

**Committee Name: Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

**Chair: Jeff Commings**

**Minutes recorded by: Chris Campbell**

**Session #9**

**Date of meeting: 10/2/2024**

**Time of meeting: 8 pm EDT**

**Actions Taken:**

1. None.

<b>Number of Committee Members Present: 8</b>	<b>Absent: 4</b>	<b>Guests: 1</b>
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<b>Present:</b> Jeff Commings (Chair), Chris Campbell (Vice Chair), Vicki Shu, Ally Sega, Lina Bot, Tim Murphy, Lucila Davies, Laura Dennison, Kenny Brisbin (Ex Officio—VP Community Services), Megan Shovlin (Guest)
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<b>Absent:</b> Virgil Chancy, Leann Rossi, Nadine Ford, Mary Jurey, Daniel Paulling (Ex Officio—National Office)
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**Minutes**

The meeting started at 8:05 pm EDT.

1. Jeff reviewed and provided updates on the Committee’s involvement in the USMS Transgender Competition Policies. While these are still being crafted, work is progressing, and Jeff has received assurances from Dawson Hughes regarding communication and updates between the Committee and the National Office. The most current policy information is summarized in the minutes of the August meeting.
2. Tim brought in a proposal for implementation by the South Central Zone. Specifically, this proposal seeks to tighten up the entry and cutoff time restrictions for freestyle events 500 yds/400 meters and longer. While the proposed amendments to these entry and cutoff times are not particularly significant (the supporting data indicated impacting only a single swimmer over the last 5 years), the Committee was concerned about the perceived lack of competition inclusivity, should these be implemented. Robust discussion ensued. Salient points raised were:
  1. The concerns driving this proposal are primarily budget-oriented. Specifically, these proposals could shorten meet timelines, resulting in lower support costs (facility rental and staffing, officials compensation, volunteer engagement, etc.). For many host entities, available budget can be a big issue, as well as facility time restrictions.
  2. Given the nature of entry time restrictions at USMS National Championships, it is possible that some swimmers, who do not meet qualifying standards for participation in these events at Nationals, would not have the opportunity to compete in these events in any South Central meets, should these policies be implemented. As a side note, while swimmers are allowed to compete in 3 events at Nationals, oftentimes the longer events are restricted by entry time.

3. One swimmer was cited as supporting data for the proposal rationale. The Committee knows nothing of this swimmer. Does this swimmer have a disability? Is this swimmer very old? Is this a novice swimmer, or someone who recently completed an ALTS course and is now looking to try their first Masters event? Or is this a swimmer, despite a lack of ability, one more demanding accommodation at any cost? The Committee can only speculate without more data.
4. Given that the boundary conditions for hosting a USMS event are controlled exclusively at the local level, this Committee, as well as USMS in its entirety, has no jurisdiction in this case. There can be no set National legislation, rules or policies. Every case is different. Every facility and every hosting organization will have their own rules on how to engage. All that can be provided here are suggestions on how to accommodate such swimmers. There were some suggestions which can be implemented which may help to shorten meet timelines, while maintaining inclusivity:
  1. Combining genders for these longer events
  2. Seeding such events fastest to slowest
  3. Placing such events at the start or end of the meet program
  4. Placing a cap on the number of entries allowed in these events. First come, first served.

There are other possibilities that can be envisioned. Our list is not all inclusive. Tim will take these suggestions back to the South Central Zone for further consideration. That's all that this Committee can do in this case.

3. There was more discussion on the inclusion of demographic information to be made available to the Committee and the National Organization. Such data can be immensely helpful with determining DE&I initiatives and policies. However, how do we implement something like this? Do we require the information with registration? That would mean a Rule Book change. Should this be a policy instead? Are there legal implications to requesting and accessing this information? Do we make giving such information optional? Are there public funding implications? Jeff will be at Relay, and he hopes to have a face to face discussion with Dawson Hughes, Ed Coates and perhaps USMS Legal Counsel Katie Kenyon while there.

4. Given that this Committee has reached a level of maturity where much of the implementation of the initial Committee stand up and investiture objectives have been completed, Jeff proposed Committee meetings on a bimonthly basis, rather than monthly. Ad hoc meetings can be scheduled as needs arise. Motion was proposed, seconded and approved.

5. VP Community Services update. Orientation for the new Board members was conducted on September 30. The Board will begin USMS budget discussions during October, with a finalized budget expected in November.

The next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 4. New Committee members are expected to be welcomed at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm EDT.

