



Disability Awards Eligibility and Criteria

**Trischa L. Zorn Award - Athlete
"Jimi" Flowers Swimming Coach Award
Disability Service Award**

Deadline: December 1, 2021

USA Swimming encourages people with disabilities to participate in the sport of swimming and facilitates their inclusion in USA Swimming programs through education and collaboration. We seek to involve people with disabilities in existing competitions and programs for all swimmers, rather than provide unique disability-only opportunities

Nomination Process: Any USA Swimming member athlete, coach, volunteer, club, or LSC may submit a nomination by completing the official nomination form for any, or all, disability awards via the USA Swimming Disability Awards nomination link on the USA Swimming Disability webpage at <https://www.usaswimming.org/home/disability>.

Qualifying Year: The qualifying year for all Disability Awards is October 1st thru September 30th of each USA Swimming membership year.

Timeline:

- Nomination acceptance begins September of each year, following the final National or International competition of the long course season.
- Nominations close November 1st. *
- Committee consideration of nominees and selection of award recipients December 1st. *
- Awards presented in conjunction with Spring Zone Workshops.
- The Committee, in consultation with USA Swimming staff, reserve the right to adjust the nomination and selection timeline.

**Note: During the award year of 2021, the Committee is extending the nomination and selection process; Nominations close December 1, 2021, and selections will take place by December 15, 2021.*

Trischa L. Zorn Award

The purpose of the Trischa L. Zorn Award is to recognize a swimmer with a disability (or relay team) for outstanding performances during the previous year. The award is named in honor of Trischa Zorn, an American swimmer blind from birth who is one of the most decorated Paralympic athletes of all time in any sport. Trischa Zorn competed in seven Paralympic Games from 1980 through 2004. During Paralympic competition she established multiple world records and earned 41 gold, 9 silver, and 5 bronze medals.

Eligibility: Nominees may include individual swimmers or relay teams. Swimmers with any disability are eligible. As a prerequisite to nomination, swimmers or relay team members must demonstrate (a) USA Swimming membership at the time of the performances and (b) competition in at least 5 events across 2 USA Swimming sanctioned meets during the previous qualifying year. The results of the 5 events must appear in the SWIMS database. Collegiate swimmers may substitute competition results from USA Swimming observed meets. Swimmers may be nominated for and/or receive the Zorn award more than once.

Awards and Criteria:

- Trischa L. Zorn Award: One Zorn Award, a plaque, will be presented annually to the swimmer who best exhibits excellence in swimming at the national or international level during the previous qualifying year.
- Honorable Mention Awards: Up to five honorable mention awards will be presented annually to swimmers who satisfy the criteria for the Zorn Award. Swimmers receiving honorable mention will receive certificates suitable for framing, with certificates distributed via the swimmers' LSCs or via mail service.

Nomination Process

- The nomination form will include (a) contact information for the swimmer, (b) results of the qualifying performance, (c) his/her coach, (d) reference of a USA Swimming sanctioned or observed meet.
- The committee will give special consideration to any swimmer or relay team who establishes a new long course or short course world record or earns a gold, silver, or bronze medal at a long course or short course international championship where they are representing the USA within their disability or para specific NGB.

Disability Swimming Coach Awards

The purpose of the Disability Swimming Coach Awards is to recognize significant contributions by coaches for the inclusion of swimmers with a disability in USA Swimming programs. The most prestigious coaching honor is the **James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award**. The award is named in honor and memory of Jimi Flowers, an incredible coach who developed numerous Olympic and Paralympic champions. Flowers passed away in a climbing accident in the summer of 2009.

Eligibility: Nominees may include an individual coach or a coaching staff from the same USA Swimming club. Nominees must be USA Swimming coach members in good standing. . Coaches may be nominated for and/or receive a Disability Swimming Coaching Award more than once.

Awards and Criteria:

- **James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award:** One national-level award shall be presented annually. You can read more about Jimi's amazing contribution to the sport of swimming at the bottom of this page.
- **Disability Swimming Outstanding Coach Awards:** Up to five awards shall be presented annually. Winners of these awards will receive certificates suitable for framing, with certificates distributed by the coaches' LSCs or via mail service.

