

Virginia Swimming Athletes in Governance Handbook

v. August 30, 2023

Getting involved as an athlete in the world of governance is truly an amazing, eye-opening experience. As an athlete, you learn the importance of your voice in the sport and are able to advocate for changes that you want to see in the sport. Specifically, being an athlete in governance has allowed me to learn many important skills in leadership, but also has allowed me to make many connections with other athletes and with those who work behind the scenes to make Virginia Swimming and USA Swimming functional. Any athlete who gets the chance to get involved with governance at this level should take advantage of the amazing opportunity.

Allison Dodd (QSTS; Athlete Representative, 2021-23)

Being given the opportunity to have a voice in the leadership of Virginia Swimming is not only very powerful but also incredibly rewarding. It gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on behalf of so many athletes to make changes that will better Virginia Swimming. It is clear that you are making a difference and have a greater understanding of what it takes to run an LSC.

Louisa Lamerdin (757; Athlete At-Large, 2022-24)

I served on the Board of Directors, starting as an at-large member of the Athletes Committee in the 2018-19 season; then as the Junior Athlete Representative in the 2019-20 season; and lastly, as the Senior Athlete Representative in the 2020-21 season. I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with Virginia Swimming. I met some of the most incredible people in the sport, and I even got to travel to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO, in 2019 for a 3-day leadership summit. I got to meet all the other athlete representatives from across the country and even got to meet Rio Olympian Maya Dirado. My trip to the OTC inspired me to continue serving as a voice for the athletes, and it helped me understand and value the importance of governance and advocacy. I encourage all athletes with an interest in leadership to get involved in governance and ensure the changes they want to see in their sport.

Jack McCann (NOVA; Athlete Representative, 2019-21)

The governing body of Virginia swimming is one of the most welcoming groups of people I have ever come across. All of us sharing our unwavering dedication and love for the sport of swimming and trying to better it for all of those around us in the Virginia Swimming LSC. Not only will you get to see faces you would normally only see on the pool deck, but also get to make impactful decisions about how Virginia Swimming can be more successful.

Brody Salpeter (TIDE; Age Group Committee, 2021-2023)

When I applied to be the representative for the VSI, I honestly didn't think I would be voted in, but I am so glad that I was. Being a part of the board was an experience from all the new people I met to actually learning what goes on in the meetings to make crucial decisions regarding everything to do with swimming. One of the biggest things that I did while being a representative was I got to go to the USAS convention (United States Aquatic Sports). There I got to meet other representatives from all around the country and be a part of big decisions. I remember I actually got to vote on the rule about 12 and under not being able to wear knee skins and that was such a surreal moment for me. One thing that being a representative helped me with is my public speaking. I was deathly afraid of it and was on the verge of panic attacks every time I had to do it, but being the representative I was always in the position that I had to do it. An example of this was when I presented the awards at the annual VSI banquet. It was a scary but great time that helped me with my fear of public speaking and made me more confident. Having a say in important decisions and being the voice of all of the athletes in the Virginia LSC was an honor and experience I think more people would enjoy being a part of.

Maddie Wallin (NOVA; Athlete Representative, 2018-20)

Being a part of the governing body of Virginia Swimming is an incredible and unique experience. It's fun to get to know people from other teams that you might otherwise not have an opportunity to meet. It's also an amazing opportunity to gather with those in our state who share the same passion for the sport of swimming!

Addi Wood (TIDE; Senior Committee, 2021-2023)

Table of Contents

Table of Contents
A Top-to-Bottom Overview of the Organizations Involved in Swim Competition
World Aquatics
United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee 4
USA Swimming4
Eastern Zone
Virginia Swimming5
Individual Swim Clubs
Other Swim Organizations6
The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act Requires Athlete Participation in the Governance of Their Sports
Opportunities for Athlete Participation in the Governance Structure of Swimming
Overview9
Virginia Swimming
Eastern Zone 11
USA Swimming and the USOPC12
VSI Governance Structure
VSI Board of Directors
VSI House of Delegates14
Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, Coordinators, and Staff Contact Information

-- Virginia Swimming --

Mission: Virginia Swimming creates opportunities that promote sportsmanship and develop excellence through competitive swimming

Vision: To develop self-confident athletes with a life-long passion for swimming and strong life skills

Values: Athlete focused, excellence, inclusion, integrity

A Top-to-Bottom Overview of the Organizations Involved in Swim Competition

World Aquatics

In December 2022, World Aquatics replaced the Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA; International Federation of Swimming) as the international governing body for aquatic sports, including swimming. This change represents both a rebranding and modernization of the organization. World Aquatics runs international competition such as the Olympics and World Championships. It also sets the rules and regulations for aquatic sports at the international level. When World Aquatics changes its technical rules for swimming, USA Swimming updates its technical rules so that they are harmonized with the World Aquatics rules.

