

USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council Minutes

April 29, 2026 / Virtual Meeting

Present: Phoebe Bacon, Gunnar Bentz, Topher Bishop, Nic Fink, Carson Foster, Lilly King, and Katie Meili Playko

Absent: Caitlin Leverenz Smith, Allison Schmitt, Olivia Tighe, Josie Uerling and Alex Walsh

Guests: Corey Manley, Greg Meehan, Stacy Michael-Miller, Michelle Steinfeld, and Yuri Suguiyama

Call to Order: Lilly King called the April 29, 2026, meeting of the Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC) to order at 11:04 MST

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: none

Agenda:

- AEC Legislature Updates – *Topher Bishop*
 - Topher shared proposals AEC would like to make
 - Athletes on a non-operating club be allowed to automatically attach to another club
 - Proposed deletion of a rule regarding competing for another country
 - Review proposal and reach out with any questions
- Vote to approve meeting minutes – *Lilly King*
 - Motion to approve minutes as written – Lilly King
 - Second Nic Fink
 - Unanimous approval 5-0
- Updates on Pool + OW APF, SCWC Selections – *Greg Meehan*
 - Discussion about the size of the National Team (pool) and the National Junior Team
 - Shared statistics of number of athletes on both rosters since 2021-2022
 - Will come back with detailed proposal for implementation in 2028
 - For 2026-2027:
 - Goal to hit 90-95 athletes on 2026-2027 National Team
 - Not proposing any changes for 2026-2027 National Junior Team
 - Explained the financial resource allocation of the stipend and the IPP Grant
 - Shared philosophy regarding elevating IPP Grant
 - Benefit to non-funded National Team members is travel assistance
 - Funds would be funneled to the IPP which is performance focused
 - Any changes are approached with intention regarding the impact of that change
 - A subtle change from top 6 to top 5 results in competitiveness amongst athletes, which is better for the sport as a whole
 - Discussed how this model impacts future National Teams
 - Data shows that international experience is greater indicator of competitive success compared to just qualifying for the National Team
 - Will notify athletes as soon as there is support for this, so they are aware of this change as soon as possible.

- Athlete Performance Funding
 - Changes will not be made to this stipend cycle
 - Proposed change:
 - AQUA A Standard was previously used to fill roster
 - Same idea will be used but AQUA A Standard will be replaced by medal standard (take last three Operation Gold international competitions and the average of what it took to earn a bronze medal – 2022 Worlds, 2024 Olympic Games and 2025 World Championships. Did not feel 2024 Worlds in Doha was representative of this standard)
 - Used this process for AP London and Mel Zajac teams competing this summer
 - Funding Open Water
 - Top 2 finishers at Pan Pacs if not already on pool funding
 - Would go to next highest if there are spots remaining
- Short Course World Championship Selection Meet
 - 20 Women and 20 Men
 - Top 2 in 100 and 200 free
 - All first-place finishers including 100IM are guaranteed making the team
 - Potentially a handful of second places
 - Will keep AQUA A Standard as tie breaker for this meet
 - Not enough data to come up with a consistent medal standard
 - Discussion regarding three meets to come up with the AQUA standard
 - Discussion to pivot and use 2021, 2022 and 2024 Short Course World Championships
 - Corey provided context from a data perspective that we wanted to be consistent across years rather than events
 - Competition will be held October 28-31 in Westmont
- 2027 Meet Prioritization
 - Selecting four meets off of Nationals in June
 - Priority below allows us to select best teams for all four competitions
- LA28 Framework
 - Olympic Team Selection Procedures process discussion
 - 26 Men and 26 Women (pool)
 - 42 unique qualifying positions per gender
 - Only way to qualify in 50s of stroke is through the World Cups
 - Cannot select directly to Olympic Team through Trials
 - Can swim 50 if already on team and haven't filled spot
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 - Question raised regarding any funding support to go to World Cups

Next Meeting: May 2026

Adjournment: Lilly King adjourned the April 29, 2026, meeting of the Athletes' Advisory Council at 12:16 PM MST