

USMS Convention — Virtual Zoom Meeting 2020

Committee Name:	South Central Zone Committee	Session #:	1
Committee Chair:	Nicole Christensen	Vice Chair:	
Minutes recorded by:	Karlene Denby	Date/time of meeting:	9/10/2020

Actions Requiring Approval by the HOD:

Motions Passed:

Number of committee members present:	Absent:	Number of other delegates present:
Committee members present (list all, including chair and vice chair): Nicole Christenson (chair), Kris Wingenroth, Diana Triana, Stacy Eicks, Kirsten Hoffman, Mark Hahn, Herb Schwab, Tom Boak, Ed Coates, Susan Ingraham, Richard Garza, Brian Albright, Scott Haliburton, Susan Hengstenberg, Tim Murphy, Steve Nichols, Steve Unruh, Kendal Jacobson, Stacy Abrams, Shannon Whitehead, Carie O'Banion, Don Mehl, Byron Shefchik, and Sandy Thatcher,		
Guests: Karlene Denby (Gulf LMSC) taking minutes, Daniel Paulling (National Office), Peter Guadagni (USMS President)		
Committee Members Absent:		

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Nicole Christensen (Chair) welcomed all of the meeting participants. Nicole said her overarching priorities for the Zone are maintaining strong communication and assisting one another through an exchange of ideas. This is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roll call was taken, with all participants introducing themselves.
2. **South Central Zone At-Large Director Endorsements:** The South Central Zone has two candidates running as At-Large Directors. They are Diana Triana (South Texas LMSC) and Kris Wingenroth (Gulf LMSC). A vote was taken to endorse one or both candidates for the position. Both Diana and Kris received majority votes of endorsement from the voting delegates.
3. **Discussion of Virtual Zone Championship Meets:** Both the 2020 SCY and LCM Zone Championships were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the present time, it is uncertain if the 2021 Zone Championship meets will be held. A discussion ensued on the level of interest in holding virtual Zone Championship meets if in-person events cannot occur. Those who had participated in the recently completed virtual USMS National Championship event offered their opinions and insights regarding the virtual event. While all agreed that virtual events are not ideal, there was consensus that a virtual event is far better than no event at all, and provides the membership with a goal to work towards and an event to look forward to. It was agreed that planning should begin for offering a virtual SCY Zone Championship meet in the spring. Susan Ingraham suggested that the virtual format should allow swims to be completed over a longer period of time, because limited pool time restricts the number of events that swimmers can complete during each swim session.
4. **Bids on In-Person Short Course and Long Course Meets:** There was agreement that it would be irresponsible to consider hosting in-person meets at the present time, in view of the current status of COVID-19. Byron Shefchik shared information about a Canadian Masters team that is holding virtual dual meets with other Masters teams in Canada and other nations. This is an option that teams and LMSCs may want to consider. Steve Nichols shared that plans are going forward for holding Spring Nationals in Greensboro, NC (April 29-May 2) and Summer Nationals in Geneva, Ohio (August 5-8).
5. **USMS Club Assistance Program:** Each LMSC shared the status of the assistance program in their region. Byron Shefchik (Arkansas LMSC): Only a handful of Arkansas teams and members qualify. One application has been submitted and there is one other possible application forthcoming. Kris Wingenroth (Gulf LMSC): Gulf LMSC has received two applications and

issued two grants; (1) a club grant and, (2) payment of an individual swimmer's club dues for five months. Payment was made directly to the club, not to the individual swimmer. Richard Garza (North Texas LMSC): The LMSC has publicized the grants via emails and on their website, but has received no applications to date. Kirsten Hoffman (Oklahoma LMSC): The LMSC has publicized the grants, but has received no applications to date. Ed Coates (South Texas LMSC): South Texas LMSC has received two applications, both of which have been approved. Additional outreach to the clubs and members is planned in South Texas.