United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

The purpose of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) is to coordinate and develop amateur athletic activity in United States including participation in the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Pan-American Games, and Parapan American Games. The USOPC certifies National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for each sport contested in the aforementioned games. The NGBs for aquatic sports include USA Artistic Swimming, USA Diving, USA Swimming, USA Water Polo, and U.S. Masters Swimming. Collectively, these NGBs are represented at the international level to World Aquatics by United States Aquatic Sports, as World Aquatics recognizes only a single sports federation from each country.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming, the NGB for the sport of swimming in the United States, is responsible for the selection and training of athletes for international competition including the Olympic Games, the Pan-American Games, and the World Championships. USA Swimming is subdivided geographically into 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSCs), one of which is Virginia Swimming. Within their respective geographical territory, each LSC has jurisdiction over the sport of swimming as delegated by USA Swimming to sanction, approve, observe, oversee, and conduct competitive swimming events with the LSC's boundaries. Individual LSCs also formulate rules, establish policies and procedures, conduct swim meets and other programs, and disseminate information to their membership.



Eastern Zone

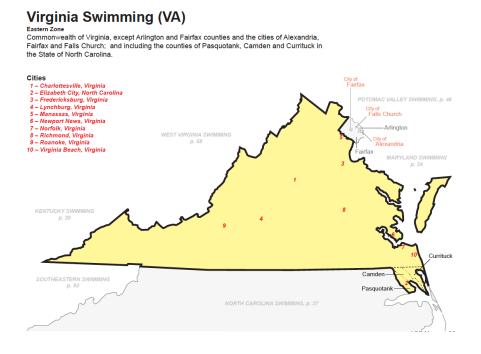
USA Swimming is subdivided geographically into 4 Zones (Central Zone, Eastern Zone, Southern Zone, and Western Zone). Each Zone represents the interest of the LSCs located within the Zone, with each Zone containing between12 and 17 LSCs. The Virginia Swimming LSC is located within the Eastern Zone. Each Zone conducts Zone-level (eg, Age-Group Championships, Senior Championships) and Sectional-level championships (eg, Speedo Championships).

Virginia Swimming is located in the Eastern Zone. Other LSCs located in the Eastern Zone include Adirondack, Allegheny Mountain, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Metropolitan, Middle Atlantic New England, New Jersey, Niagara, and Potomac Valley.

Virginia Swimming

The geographic territory of Virginia Swimming includes the Commonwealth of Virginia (excluding the counties of Arlington and Fairfax and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church) and the counties Camden, Currituck, and Pasquotank, which are located in the state of North Carolina. By agreement with North Carolina Swimming, the OBX team in Dare County, North Carolina, is also included in Virginia Swimming. For the purposes of organizing

competition, Virginia Swimming is subdivided geographically into 4 districts: Central District, Northern District, Southeastern District, and Southwestern Districted.



Individual Swim Clubs

Swimmers participate in USA Swimming as members of individual swim clubs, which may range in size from a couple of dozen swimmers to more than 700 swimmers. Depending on where a swimmer lives within the Virginia Swimming LSC, the swimmer may have ready access to only a single club or the swimmer may have access to multiple clubs.

As of January 2023, the membership of Virginia Swimming included 43 clubs, 6,225 athletes, 845 non-athletes (coaches and officials), and 62 administrators.

Other Swim Organizations

In the United States, the path to the Olympics is through USA Swimming, which includes Virginia Swimming as one of its components. USA Swimming is not the only organization that offers swimmers opportunities for practice and competition. Summer league, high school, college, and the YMCA are all separate organizations that are not part of USA Swimming, but which offer additional opportunities for organized practices and competition.

Among the other associations are the following:

• Summer Leagues: Summer league swimming is often the first introduction a swimmer has to organized competition. Summer leagues may set their own technical rules for swimming, but they often use, and sometimes with modification, USA Swimming rules or high school rules.

