



1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO
80909-5780

usaswimming.org

To our community,

The leadership of USA Swimming is aware of letters recently sent by the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA) and the Coach Advisory Council (CAC) to the USA Swimming Board of Directors and hopes to offer insights in response. We admire the immense devotion both groups have to our sport, and we continue to work diligently to ensure that we hear all members' voices and consider constructive criticism. We will not use this response to minimize the passion expressed or what we know is a true desire from ASCA and the CAC to improve our sport. We do, however, want to correct some inaccuracies so we can move forward together from the same set of facts. Below we address directly those comments we believe would benefit from further clarification.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH VS. DECLINE

Membership information is available publicly on the USA Swimming website as part of the annual Demographics Report and in quarterly Board of Directors meeting minutes. Additionally, USA Swimming members have access to multiple live membership reports, including total membership, categorical membership, and retention reports inside the new SWIMS reporting dashboard.

With the 2024 membership year closing this month, USA Swimming is pleased to share that final 2024 membership numbers exceeded 2023 and continue to display upward trends. Athlete membership increased, with substantial growth in premium athlete membership, a key metric for retention.

Traditionally, USA Swimming sees a "membership bump" following an Olympic year. For the past four quads, the traditional "Olympic bump" has been followed by a decline in the following year. This year, for the first time since 2012, we saw an increase in athlete membership growth in a non-post-Olympic year. In addition, coach membership eclipsed 20,000 for the first time since 2019 and for just the second time in history. Membership of our officials hit a post-pandemic high, continuing an upward trajectory and just below all-time highs from 2018. Though membership numbers have not returned to all-time pre-COVID highs, the upward trend, particularly in crucial membership sub-categories, indicates long-term projected growth, not decline. Work remains to return to pre-COVID levels, and we have implemented programs to support new clubs in increasing capacity and others to improve access to the sport. We look forward to continued collaboration with all stakeholders on this critical issue.



THREAT POSED BY AAU

Much like how the success of other countries in international competition only pushes us to be faster, the presence of emerging competitors to USA Swimming should be seen as an opportunity to understand how those offerings appeal to our members. We are listening to club coaches and leaders who offer AAU membership to their athletes, but we continue to point out that our club and coach resources, Safe Sport program, and insurance benefits are unparalleled in our efforts to support, protect, and assist. USA Swimming remains committed to the high standards required for membership in our organization, ensuring always that athlete safety is our top priority.

SWIMS 3.0 ROLL-OUT: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

We are steadfast in our dedication to USA Swimming's multi-year digital transformation. While the rollout and communication of the new SWIMS database disappointed many, migration to a modern technology stack was essential to our continued operations as a National Governing Body. Compliance with the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) was difficult with our legacy technology, and failure to implement an updated database would have vastly jeopardized the organization's standing and long-term sustainability. Updated compliance required an accelerated launch timeline, but the organization has continued to improve features and functionality in response to member feedback, including the addition of bulk registration and renewal via third-party team management software.

The new SWIMS database equipped USA Swimming with vital contact information to better communicate with every member of USA Swimming. This improvement was absolutely critical to our Safe Sport efforts, ensuring USA Swimming can communicate directly with parents of minor athletes.

Since the implementation of direct Online Member Registration, deliverability and open rates of digital communications have doubled. The new data hub also allowed USA Swimming to offer advanced reporting metrics to equip USA Swimming clubs with vital tools to evaluate and guide athlete development and training plans. These tools are available to all USA Swimming clubs and offer a level playing field for their athlete development plans. In addition, the new SWIMS database made possible the recent coach-driven efforts related to officials' education and certification legislation and the introduction of the Provisional Coach membership.

Most importantly, the digital transformation proactively addressed imminent technology failures that, in some instances, would have been mere months away. These failures would have impacted essential member resources like Online Meet Entry and the USA Swimming Times database. As painful as a

transition can be, enterprise technology failures like that experienced by Southwest Airlines in the Fall of 2022 show the dangers of relying on aging legacy technology.