Criteria includes: (a) excellence in coaching swimmers with a disability as demonstrated by the swimmers' improvement and performances; (b) significant efforts to attract and welcome persons with a disability to competitive swimming, and (c) significant efforts to foster inclusion within the club, LSC, other USA Swimming programs, or generally in the sport of swimming. The nominee's contributions to inclusion may include club, LSC, national, or international examples. The nomination should focus on contributions during the qualifying year.

Disability Swimming Service Awards

The purpose of the Disability Swimming Service Awards is to recognize significant contributions over a number of years by an individual or group for the inclusion of swimmers with a disability in USA Swimming programs or in the sport of swimming.

Eligibility: Nominees may include individuals (athlete, coach, volunteer, or non-members) or groups (club, LSC, organization). Nominees are not required to be members of USA Swimming. Individuals or groups may be nominated for and/or receive a Disability Swimming Service Award more than once.

Awards and Criteria:

- **Disability Swimming Service Award:** One national-level award shall be presented annually to the individual or group with the greatest contributions to inclusion over a number of years, regardless of whether the nominee works in the LSC, zone, national, and/or international arenas.
- **Honorable Mention Service Awards:** Up to five honorable mention awards shall be presented annually to individuals or groups who make significant contributions to inclusion over a number of years. Winners of these awards will receive certificates suitable for framing, with certificates distributed by the individual's LSCs or via mail service.

James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers

Namesake and First Recipient of the
James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Coach of the Year Award



The USA Swimming Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award is named in honor of James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers. According to former Executive Director Chuck Wielgus, "We hope that naming the award in Jimi's honor will help to inspire other coaches to follow his example of inclusion of swimmers with disabilities in the sport of swimming. The impact that Jimi had on our sport was felt by many and we know that his legacy will continue to live on for years to come."

Jimi's contributions to inclusion were significant. He coached several swimmers who represented the USA at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics Games and at other international competitions. When at swim meets, he motivated many young swimmers with disabilities to continue in the sport by complimenting them on their performances, speaking with them about their goals, and offering helpful advice. Jimi assisted injured athletes such as Dave Denniston and war veterans in the Wounded Warriors program to rediscover their love of sport and become involved in Paralympic swimming. In a USOC press release, Jimi was described as "an incredible coach who developed numerous Olympic and Paralympic champions. He was passionate about swimming, dedicated to helping others, and was such an inspiration to athletes, colleagues, and all who knew him."

Jimi had an extensive background in competitive swimming. He was an avid swimmer throughout his life, having competed at the University of Tulane all four years of college. He was a four-time conference champion in the 200m breast. Flowers competed in three NCAA Championships, and in his senior year, he was named Athlete of the Year for the entire University. Flowers also competed at two U.S. Olympic Swim Trials in both 1980 and 1984.

After college, Flowers worked as an assistant coach for Auburn University from 1984 to 1989. He left Auburn for a position as a coordinator in USA Swimming's National Team Division through 1993. Flowers returned to Auburn in 1995 as a swimming assistant coach where he remained through 1999. In 1999, Flowers returned to Colorado Springs to the U.S. Olympic Committee, where he managed the USOC Aquatics Center until 2007. In addition, Flowers also assisted with aquatics operations at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, airport operations at the 2006 Torino Olympic Winter Games, and he also handled logistics and airport operations at the 2007 Parapan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

In 2007, Flowers began working for U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, as National Team Manager and Resident Program Coach for the Paralympic swimming program. In 2009, Flowers was promoted to Associate Director of High Performance for the Paralympic swimming program and served as head coach of the national team.

Jimi Flowers received the 2010 Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award posthumously, after his untimely death at age 47 from a climbing accident. A U.S. Paralympics press report revealed these details, "In the early afternoon on Friday, July 10, 2009, Flowers and another experienced climber were descending Capitol Peak, one of Colorado's famous 14,000-foot mountains, near Aspen, when Flowers lost his footing and slid about 500 feet through snow chutes and rock bands before coming to a stop in a steep rocky section. He died from serious injuries sustained in the fall."

In addition to the Coach of the Year Award, Jimi was a 2010 inductee into the Tulane Athletics Hall of Fame. Also, in 2010 U.S. Paralympics initiated an annual swimming meet in Jimi's honor.

Sources:

<http://usparalympics.org/news/2009/07/16/jimi-flowers-coach-character-friend-to-all/14354>

<http://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/lane9/news/22198.asp>