



North Dakota Swimming
Athlete Representative and Athletes Executive Committee
Reference Guide

Last Edited: March 2024

****Athlete Reps should edit each year with any changes/additions****

North Dakota Swimming Overview

North Dakota Swimming is an LSC (Local Swimming Community) that consists of approximately 700 athletes and 15 teams in North Dakota and surrounding cities.

These clubs and their locations are as follows:

NAME	CLUB CODE	LOCATION
Aquastorm	AQST	Bismarck, ND
Breckenridge Wahpeton Bolts	BWST	Wahpeton, ND
Center Barracudas	CBSC	Center, ND
Dickinson Dolphins	DDST	Dickinson, ND
Fargo Moorhead Gators	FMY	Fargo, ND
Jamestown Jaws	JAWS	Jamestown, ND
Mandan Marlins	MMSC	Mandan, ND
Minot Swim Club	MSC	Minot, ND
Northern Lights	NLSA	Moorhead, MN
Prairie Rose Aquatics	PRO	Jamestown, ND
Red River Valley Wahoos	RRV	Grand Forks, ND
Valley City Sharks	VCST	Valley City, ND
Watford City Seawolves	WCST	Watford City, ND
West Fargo Flyers	WFF	West Fargo, ND
Williston Sea Lions	WSL	Williston, ND

Mission: Providing opportunities for athletes to achieve lifelong success through swimming

Vision: Swim Now - Lead Forever

North Dakota Swimming Board of Directors

<https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/czndslsc/page/lsc-info/board-members> (all board members are listed including email addresses)

Important Roles to Know:

1. General Chair: Oversee and have general charge of management, business, operations, affairs, and property of NDS, Runs and organizes board meetings
2. Admin Vice Chair: Conducts meetings in absence of GC; per request, shall perform all duties of GC; aids in development of policy and coordination of activities of officers and committees; chair of Calendar Committee, (Often works closely with Board athlete reps)
3. Registrar: Oversees meet management, athlete registration and eligibility
4. Finance Vice Chair: Oversees the financial distribution of money to NDS committees and staff, proposes annual budget to BoD and then HoD
5. Secretary: Keeps record of all meetings of House of Delegates and Board, conducts official correspondence, issues meeting and other notices (consent agenda reports)
6. Age Group Chair

By-Laws:

North Dakota Swimming's rules, regulations, and policies are included in the bylaws to ensure the organization runs in an organized fashion and follows fair guidelines.

Athlete Reps **do NOT need to know the document inside and out**, but it is helpful to glance over the athlete section and basic Board of Director procedures to understand the flow of Board meetings and to ensure the Athlete Reps are following policy.

Policies Manual:

An important document with policies and procedures on a wide range of things. Don't necessarily need to read the whole thing but skimming or being familiar is helpful; it can answer a lot of potential questions. It is also recommended to check for any conflicting policies before recommending a change or beginning a new initiative. The HOD approves policy changes bi-annually each year.

Chair Reports:

Each committee (including the Athlete Committee) needs to submit a consent agenda report the weekend prior to a Board meeting. The reports are sent out (ideally) a few days before the Board meeting - the hope is everyone will read them before the meeting so the Board only asks clarifying questions instead of going through the activities of each and every committee.

What to Include:

1. Thoughts from non-board athletes during annual athlete committee meeting (occurs twice a year during state meets) on what needs to be improved from the athlete perspective.

2. Project Overview & Plans
3. Thoughts &/or Questions

Shorter is better! Bullet points, quick thoughts, etc.

If nothing new has happened, Athlete Reps can also let the secretary know that the Athletes will not be sending in a report.

Voting:

A quorum (a majority of the voting members) must be formed before starting a Board Meeting.

Each Board Member has **both voice and vote** in meetings of the Board and its committees. Double votes (ie. if a Board member holds more than one position) is prohibited.

All motions, orders, and propositions presented need to pass by a **majority vote**.

House of Delegates:

North Dakota Swimming hosts an annual House of Delegates meeting. **Each board member is required to submit a report summarizing the year and what they have accomplished.** This is also the meeting where the budget for the next fiscal year is passed. While all meetings are open to the public, this meeting is typically when more of the NDS community listens in.