CLUBS DUES INCREASE LEGISLATION

USA Swimming club dues have not increased since at least the 1980s; we simply do not have record keeping prior to 1984 that would suggest there has ever been a club dues increase. USA Swimming values communication and feedback from key constituents, including coaches. Various coaches, including the CEO Roundtable Group, support the club dues increase, and a coach member of the USA Swimming Board of Directors introduced the resolution.

FEEDBACK FROM NON-ATHLETE MEMBERS

In 2021, USA Swimming launched a multi-year approach to solicit direct input from USA Swimming coaches. We distributed the first survey to over 7,000 USA Swimming coaches, with a follow-up survey to the 500 plus coaches whose teams scored points in the Club Excellence Program in 2023. We shared the full results of those surveys publicly in February via direct communication with all USA Swimming clubs and in the monthly Coaching Connection newsletter. We will send another coach survey to every coach member of USA Swimming this Fall, followed by annual surveys in the future to additional constituent groups to solicit feedback and improve.

USA SWIMMING UNIVERSITY SUCCESS

Similarly, every USA Swimming course offered in USA Swimming University, our centralized hub for education, includes an opportunity for feedback upon completion of each course module. We use Net Promoter Scores (NPS) allowing us to continually monitor the quality of the courses and ensure they meet the expectations of coaches, officials, and volunteers. For those not familiar, the NPS is an extremely common method of measurement for customer satisfaction. The scoring spread is as follows:



The overall NPS for all USA Swimming University courses is 44, with Officials courses scoring a 63.5 and Legacy Coach program courses scoring a 71. We are encouraged by these “great” to “excellent” NPS ratings, and we continue to find ways to improve.

Over 300 coaches were involved in the development of the coach education program and veteran officials have been key contributors in creating their new curriculum. USA Swimming continues to solicit feedback from membership groups such as committees, LSC leaders, attendees to the USA Swimming Workshop presented by LiveBarn and Annual Business Meeting, and various member groups.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE SUCCESS & SELECTION PROCEDURES

USA Swimming prides itself on a record of international success unmatched in sport. Despite increased competition and the evolution of global athletes, USA Swimming staff presented, and the Board approved, three performance KPIs ahead of the 2024 Olympic Games.

1. Win the gold medal count
2. Win the overall medal count
3. Achieve the overall medal goal set by the USOPC in its high-performance plan

We congratulate our athletes and coaches for delivering on all three organizational goals!

The coaching staff supporting our incredible athletes were critical to that success and were selected using public selection criteria. USA Swimming posts selection procedures on its website under a dedicated Selections Procedures resource hub on the National Team homepage. USA Swimming drafts Olympic Coach selection procedures, which are reviewed and approved by the CEO and the USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC) Chair. For the Olympic Games, the USOPC must approve the selection procedures and all selection recommendations.

Additional staff selections are determined through a combination of objective and subjective criteria. For example, the Assistant Coach appointments for the 2024 Olympic Games were made by a committee of six, including the 2024 Olympic Head Coaches, USA Swimming's National Team Managing Director and Performance Director, and two elite athlete representatives, in this case, the AAC Chair and AAC Vice Chair (or their designees). To continually evolve and improve, the National Team Steering Committee and the AAC have discussed potential selection procedure updates, as evidenced by committee meeting minutes on our website.

STAFF DEPARTURES & REPLACEMENTS

At the Q1 Board meeting each year, the CEO must present key or material personnel decisions in an open session. The Board approves this report at that meeting, during which any discussion or questions are welcome. Following the meeting and approval of the report by the Board, the report is available publicly as part of the Board Meeting Minutes on USA Swimming's website.

In conclusion, we at USA Swimming take seriously the concerns of our members and know that healthy debate and discourse is a byproduct of the incredible passion so many have for our sport. The staff of USA Swimming is heavily invested in the satisfaction of our athletes and non-athlete members, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the advancement of the sport we all love.

We are excited to welcome over 500 of our members from our LSCs, the USA Swimming House of Delegates, USA Swimming national committees, coaches, athlete representatives, officials, and the USA Swimming and USA Swimming Foundation Boards of Directors to our 3rd annual USA Swimming Workshop presented by LiveBarn and Annual Business Meeting next month to celebrate our sport and engage in meaningful discourse focused on growing our sport and starting the countdown to LA'28!