

**USA Swimming Steering Committee Meeting Minutes  
September 20-21, 2023 / In Person Meeting**

**Present In Person:** Bob Bowman, Carliann Brashier (staff liaison), Carol Capitani, Todd DeSorbo, Bruce Gemmell (Chair), Catherine Kase, Jaime Lewis, Greg Meehan, Lindsay Mintenko (staff leader), Anthony Nesty

**Present Virtual:** Cammile Adams, Connor Jaeger, Matt Kredich, Katie Meili (in person September 21), Ginny Nussbaum, Davis Tarwater

**Absent:** Gunnar Bentz, Dave Durden, Tad Kremen

**Guests:** Matt Barbini, Brendan Hansen, Tim Hinchey, Stacy Michael-Miller, Erik Posegay, Keenan Robinson, Joel Shinofield, MJ Truex

**Call to Order:** Committee Chair Mr. Bruce Gemmell called the September 20-21, 2023 meeting of the Steering Committee to order at 4:36 PM Mountain Time on September 20, 2023.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** The following coaches disclosed they currently have an athlete on the National Team: Bob Bowman, Carol Capitani, Todd DeSorbo, Bruce Gemmell, Matt Kredich, Greg Meehan, Anthony Nesty, and Ginny Nussbaum. Managing Director, National Team Lindsay Mintenko stated she has a daughter on the National Junior Team.

**Approval of Past Minutes:** Motion to approve the following past minutes was approved unanimously:

- February 18, 2022
- March 7, 2022
- September 14, 2022

**2023 World Aquatics Championships Debrief:** Mr. Gemmell encouraged a lively discussion as the group debriefed the competition. The Committee discussed the challenges and successes of the trip, including timing between Nationals and the competition as well as logistics including travel, time spent at the training camp location, and practice times. There was also discussion regarding the stressful nature of a trials competition and the impact on athletes. Ms. Mintenko stressed the need for the Committee to review the materials they are sent both via email and for Committee meetings as these materials contain important information about our plans for competitions. She emphasized the National Team Division relies on the decisions the Committee makes when making decisions about logistics for competitions. It was suggested that maybe the coaches of the Committee get on a call prior to Committee meetings to discuss materials. Many comparisons were made to 2022 which led Mr. Gemmell to ask the group why there was more collaboration in 2022. The coaches stated it was because there was more time to collaborate in 2022 than there was in 2023. Ms. Mintenko stated in 2024 with both a domestic and international training camp for the Olympic Games, along with personal coaches being able to attend the domestic training camp, there would be more time for collaboration.

**2023 World Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships Debrief:** Director, National Junior Team Erik Posegay provided the Committee with a debrief of the 2023 World Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships in Netanya, Israel. Mr. Posegay highlighted the team had many new athletes and coaches, so the trip had many educational and learning opportunities. Athletes had the opportunity to learn how a World Aquatics event is run and how to manage transportation and food in a foreign

country. He also discussed the educational components of NJT trips, for example athletes learning how to use a cold tub. He observed that relay take offs, specifically the use of step-over starts, were an area for future improvement that could be better addressed at camps moving forward. Mr. Posegay conveyed his desire to work on/fine tune details before they get to the National Team. He also discussed the Australians having a camp in Cyprus before the meet, allowing them to acclimatize. He plans to have the team arrive earlier next summer for Junior Pan Pacs in Australia. Mr. Posegay noted plans to build more time at the National Junior Team Camp to work on relay starts. Other discussions included the difference in fitness/strength between our athletes and other countries, as well as distance swimming and the yardage done weekly by other countries.

**Relay Discussion:** Ms. Mintenko began the discussion by noting all of our relays qualified for the Games in Fukuoka. While the USA medaled in every relay, only two relays were won by the USA. The question was posed of what we do to get the ball rolling for Paris and LA? The Committee discussed various cultural and performance components to prioritize relays for 2024 and beyond.

**2024 World Aquatics Championships Updates:** Ms. Mintenko provided updates on 2024 Worlds Team selection and logistics. Invites will start going out the beginning of November. Athletes will have 48 hours to accept or decline. We will be selecting 14M/14W (one athlete will be selected per individual Olympic Event). We will not go below the top 10 fastest time. Times will need to be swum at an AQUA approved meet from January 1, 2023- November 1 2023. We will also include times from the Pan American Games. Should events be open, athletes who have the fastest time in the open event can swim additional events, they must have the A time standard. The pool competition starts February 11. The team will likely depart on February 5 depending on flight options. The team will have four full days on the ground prior to the start of competition. A head coach has not been selected at this time.