Each club receives one vote as a “Group Member Representative”; other votes are given to Board members and HoD members appointed by the General Chair. Each club also gets one athlete vote; this athlete must be 16 years of age or older.

Examples of previous Athlete House of Delegate are on the North Dakota Swimming site.

Approval of Budget Items/Projects:

In the past, NDS has struggled to clarify for athletes what actions need approval from the General Chair, Admin Vice Chair, and/or Board of Directors before proceeding. The athletes will work with the General Chair to create and implement the yearly budget.

Emails and Safe Sport:

It is required by USA Swimming MAAPP 2.0 guidelines that all communication between an athlete (or athletes) and an adult must include at least two adults. When emailing or meeting with an adult, please remember to always include another adult such as your parent, coach, or a member of the LSC office staff. Make sure you **always include a second adult** when in communication with the Board to follow all MAAPP and [Safe Sport guidelines](#).

North Dakota Swimming Committees

In addition to the Board of Directors, New England Swimming Governance is made up of numerous committees. **Athlete Reps are expected to participate on a few committees.** Athlete Reps should notify the Board/Committee Chairs of what committees they wish to participate in.

20% of the Board, committees, and task forces must contain athletes (NOT limited to just Athlete Reps). AEC Members should consider participating on these committees.

Committees:

- Age Group Committee – oversees all aspects of Age Group swimming; includes meet management and time standards, LSC Champ meet progression; creates opportunities that foster age group development, including camps/clinics, and manages LCM Zones and any All-Star team events
- Coach's Committee – liaison between the coaches who are members of NDS and the Board and House of Delegates
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee – voice for NDS underrepresented populations and is responsible for creating and implementing programs that create bridges of understanding between ethnic groups and that raise cultural awareness within swimming
- Executive Committee - Athlete Reps are automatically on this committee; used for emergency meetings and votes
- Finance Committee – general charge of affairs and property of NDS; prepares annual budget for NDS operations and presents for approval of Board and House of Delegates
- Governance Committee – Responsible for bylaws, policies, and procedures of NDS meetings and solving issues between disagreeing parties
- Officials Committee – further the sport of competitive swimming by providing the highest quality of officiating needed for fair competition; oversees all training clinics, certification, and tracking of NDS Officials
- Safe Sport Committee – responsible for the implementation and coordination of the Safe Sport Program established by USA-S
- Senior Committee – falls under the responsibility of Development and Performance; responsible for creating opportunities in the LSC for senior level athletes; oversees decisions on camps/clinics, meet evaluation, Senior meet formats, awards, travel fund policy, and time standards
- Technical Committee – responsible for long-range planning regarding the swimming programs conducted by NDS, continuing the review and development of NDS philosophy, and for advising other committees and divisions

Central Zone Information and Expectations

Central Zone Participation:

North Dakota Swimming is part of the Central Zone. The Central Zone is one of four zones that make up USA-Swimming.

CZ Athlete Committee:

As Athlete Reps, you are automatically added as a member of the Central Zone Athlete Committee. Meetings are typically sporadic, with many of the meetings falling close to the Annual Business Meeting or Zone Workshops (more on that in the pages to follow). It is a good way to hear about what other LSCs are doing, ideas of what we can implement in NDS, and what is happening nationally! All meetings are **highly recommended**, though some will be **mandatory**.

Once elected, please join GroupMe! This is the way Zach and Savannah communicate brief messages about opportunities and meetings to athletes.

- **Previous CZS Athlete Reps should add you to GroupMe**

The CZ has its own set of committees as well. Zach and Savannah will send out texts when athlete spots are open for respective committees. Join GroupMe to stay up to date!

CZ Committees:

- Technical
- Age Group
- DEI
- Officials
- Safesport

CZ Athlete Rep Contacts:

Athlete Committee Email: centralzoneathletes@gmail.com

Athlete Director: Zach Toothman (LE) – ztooth21@gmail.com

Junior Athlete Representative: Savannah Gurley (MI) – savannah.gurley@miswim.org

National Information and Committees

National and/or the ND Athlete Committee should send a link for incoming Athlete Reps to provide their contact information so they can be included in future event information. This is important for the events listed below, so **make sure you track down this link** if the previous NDS Athlete Reps do not forward it to you!

