

MINUTES
U.S. Masters Swimming
Board of Directors, Governance Committee
Phone Conference, March 15, 2010

Attendance: Anthony Thompson (chair), Meg Smath, Michael Moore, Nancy Ridout,
Sean Fitzgerald, and Don Mehl (minutes)

Zone Governance

The Committee feels it is difficult to make generalizations regarding the role of the “Zone” organization within USMS because there are so many variables within each region.

Some members of the Committee feel that the Zone format has helped support LMSCs and Clubs, and contributed to the establishment of operating guidelines and/or bylaws which greatly assist with member growth and very successful Zone Championship Meets. The communications within Zone help present scheduling conflicts in neighboring LMSCs, during Zone Championships, Open Water events, and clinics.

Some members feel the Zone “concept” has become ineffective. Often, there is little or no communication among LMSCs or Clubs within the Zone other than at the USAS Convention. On the other hand, many LMSCs are very organized and large enough to successfully function without the cooperation of other groups within their Zone.

The term “governance” probably needs to be defined. The Governance Committee feels adding another level of hands-on administration and bureaucracy is not needed (nor wanted), but offering support for LMSCs, clubs, workout groups, or individual members fall within the scope of their Zone.

As USMS grows and the number of swimmers at our National Championships swells to unmanageable splashes (a nice problem to have), we may need to depend more and more on a Zone system to accommodate (regionally qualify) future competitors.

Zones do currently serve a function to ensure a broad geographic representation for the at-large BOD directors and on some HOD committees. If they are changed, the impact to the BOD and HOD Committees will need to be considered.

Questions Asked

Should we:

1. Keep the Zones?
2. Change their borders?
3. Change the number?

Many LMSCs do not participate in Zone functions and some Zones have no events (meetings, meets, clinics, etc.) for LMSC’s to attend. Other LMSCs depend on their Zone for motivation, direction, competition, and assistance.

With the addition of Coach and Club Services, LMSC Development Committee, and the National Office staff, the role of the previous and traditional Zone Chair (or Rep) has been greatly downsized, and, in some cases, eliminated. Is that a good thing at the local level?

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LMSCs and Clubs with effective internal governance may not need, and may resent, guidance or “rules” from the Zone. However, when selecting members for various House of Delegate committees, choosing candidates from all geographical areas (Zones) allows us to balance the views of USMS members nationwide.

One size does not fit all.

Next Conference Call is Monday, April 5, 2010, 6:00 PM (CDT)

Assignments for the April 5 Conference Call:

1. Don - minutes from 15-March
2. Don - Julie Heather - input on Zones
3. Meg - information on Zone Bylaws
4. Meg - talk with Mike Lemke, Great Lakes Zone Rep
5. Anthony - current/former Zone Reps
6. Nancy - National office/Rob Butcher
7. Other - were there other things?
8. Since Michael and Sean did not have specific assignments, can I get one of you to volunteer to draft minutes at Monday 5-April meeting?

The focus of our next meeting will be governance of Zones (regional structure of USMS).

Tentative Agenda:

1. Get input from stakeholders - such as current and former Zone rep/chairs, member of BOD, and others.
2. Review any governance tools already in place: what in USMS Rule/Regulations (article 503 USMS Rule/Regs); some Zones have bylaws, etc.
3. What governance models do other organizations have for regional/zone entities (like USA Swimming, USA Triathlon, or others)?
4. Then answer fundamental questions: Do we need to have a regional governance or just LMSC and national? Tentative answer in last meeting was yes, but role and vision not yet clear.
- 5. Creating a vision and understanding of what Zone should be or could be doing.**
6. Once completing the above, move toward assessing whether Zone governance meets these roles and if legislation/rules should be proposed (like boundary changes, updating other USMS Rules/Regulations, etc).
7. Once we have tackled the topic of Zone, we will start the process of assessing LMSCs in the same approach.