to Charis via email. For more about the awards go to: <https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/awards>.
 - a. Ransom J. Arthur M.D. Award: Nadine is the chair. USMS’s most prestigious award, it goes to an individual who has contributed over a number of years. Nadine noted that updated nomination information and form have been posted on the website. Ransom Arthur asked fellow swimmer Judge Bob Beach to develop an award to honor a “Masters Swimming volunteer” and it was first awarded in 1973. Nadine has reminded last year’s nominators of the March 15 deadline and encouraged them to refresh last year’s paperwork and submit it again.
 - b. June Krauser Communications: Nancy has been the chair for a number of years. The award is named after June Krauser, who single-handedly kept people informed with her SwimMaster newsletter. She hand typed it and for a small fee, mailed copies all over the country. The award is presented to a group or person who’s volunteer work in communications contributed to the growth, improvement, or success of Masters Swimming locally, regionally, or nationally. The nomination form has been revised so it is easier to compare nominations. The committee reviews the paperwork and conducts a teleconference to determine the winner.
 - c. Club of the Year: Laura chairs this award subcommittee. Both local and regional clubs are honored. Honorees are recognized for developing clubs that support their swimmers and set standards for other clubs to follow. The seven subcommittee members include 4 from outside our committee. Rich asked about the nomination form that he had updated last year. Sally explained that the review committee tackled the RJA award first, since the information needed to be on the website sooner (with a nomination deadline of March 15). The Club of the Year is the next award to be discussed. Rich will send Sally the updated form since it is not currently

posted on the website. The review committee will include Laura in their discussions. Rich also mentioned that we've used a catchy ad to attract nominations. See proposed below

- d. Dorothy Donnelly Service Award: Charis explained that as many as 15 USMS members can receive this award each year. Recipients have contributed to the growth, improvement, or success of USMS locally, regionally, and/or nationally. The selection committee was recently expanded to include 2 committee members, in addition to the USMS President, Chair, and Vice Chair of the R&A committee. Charis found it interesting hearing about the important things members are doing to support USMS.
- e. MISHOF: Rich has led this subcommittee in recent years. In 2020, the Masters International Hall of Fame selected no recipients and the ceremony was canceled due to COVID19. The R&A committee had nominated Coach Kerry O'Brien in the Honor Contributor category and we will put forth Kerry O'Brien again for 2021. The committee policies do not state the number of subcommittee members. Nadine suggested Rich reach out to ISHOF about the presentation to determine if/when it will take place and to confirm receipt of Kerry's paperwork from last year.
- f. Zone/LMSC Communications (formerly Local Recognition): Charis proposed a merging of the subcommittees that encouraged nominations at the local level and for the national awards. She'd like the committee to be proactive in promoting USMS awards and get ads in *Swimmer* magazine. Beth suggested that beyond the USMS magazine, we use social media through calendars and other methods. We should also reach out via email to key people in LMSCs. Nadine said we already have a publications calendar and Charis can get the information from the National Office to make sure it is what we want. Nancy would like to reach out to LMSC newsletter editors and officers that her committee members know personally in order to generate nominations for the JK award and asked if that would be appropriate and acceptable. Ed said that it would be. In recent years, the National Office has prevented the R&A committee from sending messages directly to LMSC officers. There are concerns that we would "overload" the LMSC leaders, so the decision at the national level has been to use Streamlines to publicize our awards. Most agreed that this has not been effective; the announcement is often buried under a number of other articles and significant "scrolling" is required to find it. Sally said that as President of her LMSC, she does not receive that many messages from USMS and she'd welcome some with a specific purpose – like encouraging award nominations. Ray suggested that rather than trying to "reinvent the wheel", we need to come up with new ideas. It was suggested that we could email Zone Chairs and ask that they forward messages to LMSC leaders. Finally, it was suggested that multiple members of an LMSC need to see the reminders; a chair who is deserving is not going to nominate themselves even if they deserve an award.

4. Other committee work needing volunteers

- a. Review of Award Forms: Current goal is to be done by the beginning of March. Nancy, Barb, and Sally will share proposed changes with the chairs of each award subcommittee.
- b. Award web page bios: USMS award recipients are linked to a page where we can post a short bio about each person. Sally and Ray could use help from one or two members who have good writing skills. Ray asked Ed if he could help us get photos of the recipients posted to the pages. The National Office told him that feature has been disabled and it's a low priority to get it fixed.
- c. Press releases to be distributed about honorees after convention: Ray said this has evolved over the last couple years; the National Office wants to be more involved. Charis said we will revisit this in the future to make sure we are ready to go for convention.
- d. Coordinate the purchase of awards with the National Office: They would like to prepare awards for our committee and handle delivery when necessary. We need to develop an inventory of the awards. Charis asked each award subcommittee chair to send her details of the awards sent last year.
- e. Online award application process: It was suggested that all award applications be submitted online, rather than by email. The National Office has offered this service. Nadine pointed out that the RJA application is an online PDF this year. Barb suggested we could also use Google forms or PDF forms that can be filled out on the computer.

5. 2021 Goals & Initiatives

- a. Increase nominations for all awards: While discussed already (3.f above), it was also suggested that we set target goal numbers for each award – determine how much of an increase in nominations we desire since last year. The committees need to do better in contacting the nominators of submissions that didn't win, asking them to update and submit the nomination forms again. Also, extend communications to zones or LMSCs. Send other ideas to Charis via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm ET.