- High School Swimming: The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) is the governing body for high school swimming. High schools use the NFHS rulebook for swimming. While the high school technical rules are very similar to those of USAA Swimming, there are some minor differences. In Virginia, high school swimming is organized through one of two organizations:
 - Virginia High School League (VHSL) governs competition for public schools
 - Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) governs competition for private school members
- *College Swimming:* The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the governing body for college swimming. Although colleges use the NCAA rulebook for swimming, their technical rules conform to those of USA Swimming.
- YMCA Swimming: The YMCA uses the USA Swimming rulebook. While YMCA teams often participate in only YMCA competition, some YMCA clubs are also dual USA Swimming clubs and also participate in USA Swimming competition.

There are also organizations that, while they don't have organized clubs, offer championshiplevel events in which USA Swimming clubs often participate:

- Amateur Athletic Union (AAU): The AAU was the precursor to USA Swimming. Although it is no longer the NGB for swimming, it still conducts a limited number of championship meets in which USA Swimming member clubs can compete.
- International Swim Coaches Association (ISCA): ISCA offers a variety of championship meets throughout the United States.
- *National Club Swimming Association (NCSA):* NCSA offers a variety of championship meets throughout the United States.

The *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act* Requires Athlete Participation in the Governance of Their Sports

The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) was founded in 1888 to regulate amateur athletics in the United States and represent the country with international sports federations. The AAU worked with the United States Olympic Committee (now the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee; USOPC) to prepare and select athletes to compete in the Summer and Winter Olympics. During the 1970s, the AAU was increasingly seen as being out of touch with the changing environment of amateur athletics. The AAU still barred women from many athletic competitions and the concept of athletes competing only as amateurs was fading away as the need for financial support beyond collegiate competition began to take hold. Moreover, athletes wanted increasingly to have a say in how their sports were run. In response to criticism of the AAU, the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act* (36 USC Sec 2205; the "Act") was adopted as a national law in 1978, and it has been amended several times, most recently in 2020.

The Act defines the purpose of the USOPC, which broadly involves coordinating and developing amateur athletic activity in United States including participation in the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Pan-American Games, and Parapan American Games. The USOPC certifies National Governing Bodies (NGB) for each sport contested in the aforementioned games. USA Swimming is the NGB for the sport of swimming in the United States. Swimming is not the only aquatic sport recognized by the USOPC. Additional certified NGBs for aquatic sports include USA Artistic Swimming, USA Diving, USA Water Polo, and U.S. Masters Swimming. Collectively, these NGBs are represented at the international level to World Aquatics by United States Aquatic Sports, as World Aquatics recognizes only a single sports federation from each country.

Moving away from how the AAU governed amateur athletics, the Act requires the active participation of athletes in the governance of the USOPC. The bylaws of the USPOC incorporate the athlete representation requirements specified by the Act, both with respect to the required USPOC Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC) and the required athlete representation on the USPOC Board.

The Act requires the USOPC to have an AAC that is composed of, and is elected by, amateur athletes who serve as a source of amateur athlete opinion and advice with respect to policies and proposed policies of the USOPC. The USOPC AAC consists of at least one athlete from each NGB, 8 athletes representing the Paralympic Sport Organizations or NGBs designated to govern a Paralympic sport, and 6 athletes elected by the AAC to serve at-large, including a chair and 2 vice chairs. For USA Swimming, Anthony Ervin currently serves as the athlete representative and Ashley Twitchell serves as the alternate athlete representative. The AAC also has a Leadership Group composed of 6 individuals, one of whom is Anthony Ervin who serves as one of 3 at-large representatives.

The Act also requires that amateur athletes who are actively engaged in amateur athletic competition or who have represented the United States in international amateur athletic competition make up at least one-third of the voting membership of USOPC Board of Directors, any USOPC committee, and any panel empowered to resolve grievances. At least 20% of the membership in these groups must include amateur athletes who are actively engaged in international amateur athletic competition or who have done so in the preceding 10-year period. Moreover, these athlete representatives must be elected by the athletes, themselves. The USOPC Board includes 3 AAC athlete members who are elected by the USPOC AAC and 2 atlarge athlete members elected by the United States Olympians and Paralympians Association (USOPA).

The Act and the USPOC bylaws also impose amateur athlete representation requirements on the Board of Directors (BODs) and other such governing boards (eg, House of Delegates; HOD) of NGBs, including USA Swimming. The Act and the USPOC bylaws also require each NGB to establish an Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC).

In turn, the USA Swimming bylaws require that 5 of the 15 USA Swimming BOD voting members be 10-Year Athletes who are elected by athletes who meet the same standards as 10-Year Athletes. At least 50% of these 10-Year Athlete members of the BOD must have obtained 10-Year Athlete representative eligibility through competing at an event that is on the USOPC Delegation Event program.

