



Safe Sport Committee Meeting Minutes

7/13/2026

USA Swimming Mission: USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Olympic & Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport. We are committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all members.

Committee Mission: To support USA Swimming's commitment to provide a healthy and safe environment free from abuse for all its members, especially athletes, through the planning, implementation, and coordination of USA Swimming's Safe Sport program.

Safe Sport Mission Statement

1. Present: Maja Palmroos (Chair), Pat Kerrigan, Leo Gibbons, Will Gallagher, Audrey Cohen, Nikki Patton, Pierre Guzman, Sondra Hunt, Staff: Cha'Vera Jackson, Liz Hahn, Guest: Tanya Avant, Paul Stauder
Not Present: April Walkley, Claire Kemmere, Drew Gundrum, Steve Frye
2. Housekeeping
 - a. Review Minutes from last meeting on 5/18/2026
 - b. Motion to approve at 6:05 pm MT, seconded, and approved
3. Committee Member Update
 - a. Introduction of new member Pat Kerrigan to the committee.
4. Staff Updates
 - a. MAAPP Review for the Center
 - b. Safe Sport Code Review for the Center
5. Zone Athlete Summit Feedback
 - a. See feedback attached to the agenda
 - i. [Group A](#)
 - ii. [Group B](#)
 - b. Take aways, ideas to pursue. Both of these initiatives have good ideas that we as a committee should take a deeper look at. It would be a good idea for our training

and education subcommittee to look at these proposals. There are also LSCs that have very engaged athletes, let's connect with them to see how they get involved.

6. HOD Legislation Proposal (Safe Sport requirement for LSC Board Members)
 - a. Discussion about potential feedback/responses to proposal
 - i. Some issues that could come up such as:
 1. "I've been cleared."
 2. Individual was temporary suspended, that was lifted, then individual was banned again.
 3. What information can/will be shared and to whom?
 4. How will the LSC know if something has been overturned?
 5. Is being "cleared" the same as being overturned?
 - b. Ways to support proposed legislation
 - i. We will create an FAQ to help answer this feedback.
 - ii. One of the core values of USA Swimming is "insert USA Swimming core value" And this is in line with what USA Swimming expects from its leaders and who is representing LSCs
7. Subcommittee Updates
 - a. Zones: April, Paul, Tanja, Will. Working to reschedule meeting.
 - b. Education and Resources: Claire, Drew, Leo, Maja, Nikki, Pierre. New trainings and resources for the fall to come.
 - c. SSRP: Audrey, April, Sondra, Steve, Will, Pat. Creating a 30/60 day plan for LSC SSCs and getting the banner logo ready.
8. USA Swimming Annual Summit 2026
 - a. September 23-26, 2026 in Denver, CO
 - b. **IF ATTENDING:** Funding from LSC or person expense (athlete funding may be possible TBD)
9. New Business
10. Group Feedback
11. Adjourn
 - a. Motion made at 7:09 pm MT, seconded and meeting adjourned.

Next Committee Meeting: September 14, 2026 at 8pm EST

2026 Zone Athlete Summit National Committee Project Brief

National Committee: Safe Sport Committee

Overview: The Safe Sport National Committee invites athletes to explore how Safe Sport is currently perceived and to develop bold, actionable strategies to improve understanding, reduce stigma, and promote peer-to-peer education. Athletes are uniquely positioned to influence culture within their teams and clubs, making their perspectives critical in shaping how Safe Sport is communicated, understood, and embraced.

Project Objective: The project aims to explore current athlete perceptions of Safe Sport, particularly among younger athletes, and identify opportunities to improve communication, understanding, and engagement. It will develop actionable strategies that promote athlete-led education and accountability within clubs, while also working to shift the narrative around Safe Sport to emphasize positivity, growth, and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment.

In short, develop and present a concise set of athlete-driven recommendations that identify key perception challenges and outline clear, actionable strategies to improve Safe Sport understanding, normalize peer-to-peer conversations, and promote athlete-led education within clubs.

Stakeholders: Athletes (especially youth and peer leaders), coaches and club administrators, Safe Sport National Committee, Local Swim Committees (LSCs) and national governing bodies, parents and guardians.

Scope of Work:

Included:

- Group brainstorming and discussion on current perceptions of Safe Sport.
- Identification of key challenges, misconceptions, and areas of stigma.
- Development and prioritization of ideas to improve communication and athlete engagement.
- Creation of a concise presentation or summary outlining insights and recommendations.

Not Included:

- Formal research, surveys, or data collection beyond group discussion.
- Implementation of proposed strategies or programs.
- Policy changes or formal governance recommendations requirements.

Deliverables:

- A high-level summary of current perceptions and challenges related to Safe Sport.
- A set of actionable, athlete-driven strategies to improve understanding and engagement.
- Recommendations for promoting peer-to-peer education and normalizing Safe Sport conversations.
- Key ideas to support creating safer, more positive team environments.