USA-Swimming hosts an Annual Business Meeting each September. In the past (pre-COVID), it was a full, in-person weekend, but it has since changed. The week consists of athlete meetings (mandatory) and committee/legislature meetings (optional), and it ends with the ABM. The ABM is long (~4 hours), but it gathers all those who attend convention to provide USA-S updates, pass legislation, and debate.

This week of events is MANDATORY for ALL Athlete Representatives. Not all meetings are mandatory, but the Athlete Meetings and ABM are required of all Athlete Reps. The USA-S AEC will communicate what is/isn't mandatory through email.

Important Notes:

- Convention requires all participants to register in advance. This is the only way that you will be able to participate in meetings and the ABM
- Grassroot Athletes (LSC Athlete Reps) have lost their vote at national convention (effective Sept. 2021)
- Each year, the CZ will delegate certain "extra" athlete votes to actively engaged athlete committee members – normally requires a very short application/statement
- If you receive a vote for the ABM, you must attend ALL the mandatory sessions in order to maintain your vote
- **The USA-S Athletes Executive Committee sends out a "survival guide" filled with links and instructions to help guide you through the weekend.** This is what dictates what is/isn't mandatory. This should be sent to your email.
- Utilize GroupMe throughout the weekend - especially at the ABM, the CZ GroupMe is active with the Athlete Coordinators answering questions and explaining what is being debated/voted on. If you are given a vote, you will also be added to a USA-S AEC GroupMe to understand the flow of the ABM and what is being voted on when.

USA-Swimming National Committees:

Every year, there are athlete spots available on National Committees. Typically, the committees look for actively engaged athletes who have held leadership positions for at least one year. A lengthy application process is required.

All Athlete Representatives should be added to an email list for the USA-S AEC. Open positions will be communicated through emails. If you are unsure if you are on this list, or need to be added, reach out to your CZ Athlete Coordinators.

Junior/Senior/At-Large Athlete Representative Descriptions

The role of an Athlete Representative is simple: **use your voice to advocate for the needs and wants of the NDS Athletes.**

Expectations:

1. Attend ALL Board Meetings (extenuating circumstances excluded)
2. **Actively** participate in Board Meetings - offer the athlete perspective, challenge beliefs if you do not agree, push the Board in a direction that benefits the athletes
3. Lead the NDS Athletes Executive Committee
4. Consistently brainstorm and implement athlete-driven and athlete-focused projects
5. Join other committees
6. Respond to emails in a timely manner

Mandatory Requirements:

- Board of Director Meetings
- House of Delegates Meeting
- USA-Swimming Annual Business Meeting and USA-Swimming Athlete Meetings

Board of Directors Athlete Point-Person:

The Board of Directors has determined that the **General Chair (Brian Toay, WFF) is the adult point-person for the Athlete Reps.** Athletes should direct questions to him, and use him/her as a resource. If there is any conflict or miscommunications, the General Chair will step in.

Previous Athlete Reps' Contacts:

Previous Athlete Reps want to help you succeed, so please reach out to any of them along the way if any questions or concerns arise. They are a great resource with a lot of experience, so please take advantage of any help they can provide!

- ☐ Megan Schill – meganschill01@gmail.com – (701) 213-9754
- ☐ Lauren McDonagh – laurenkm07@gmail.com – (701) 630-0963
- ☐ Logan Bjerke – Logan.Bjerke123@gmail.com – (701) 620-1317
- ☐ Addison Cerney – addiecerney@gmail.com – (701) 566-2546
- ☐ Sienna Mrachek — siennamrachek@icloud.com — (701) 226-9653

Roles and Responsibilities

Junior Athlete Representative:

The Junior Athlete Rep role is the first of a two year responsibility. The first few months should be used as an adjustment period to learn how the Board and its committees operate. Once adjusted, the Junior, Senior, and At-Large Athlete Reps should work collaboratively to lead the AEC, plan projects, and advocate for the athletes.