The USA Swimming bylaws also require that a sufficient number of 10-Year Athletes and 10-Year+ Athletes constitute at least one-third of the total voting power of the HOD. A minimum of 20% must be 10-Year Athlete representatives and the remainder may be 10-Year+ Athlete representatives. At least 50% of these athlete members of the HOD must have obtained 10-Year Athlete or 10-Year+ Athlete representative eligibility through competing at an event that is on the USOPC Delegation Event program. The athletes elected to the HOD must be elected by athletes who meet the same standards as 10-Year Athletes.

Finally, the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations establish the AAC as operating committee of USA Swimming. The AAC consists of 9 voting members who meet the requirements of 10-Year Athlete representatives, and they are elected by athletes who meet the same standards as 10-Year Athletes.

Per the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Official Glossary:

Actively Engaged Athlete Representative: An athlete who qualifies as a 10-Year or 10-Year+ Athlete representative, or who has been actively engaged in 24 months prior to election/selection in a USA Swimming-sanctioned competition (as defined by the USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council and approved by the USAA Swimming Athlete Representation working Group [as defined in the USOPC Bylaws]), which may include events that categorize entrants in age-restricted competitions.

10-Year Athlete: An athlete who has represented the United States in a Delegation Event, World Championships, or another event designated by the USOPC (together with the USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council) and USA Swimming (together with USA Swimming's Athletes' Advisory Council) as an elite-level event for the purposes of this definition within the previous 10 years.

10-Year+ Athlete: An athlete who has represented the United States in a Delegation Event, World Championships, or another event designated by the USOPC (together with the USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council) and USA Swimming (together with USA Swimming's Athletes' Advisory Council) as an elite-level event for the purposes of this definition, but not within the previous 10 years.

Delegation Event: Includes the Olympic Games, the Olympic Winter Games, the Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Winter Games, the Pan American Games, and the Parapan American Games.

Through the required LSC Bylaws template, USA Swimming also requires athlete representation within the governance structure of each LSC, including Virginia Swimming. At least 20% of the voting membership of the HOD, Board of Directors, and each committee must be athlete members, at least 14 years of age. The details of these requirements are given in the next section.

Opportunities for Athlete Participation in the Governance Structure of Swimming

Overview

The *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act* has created meaningful opportunities for you to participate in the governance of the sport of swimming. These opportunities start at the local level and continue to the national level. Importantly, by participating in the governance of your

sport, you have the opportunity to make your voice heard and to bring about meaningful changes. As with governing at all levels, your active participation is the key. The sections below give examples of how you can participate in the governance of swimming.

Virginia Swimming

House of Delegates. The purpose of the HOD is to elect the officers and Non-Athlete At-Large Board of Directors members; elect the officers and members of the Administrative Review Board; review, modify, and adopt the annual budget recommend by the Board of Directors; call regular and special meetings of the House of Delegates; ratify or prospectively modify or rescind policy and program established by the Board of Directors; establish joint administrative committees, or undertake joint activities with other sports organizations were deemed helpful or necessary; amend the bylaws of Virginia Swimming; and remove from office any person not fulling his or her duties.

The membership of the HOD includes the group member (ie, clubs) representatives of which each club is entitled to appoint up to 4 group member representatives, at least one of whom must be an Athlete Member. If your club doesn't actively solicit volunteers for this position, let your head coach or club board know that you are interested in serving. Many of these athlete positions go unfilled through a real or perceived lack of interest on the part of a club's athletes.

Overall, the membership of the HOD must include a sufficient number of athletes to constitute at least 20% of the voting membership of the HOD. If the membership of the HOD falls below this threshold percentage of athletes, the General Chair of Virginia must then appoint a sufficient number of At-Large Athlete Members to reach the 20% threshold. If you are interested in serving as an At-Large Athlete Member of the HOD, perhaps because other athletes are already serving as group member representatives for your club, please let the current Virginia Swimming Senior Athlete Representative, Junior Athlete Representative, or General Chair know of your interest (contact information below).

Board of Directors. The purpose of the BOD is to establish and direct policies, procedures, and programs for Virginia Swimming; oversee the conduct of officers and staff; provide advice and consent on appointments; cause preparation of the annual budget and its presentation to the House of Delegates along with a recommendation for approval/disapproval; approve annual review/audit; call regular/special meetings of the Board of Directors and House of Delegates; retain independent contractors as necessary to conduct Virginia Swimming affairs; appoint other officers, chairs, and coordinators as needed; and remove from office any board member, committee chair or member, or coordinator when the individual is not fulling his or her responsibilities.

