



## **Zone Directors' Council Meeting**

*April 21st, 2023 - Notes*

**12:30-1:30 (MT) Denver, Colorado**

*"Serving as a connecting link in the USA Swimming Community to build awareness and trust through shared communication and education."*

**Panelists:** Zach Toothman, Tim Husson, Pam Lowenthal, Jackson Fouras, Gavin Formon, Michael White, Bruno Darzi

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The panel was called to order at 12:38pm MT.

### **1. Welcome**

Tim Husson welcomed the audience, introduced himself, and gave a brief history on how the ZDC was formed and what their role is. Zach Toothman also gave a brief introduction.

### **2. Introduction of ZDC**

The panelists consisted of Bruno Darzi, Pam Lowenthal, Jackson Fouras, Gavin Formon, and Michael White. The panelists each gave a brief introduction, outlining their background and role on the ZDC. Zach then went over how the rest of the time will be structured.

### **3. Sectional Manual Update**

Pam gave an update on the Sectional Manual, which they have been working on for about a year and a half. This manual is a guideline to help facilitate a more consistent sectional meet with new hosts. The plan is to send out this guideline to past and future hosts, as well as coaches to get feedback. Pam hopes this will be seen as a helpful guideline, which does not take autonomy away from the hosts.

### **4. Moderated Questions**

Tim and Zach asked moderated questions to the panelists. Their responses were as follows:

- 1. As a Zone Director, how would you describe your role within the council and the impact of your position with the NGB?*

Jackson: From the athlete perspective, our job on the ZDC is to go back to the grassroots level by talking to LSC reps and making sure they feel their voices are being heard, connecting LSC reps to the Board and AEC, as well as making sure they get the resources they need

Bruno: The role of this position is to bridge the gap between the Zones and USA Swimming, communication is key to breaking down misconceptions and ZDC is here to help facilitate this, while providing support and feedback to LSCs and membership

Tim: Each Zone has different strengths and weaknesses and ZDC hopes to help bring them together, so they can share resources even though they do not have the exact same struggles

- 2. What strategies as a zone director do you plan to implement or already have implemented to help the LSCs communicate their feedback and comments to you and the other directors in your zone?*

Michael: One thing Pam (Lowenthal) did well in the Central Zone was getting the General Chairs and important LSC members to meet regularly and shine light on issues, which has done a good job of getting LSCs to collaborate and communicate regularly. Pam did well in CZ is starting to get general chairs and important LSC members to meet regularly, shine light on issues done good job of getting LSCs to collaborate and communicate regularly

Gavin: One thing the athletes in ZDC have done is the LSC Check-In effort, where all LSC reps have met with a member of ZARC or the AEC, which will help the ZDC to learn what areas of the LSC need support and to help connect them with the correct resources

Bruno: One strategy is to share as much information as they can gather with the Zone Directors so the Southern Zone can share information with their LSCs. His main goal is to help bring change and improve communication with the LSC, as well as implementing improved communication at the Zone level through surveys

Zach: Looking to facilitate projects in discussion and hoping to get LSC opinions to move the discussion towards action

- 3. What can your LSCs do to best engage with the feedback process that the council is looking to strive for?*

Jackson: After running the LSC Check-In, many LSC reps expressed that they had not known how helpful of a resource the ZDC and AEC could be and he would like to see LSC athletes tapping into these resources more to help build a community

Gavin: Athlete or nonathlete, Gavin wants to see the ZZDC providing resources to help LSCs develop their various projects and initiatives

Pam: The Zone Directors are your voices as grass roots members and they are the pipeline between the ZDC and the Board to make sure grass root voices are heard clearly

Bruno: The Southern Zone is trying to improve communication and bridge gaps between the LSCs and leadership to help everybody, so that USA Swimming has better understanding of needs at the local level and the LSCs at the local level are being supported by USA Swimming

Tim: One benefit he has seen in his time on the ZDC is the ability to share ideas across the entirety of USA swimming so one zone can pick up ideas from other zones and everyone can share ideas to make each zone better

## **5. Open Q&A**

Tim and Zach opened the floor for questions from the audience. The questions asked, as well as the respective responses, are below.

*Q: Are there any current initiatives within ZDC?*

Michael: From the ZDC up, there are no major projects, however from the Zone down, there have been improvements in helping with sectional meets and Zone meets, as well as getting collaboration between LSCs

Gavin: The LSC Athlete Check-In responses, we are currently going through the data to see how to better implement resources using this information

Bruno: At the Southern Zone level, they are focusing on supporting the athletes, such as creating an athlete summit at the 2024 trials

*Q: Is the sectional manual released yet?*

Pam: The Sectional Manual has been a work in progress and will be with the Zone Directors by April 30th.

## **6. Closing**

Tim thanked the audience for attending the first ZDC panel, and reminded the audience that the Zone Directors are here as resources and members are always welcome to find directors and ask them questions.

The panel was adjourned at 1:06 pm MT.