**2024 Olympic Trials and Olympic Games Updates:** Ms. Mintenko told the group that Mr. DeSorbo and Mr. Nesty would be named as the 2024 Olympic Head Coaches the next day.

#### *Paris Hotels and A/C*

Ms. Mintenko also discussed her site visit to Paris, including transportation being a potential challenge with her travel time from the Village to the venue taking her 50 minutes in a car. Ms. Mintenko asked the Committee if USA Swimming got hotel rooms or apartments within walking distance of the venue for athletes and potentially staff to stay at between sessions if this was something the athletes would utilize. After discussion, the Committee leaned toward getting these spaces now and strategizing how to utilize them later. Ms. Mintenko also mentioned A/C units would be purchased for every bedroom in the Village (athletes and staff).

#### *Olympic Team Plan*

Ms. Mintenko then reviewed the Olympic Team plan. Team processing will take place in Indianapolis. The team will be asked to stay until June 24 as there will be a team swim and meeting that morning. The team should be able to depart Indianapolis by 2:00 pm. Athletes can leave Indianapolis and then come back for Finals on June 23. USA Swimming will pay for two nights at a hotel for those athletes done competing earlier at Trials. For the Raleigh training camp, there will be an option for athletes to arrive early, midday on June 30, but the official start of the camp will be midday July 2. Details regarding the camps were then discussed, including personal coaches, families, training times, flights, and logistics. Discussions around arrival into Paris and Paris training, competition and departure plans were also discussed.

Ms. Mintenko told the Committee the Impact Coaches Meeting will be held in April after the San Antonio TYR Pro Swim Series. The Committee emphasized the need to highlight what days there will only be single training options until the start of competition. Ms. Mintenko also provided additional information based on questions asked by various Committee members: personal coaches are expected to pay for their own expenses at the Raleigh training camp, athletes who may live in the Raleigh area are required to stay at the team hotel, and there are not currently other pool options in Paris (what has been presented is limited and far from the Village).

In regards to the open water training camp plans, Ms. Catherine Kase highlighted that there has not been a set number of days in the past that have shown success for the open water team. Therefore, the current plan is to let athletes have an individualized plan, with the open water team opting into training camps at a point that works best for them (e.g., go to domestic camp, join the team at the start of the international camp, join the pool team in Paris). Ms. Mintenko stated a head coach for open water has not been announced yet.

#### *Paris Accreditations*

Ms. Mintenko discussed that some staff will be staying outside the Village in Paris due to the number of Village beds given to USA Swimming by the USOPC. Approximately 11 staff would be staying outside of the Village in a hotel within walking distance of the Village. All of the athletes and coaches, and some staff would be in the Village. The number of beds the USOPC is given depends on the number of US athletes (all of Team USA) who qualify for the Games.

#### *Relay Selection Discussion*

A discussion was held on the addition of 7<sup>th</sup> place finishers in the 100/200 freestyle for the Olympic Games. Ms. Mintenko began the conversation disclosing that her daughter, who is on the National Junior Team, swims the 200 freestyle. Mr. Gemmell recused himself from the discussion because his daughter also swims the 200 freestyle. Unlike at a World Championships, relay only swimmers must swim in the relay (preliminaries and/or finals) at an Olympic Games. Two options were put forth and discussed (the written version of these was not provided to the Committee until after the meeting based on the discussion held):

Option 2 (was selected by the committee to be implemented into the selection procedures): Select 1-6 with specific decline procedures based on place

In this scenario declines or vacancies would be handled based on the position of the athlete declining and whether they were still on the roster, with the goal of ensuring we have six potential relay athletes in each event.

- If an athlete who finishes first or second at Trials declines to swim the individual event, but still wants to be considered for a relay, we WILL NOT replace them with the seventh -place finisher.
- If an athlete who finishes first through sixth is removed from the roster due to decline or other reasons, prior to entry deadline, we WILL replace them with the seventh-place finisher.

Ms. Mintenko emphasized our selection procedures cannot be harder than those of the International Federation. Ms. Mintenko mentioned that any athlete on the team is eligible to swim any relay. Per World Aquatics rules, we can only take a maximum of 12 relay only swimmers.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of each option. It was decided the Committee needed to see the written options before voting via email (the above text of the options was provided after the meeting).

After an email vote, option 2 was implemented in the selection procedures.