Athletes are represented on the Virginia Swimming BOD by a Senior Athlete Representative, a Junior Athlete Representative, and a sufficient number of appointed At-Large Athlete Members such that the Athlete Members constitute at least 20% of the voting membership of the board.

The Senior Athlete Representative and Junior Athlete Representative must be at least a sophomore in high school or at least 16 years of age at the time of election. A new Athlete Representative is elected each year for a 2-year term. The athlete in their first year as a representative is the Junior Athlete Representative and the athlete in their second year as a representative is the Senior Athlete Representative. Elections are held in the spring each year. If you are interested in running for election, please let the current Virginia Swimming Senior Athlete Representative know of your interest (contact

information below). You can also watch the Virginia Swimming website for details of the next election.

If you are interested in serving as an At-Large Athlete Member of the BOD, please let the current Virginia Swimming Senior Athlete Representative, Junior Athlete Representative, or General Chair know of your interest (contact information below).

Committees. Virginia Swimming has 14 different committees, each serving a unique purpose. Not surprisingly, you as an athlete, might be drawn first to the Athletes Committee. The Athletes Committee is in general charge of the business and affairs of the athletes of Virginia Swimming. The committee undertakes activities delegated to it by the Board of Directors or the General Chair, and it undertakes activities deemed by the committee as being in the best interests of the athlete members, Virginia Swimming, USA Swimming, and the sport of swimming. The committee is chaired by the Senior Athlete Representative. The members of the Athletes Committee include the Senior and Junior Athlete Representatives, the At-Large Athlete BOD members, the At-Large Athlete HOD members, and the Group Member Athlete Representatives appointed by each Group Member. As you can see, you can't volunteer per se to be on this committee, but rather you automatically join this committee through your association with the HOD or BOD or as Group Member Athlete Representative of your club.

In addition to the Athletes Committee, the other Virginia Swimming Committees are the Age Group Committee, Coaches Committee, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Finance Committee, Governance Committee, Hall of Fame Committee, Officials Committee, Open Water Committee, Operational Risk Committee, Safe Sport Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee, Senior Committee, and Technical Planning Committee. While at first glance, you may not find these committees to be of interest, dig a little deeper and you may find one that one sparks you. As an example, the Age Group Committee and Senior Committee establish the competitive format for Age Group Championships and Senior Championships, respectively. If you feel that the athletes need to have a greater impact on how these meets are run, serving on one of these committees might be a good fit for you. A description of the responsibilities of each of these committees on the Virginia Swimming website. Importantly, each of these committees must have a sufficient number of athletes so as to constitute at least 20% of the voting membership of the committee. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, please let the current Virginia Swimming Senior Athlete Representative, Junior Athlete Representative, or General Chair know of your interest (contact information below).

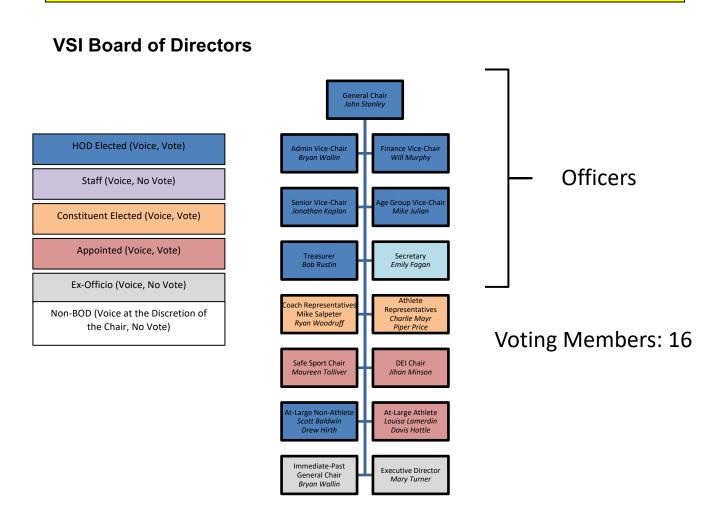
Eastern Zone

When Virginia Swimming participates in Eastern Zone meetings, the Virginia Swimming Senior and Junior Athlete Representatives represent the Virginia Swimming athletes. The officers of the Eastern Zone include both an Athlete Zone Director and a Junior Athlete Representative. Both of these positions are elected by the athletes in attendance at the Eastern Zone meeting at which the election takes place. You should let the current Virginia Swimming Senior Athlete Representative or Junior Athlete Representative know if you are interested in running for one of the Eastern Zone positions. Both the Athlete Zone Director and Junior Athlete Representative also serve as members of the USA Swimming HOD.