Project Considerations: As you work as a group, consider the following questions as part of your design:

- How can we better communicate what Safe Sport really is, especially to athletes ages 12 & under?
- What are effective ways to encourage athlete-led education and accountability within clubs?
- How can Safe Sport conversations be normalized among peers?
- What strategies can shift the perception of Safe Sport from punitive or uncomfortable to positive and supportive?
- What practical steps can athletes and teams take to create safer environments?

Background/Context:

(From Safe Sport Committee Chair, Maja Palmroos, and Director of Safe Sport, Liz Hahn)

Safe Sport plays a critical role in ensuring that athletic environments are safe, respectful, and supportive for all participants, yet athletes' understanding and perception of Safe Sport can widely vary, especially among younger athletes. In many cases, Safe Sport is primarily associated with rules, reporting mechanisms, or consequences, rather than being understood as a proactive, community-driven effort to build healthy team cultures. This gap in understanding can create stigma or discomfort around Safe Sport conversations, making it harder for athletes to engage or see themselves as active contributors to the safety and culture within their teams.

Athletes are uniquely positioned to address this challenge because they experience the day-to-day culture of their clubs and teams, where norms and behaviors are shaped most directly. Peer influence is especially powerful in youth sport environments, where athletes often learn more from teammates than from formal messaging. By centering athlete perspectives, this project aims to better understand how Safe Sport is currently perceived and identify barriers to engagement that may not be visible to coaches or administrators. These insights can then inform athlete-driven strategies that make Safe Sport more relatable, normalize peer-to-peer conversations, and shift the narrative toward one of shared responsibility, positivity, and growth in creating safer team environments.

2026 Zone Athlete Summit - Safe Sport Athlete Ideas

Group A

- [Link to Drive resources](#)
- Video not included in this document but is available in the Google Drive folder

Comp in LSC for highest ranking team:
- ~~SSC/stabs~~ - percentage of swimmers that are SS certified
- Competition is motivating
- why not combine competitive nature + love for sport → create tiers (bronze, silver, gold)
- allows for higher retention (Someone who meets and talks to michael phelps is more likely to ~~be~~ ^{stick to} ~~swim~~ swim than one who has not)

Who
Athletes

SS trophy @ state ~~banquet~~

Require some sort of activity for U-12
activity/Game

Safe sport ~~event~~ @ zones? ^{Cheesy needs for scenarios}

Social media posts to normalize

Have people come & present + play games

Make It Fun!

give awards for safe sport
certified clubs & people

Rank clubs by % of
SS certification

Pamphlets

Develop strategies for how safe
sport is perceived. try to

Combined

SAFE SPORT PERCEPTION

ISSUE: Lack of understanding of SAFESPORT and what it entails.

Solution: Safe Sport requires each LSC & Club to create an action plan.

- Ranked Safe Sport Recognition program with reward system.
- Safe Sport specific Social Media campaign.
- In person activities with Safe Sport Rep.

peer-to-peer education

Requirements:

- Must hold at least one in-person Safe Sport event per season with Safe Sport personnel present.
- Required to report results and evaluate plan for improvement.
- Create a set of goals for the program to develop.

Result: more participation and meaningful awareness of Safe Sport. More open discourse on Safe Sport.



Group B

- [Link to Drive resources](#)

SAFESPORT REPS Group 6

Athletes leading the way to safer sport

What is the problem?

- Not everyone (especially younger/12 & under athletes) ^{is} ~~arent~~ aware of the true purpose of safesport and they don't feel comfortable speaking up
- There are incorrect perceptions/stigmas related to safesport

What is our solution?

SAFESPORT REPRESENTATIVES

1. Elect athletes to become Safesport Reps
↳ club, LSC (which makes up national committee)
2. Safesport Reps go through training
3. Training goes into interactive informational sessions for younger athletes

IMPORTANCE:

Group 6

- SafeSport works to ensure protection and safety for all swimmers
 - ↳ w/o education, athletes are unaware of resources
- grows awareness of SafeSport to break the stigma & bring seriousness to the topic
- makes young swimmers feel more comfortable about speaking up about issues they may face

EXTRA INFO:

Application Process:

- 1 year term
- Includes a questionnaire
 - ↳ Essay question/Interview, Coach Rec. Letter
- Reviewed by LSC athlete reps

Training:

- LSC athlete reps are trained by the safe sport chair of the LSC
- Then, the LSC reps train the Safe Sport club reps

Incentives:

- volunteer hours
- leadership opportunities
- resume building
- scholarships

SAFE SPORT

Rep Duties:

LSC reps:

- Create 10-15 min presentation
- Facilitate meetings between club reps
 - ↳ lead convos
 - ↳ ensure that guidelines are followed

Club reps:

- tweak presentations to be more specific to their clubs
- plan on day-to presentation and report back to LSC reps and Safe Sport chair