6. **USMS Virtual National Championships:** Approximately 50% of the meeting participants entered the virtual championship. Opinions were mixed about the format. Some found it difficult to garner excitement about a virtual event in which the times do not count and the social aspect of competition was missing. Others said that the chatter, challenges, and "trash talk" on social media made the event more fun. It was asked if the times would count for rankings, top ten, and records. Due to stringent USMS rules regarding officiating, pool measurement, and a host of other factors, no virtual swims can be verified. Daniel Paulling was asked whether it was possible to find out the event participation for each LMSC. Daniel said that the National Office did not delve into a detailed analysis that would yield this information. Most agreed that the virtual event allowed swimmers to work towards a target goal and was better than no event at all.
7. **LMSC Membership:** Ed Coates (South Texas LMSC): The registration level was similar to 2019 prior to the COVID shutdown. New registrations have tracked closely to the reopening of programs. A 5-10% decrease in registration is anticipated at year end. Richard Garza (North Texas LMSC): Registration was running ahead of 2019 prior to the shutdown. New registrations have tracked closely to the reopening of programs. 2020 registration is anticipated to be about 50 fewer members when compared to 2019. Kris Wingenroth (Gulf LMSC): Registration was running slightly behind 2019 prior to the shutdown. Like other LMSCs, registration has ramped up as programs reopen and members take advantage of the 2020/2021 year-plus registration for \$60. The big concern is what happens to registration and the resulting revenue in 2021. Kirsten Hoffman (Oklahoma LMSC): The state of Oklahoma was one of the first to reopen, so there was very little impact on registration. The LMSC has about the same number of female members and is down slightly on male members. Scott Halliburton (Arkansas LMSC): Registration is about the same as 2019. The state had a shutdown period of about two months. The LMSC has three new clubs. In summary, the South Central Zone is doing relatively well with membership during the pandemic.
8. **Zone Website:** Nicole reported that domain names have been purchased and the new zone website is up and running. A visual tour of the website was provided to the meeting participants. Eventually bid packets for Zone Championship meets will be added to the website. Don Mehl noted that the map of the West Texas LMSC on the website is incorrect and that the LMSC goes further up in the panhandle toward Amarillo. Steve Nichols thought the new website looks great. He would personally like to see more information from adjacent LMSCs, especially meet information, added. Nicole plans to send an email to LMSC chairs for input on best practices to share on the site.
9. **Considerations and Challenges for In-Person Meets:** Nicole Christensen: A major difficulty lies in securing facilities for meets, as most educational facilities are not ready to hold events. While a facility may be open to lap and fitness swimmers, it may not be available to outsiders to rent for large gatherings. When swim meets occur again, facility rentals were already getting more and more expensive, and COVID may have a negative impact on both the availability and cost of renting facilities. Kristen Hoffman: There are age-group dual meets being held. Officials are masked, and swimmers swim down 25 yards and exit from the opposite end to limit the number of people in the starting area. Ideas from other sports may provide guidance on how to hold events. Susan Ingraham: The facility director for NEISD is open to holding a Masters meet as he feels that adults are more likely to observe proper facemask and social distancing practices. Any meet would most likely be limited to South Texas LMSC swimmers, due to concerns about out-of-area competitors coming from COVID hot spots. Ed Coates: The USMS National Office recommends no sanctioning of indoor events through the end of September, and will update their recommendation on a regular basis. Steve Nichols: Zone Championship meet venues should be a good quality, fast pool. But they do not necessarily need to be a world-class facility like UT or TXAM. Steve also said that Zone Championship meets need to extend the ambience of the event beyond the pool. Nicole will be asking each LMSC for a list of suitable facilities within their region at which events, including Zone Championship events, can be held. Don Mehl: On a non-competitive note, Don shared how the swimmers in the West Texas LMSC were renting a water park and wave pool to conduct swims and thought this might be an option that others may wish to explore during the pandemic.
10. Stacey Eicks expressed thanks to Nicole for the organization and quality of the Zone meeting, especially in consideration of the challenges of the Zoom meeting format.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.