USA Swimming and the USOPC

As indicated above in the description of the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act,* athlete representation in these organizations requires that athletes constitute no less than one-third of the voting membership of the organizations' BOD, HOD, and committees. The *Act* also requires that each organization have an AAC. What sets the athlete representation in these organizations apart from the athlete representation at the LSC and Zone levels, is that the athlete representatives be either 10-Year Athletes or 10-Year+ Athletes.

VSI Governance Structure



As shown on the above diagram, the Board of Directors currently has 18 members in a total of 19 positions (the same individual currently serves as both the Administrative Vice-Chair and thee Immediate-Past President). The General Chair, Administrative Vice-Chair, Finance Vice-

Chair, Senior Vice-Chair, Age Group Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary are officers. Each of these positions, with the exception of the Secretary, is elected by the House of Delegates and each of these positions has both voice and vote at Board of Directors meetings (the secretary has voice, but no vote). The coaches elect both a Senior and Junior Coach Representative to the board, with each representative having both voice and vote. Likewise, the athletes elect a Senior and Junior Athlete Representative to the board, with each representative having voice and vote. The Chair of the Safe Sport Committee and the Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee are also board members with voice and vote. Two At-Large Non-Athlete members are elected to the board, and the General Chair appoints 2 At-Large Athlete members to the board. Each at-large member has both voice and vote. The Executive Director is also a board member with voice, but no vote. Finally, the Immediate-Past General Chair is a board member with voice, but no vote.

The Board of Directors oversees 7 divisions, each of which is responsible for one or more committees or coordinators. The Governance Committee reports directly to the board.

Administrative Division

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- Hall of Fame Committee
- Officials Committee
- Open Water Committee
- Technical Planning Committee
- Rules/Legislation Coordinator
- National Times and Records Tabulation Coordinator
- Virginia Swimming Office

Age Group Division

- Age Group Committee
- Zone Team Coordinator

Senior Division

Senior Committee

Finance Division

• Finance Committee

Athletes Division

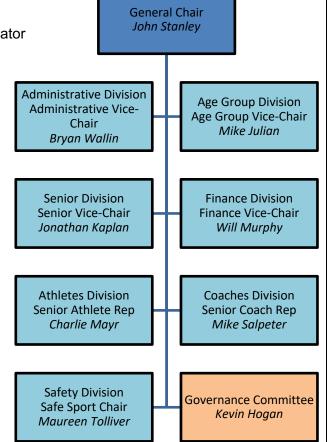
- Athletes Committee
- Scholarship Selection Committee

Coaches Division

• Coaches Committee

Safety Division

- Operational Risk Committee
- Safe Sport Committee



VSI House of Delegates

The HOD consists of the following members: Group Member representatives (4 members from each club, at least one of whom must be an athlete); the members of the BOD; up to 10 Non-Athlete At-Large Members appointed by the General Chair; a sufficient number of Athlete At-Large Members appointed by the General Chair to ensure that Athlete Members constitute at least 20% of the voting membership of the HOD; the Chair and members of the Governance Committee; the Chair of the Administrative Review Board; the Chair of the Operational Risk Committee; the Chairs of the operational committees specified in the VSI Policies and Procedures; and the Coordinators specified in the VSI Policies and Procedures.

The *Virginia Swimming Bylaws* require the House of Delegates to hold an annual meeting in the spring (usually in April) and additional meetings as set by the House of Delegates. Recent practice has been to hold an annual fall meeting, usually in September.

Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, Coordinators, and Staff Contact Information

BOARD OF DIRECTORS			
POSITION	NAME	Email	PHONE
GENERAL CHAIR	JOHN STANLEY	JFSTANLEY1@GMAIL.COM	(540) 354-9856
Administrative Vice-Chair	BRYAN WALLIN	THEWALLIN5@COMCAST.NET	(804) 389-2438
Age Group Vice- Chair	Mike Julian	COACHMIKEJ@NOVASWIM.ORG	(804) 405-9625
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SENIOR ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE	CHARLIE MAYR	SRATHLETEREP@VIRGINIASWIMMING.ORG	-
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COORDINATORS				
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