Senior Athlete Representative:

The Senior Athlete Rep will assist the incoming Junior Athlete Representative in their transition to the Board of Directors. The Senior Athlete Rep should feel comfortable leading projects and using their voice at Board meetings. The Senior Athlete Rep will often be called on to make recommendations to the General Chair and/or Board. Additionally, they should lead the Junior Athlete Representative application process in the spring.

At-Large Athlete Representative:

Though not specifically outlined in the job descriptions, the At-Large Athlete Representative should **act as equals to both the Junior and Senior Athlete Reps**. The At-Large Athlete Rep has the same roles and responsibilities, just a different title! The At-Large Athlete Representative should be vocal at meetings and participate in organizing meetings and events.

Note: The **At-Large Athlete Representative is nominated at the same time** as the Junior Athlete Representative.

Recommendation: Start transitioning **in the spring** in order to fully understand the ropes before the next BOD and HOD meeting.

**** Previous Athlete Rep Advice: Use each other and work together as much as possible;** this lessens the workload and makes this role less stressful.

NDS Athlete Accounts

Instagram:

- Username: northdakotaswimming // Password: Lead4ever

Social Media:

Our northdakotaswimming Instagram account is used frequently to highlight accomplishments, spread news, and publicize events. Avoid posts that portray opinions or contribute to controversial topics. Stick to celebrating accomplishments and events, publicize new opportunities, and display leaders in the LSC.

Athletes might try to get in contact with Athlete Reps through an Instagram DM; turn notifications on so you don't miss anything by accident!

Below is a list of what Athlete Reps have posted about in the past. **Canva is great for creating posts.**

- Records
- Championship Meets
- College Commitments
- Athlete Newsletter
- Events (Leadership Summit, College Recruitment Discussion, etc.)
- National Camps (Select Camp and DEI)
- Water Safety Days
- National Meets
- Starts and Turns Clinics
- NDS Board Statements

When a new AEC is created, utilize Instagram takeovers to introduce the committee to the public.

Annual Junior Athlete Rep and Members At-Large Elections

Note: The **Junior Athlete Rep and Members At-Large** must be elected at the Short Course State Championship Meet and reported to the Board **at least one week prior to the House of Delegates meeting**. Ideally, these elections should be done before the House of Delegates, too, but it's not necessary.

Make Instagram post announcing new Athlete Rep, congratulate those who ran, and encourage all to run for the AEC

Expectations:

First and foremost, we are all student-athletes! Life happens, and it's okay. Please just communicate with the Athlete Reps as much as possible when stuff comes up.

1. AEC Members are expected to make all the meetings that they can. If members have a meet, family event, etc., it's okay to miss a meeting, but please review the posted minutes and touch base with the Athlete Reps about what you missed.
2. If you can't make a meeting, please text an Athlete Rep to let them know!
3. If something is declared mandatory (meetings, assignments, etc.), it must be done/attended. Very few things are mandatory, but sometimes we need to communicate important info!

Communication:

The Athlete Reps communicate with the AEC through GroupME Make sure you download the app and **turn notifications on**. Make a new group chat every year to avoid any confusion.

Meetings:

The Senior and Junior Athlete Reps lead all AEC meetings with the help of the At-Large Athlete Rep and happen during every Long Course and Short Course State Championship Meet.

AEC Goals:

The Athlete Reps has come up with a list of future ideas that our LSC lacks at this time. Here is a list of things that can be implemented!

Improve On:

- Expand social media platform
- Need bigger DEI platform
- **Consistent AEC** (monthly, after Board meetings?) – meetings geared toward issues in the LSC and Board of Directors (problem-solving, discussion based)
- **Spreading information about what the different athlete roles are in NDS (i.e. Athlete Rep, AEC, committee members, etc.) and how to get involved** – need to find better way to make this information available to swimmers, especially as the application season rolls around; need to recruit more kids (especially those in leadership roles)
- More engagement with swimmers socially and in an organized setting