**Discussion:**

*Coaching Staff Philosophy*

Mr. Gemmell asked the Committee to discuss what USA Swimming's coaching staff philosophy should be in regards to selecting coaches as well as their role for international competitions. Historically, coaches are rewarded and selected to a team staff based on how many athletes they put on a team. The question was posed of how this type of coach selection impacts staff dynamics. Mr. Barbini provided several data points to the Committee regarding coach selection and athlete success. The Committee discussed the importance of staff dynamics, including the role of assistant coaches on international trips. President & CEO, Tim Hinchey suggested that what values/characteristics and expectations there are of assistant coaches is discussed at the Impact Coaches meeting.

*How do we turn 20 silver medals into gold*

Mr. Gemmell then turned the discussion to how we can turn the 20 silver medals won at the 2023 World Championships into golds in Paris. Mr. Barbini emphasized how direct selection of the Worlds team this year will help next year.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Gemmell adjourned the meeting of the Steering Committee on September 20 at 8:05 PM Mountain Time to be continued the next morning.

**Call to Order:** Committee Chair Mr. Bruce Gemmell called the September 20-21, 2023 meeting of the Steering Committee to order again at 8:01 AM Mountain Time on September 21, 2023.

**Carryover discussion from September 20:** Mr. Gemmell opened the meeting by opening the floor for any carryover discussion from the September 20 meeting.

*Relay Selection Discussion*

Ms. Mintenko stated the Athletes' Advisory Council would also be reviewing the options for the 7<sup>th</sup> place finishers in the 100/200 freestyle.

*Coaching Staff Philosophy*

Coaching fatigue was brought up as a challenge and a reason coaches turn down trips. A busy quad plan with lots of meets is challenging and makes it difficult for coaches to take at least one summer off each quad. The timing of the Pan American Games this year contributed to coaches turning down the opportunity because of the school year. It was mentioned that when more experienced coaches decline a trip, it does provide an opportunity to try new coaches on staff. Specifically this is a chance to give assistant coaches opportunities. It was suggested the same language we use for athletes should be applied to coaches. For example, this is an international opportunity and we have x number of opportunities this summer.

**2028 Quad Plan Updates:**

Ms. Mintenko provided the Committee with updates on the 2025 calendar. She stated that we are still waiting for dates for 2025 Worlds but they are expected to be held late July/early August with swimming held the first week and open water held the second week. The current plan is to direct select the World University Games (WUGs) team if possible. The Worlds team would be selected first, then the WUGs team. We would also be selecting a World Juniors team. There is also another U23 European Aquatics opportunity. Potential dates for 2025 Nationals were discussed by the Committee.

Ms. Mintenko let the Committee know that USA Swimming would be hosting the Pan Pacific Championships in LA in 2026 with dates likely the middle/end of August.

Director, International Games Operations Carli Brashier provided information on options for the 2025 Worlds training camp locations. The first option included a longer initial flight and shorter flight to Singapore with long course and short course water. The second option included more pool space, but another long initial flight and longer flight to Singapore. The Committee consensus was option 1. It was asked that USA Swimming look into three hour training windows, confirm the outdoor pools were temperature controlled, and look into other facilities nearby that might be available.

Ms. Mintenko asked the Committee if they would want to hold a training camp in Southern California in 2028 prior to the Olympics. The Committee consensus was to stay out of Los Angeles, away from LA2028. It was asked if there would be one camp or two camps. This was left up for further discussion in the future.

A question was raised about the longevity of the Pan Pacific Championships with the Commonwealth Games potentially being influx and the Asian Games being held later in the calendar year. Ms. Mintenko stated that for 2026 the goal was to get invites out early to non-Pan Pac countries (non-LEN countries) as there are many countries who are interested in coming and checking out training camp locations for 2028.

Motion to support hosting the 2026 Pan Pacific Championships in Los Angeles near the 2028 Olympic venue was approved unanimously.

**Additional Items:** Ms. Mintenko let the Committee know that there will be three non-TYR PSS in May 2024 in place of a PSS. Only the meet in Atlanta will be open to foreign athletes in order for them to get time standards for the Olympic Games.

**Upcoming Meetings:** The Committee discussed potential upcoming meeting dates based on the need to meet. The earliest next meeting would be Monday, November 13 for a check in after the Pan American Games and the Doha site visit. If needed, a meeting could be held in December in Greensboro at U.S. Open. An in person meeting was tentatively put on the calendar for January at the TYR PSS in between prelims and finals one day. The next confirmed in person meeting would be in April at the San Antonio TYR PSS held Wednesday morning before the start of the meet. This would give the Committee the opportunity to meet prior to the Impact Coaches Meeting.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Gemmell adjourned the September 20-21, 2023 meeting of the Steering Committee at 8:56 AM Mountain Time.