

# GULF MASTERS SWIM COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING

December 2, 2023 3:00 pm

APPROVED 1/5/2024

## Meeting held at Fuzzy's Pizza

The Gulf Annual LMSC meeting serves as both a business and social event, with pizza and beverages provided to all attendees.

Nicole welcomed all attendees. Attendance was taken via a sign-in sheet. A quorum is present.

### Attendance

Officers and Committee Chairs: Nicole Christensen (Chair, Communications-Webmaster), Stacey Eicks (Vice-Chair, Fitness Co-Chair), Kris Wingenroth (Secretary), Linda Visser (Membership Coordinator), Kevin Lunsford (Sanctions), Andreas Lorenz (Open Water/Long Distance Chair), Patrick Harrington (Coach's Chair).

Other Attendees: Alana Wilson (WMST representative), John Keen (Coogs representative), Seth Huston (Rice representative), Mark Hahn (Trotter YMCA representative), Brian Miller (SWYM representative), David Guthrie (Rice), Kerry Suhr (SWYM)

Absent Officers and Committee Chairs: Karlene Denby (Treasurer, Communications Chair/Newsletter, Fitness Co-Chair), Kyra Wakefield (Top Ten), Herb Schwab (Officials), Anna Bass (Diversity & Inclusion Chair), Jill Gellatly (College Club Swimming Liaison), Claire Parker (Social Media),

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Minutes from the 5/3/23 meeting were approved by email vote on 8/15/2023 and have been posted to the Gulf LMSC website.

### Officers' Annual Reports

- **Chairman** – Nicole Christensen – See the State of the Gulf LMSC report below.

#### State of the LMSC

The Gulf LMSC ended out the 2023 registration period with 897 swimmers. We currently have 139 swimmers registered for 2024. We are up to 27 teams registered for 2024 as compared to 25 for 2023.

We have several member and club initiatives to help support and hopefully grow our membership.

For the first time, we have paid for the annual registration for all of our Gulf clubs with the goal of supporting the clubs and building community. We also paid for our Gulf members to attend the USMS Stroke Development clinic here in Houston on November 5<sup>th</sup> for free and we had 17 members take advantage of that offer. For our coaches, we paid for Gulf registered coaches to attend the USMS certification courses which enabled 15 coaches to receive grants.

Additionally, we have continued our ongoing First Meet Free program that enables a Gulf member to register for their first ever USMS swim meet for free and we had 12 members take advantage of that this year. Other programs that we have include a free Thanksgiving swim, free open water clinic, paying for the sanctioning fees for our event hosts, as well as our Gulf Swim University for our fitness swimmers and the 1 hour swim in January.

We are in the middle of a new fitness event – the Virtual Swim around Galveston Island – which will culminate in a lunch for all participants in Galveston sometime in January. This has been very well received and we are excited to offer it.

2023 also saw a new addition to our Gulf members with 23 College Club Swimmers taking advantage of the Gulf paying for the \$25 bridge membership so that they can attend USMS events. The Texas A&M University Club Swim team brought a contingent to the Sweetheart Swim last February. A great time was had by young and old with the older swimmers enjoying the energy and enthusiasm brought by the college swimmers.

A new program has also been started to help out our members who attend swim meets with no coach. The Gulf Coach On Deck program was begun at the appropriately named First Time for Everything Meet in Sugarland and has continued at the Texas Elite Fall Opener and the Sabine Weiser November Classic.

While the program will need to get more coaches involved, right now it has already had a positive impact with swimmers who have sought out the On Deck Coaches, in their brightly colored shirts, to give the stroke and start tips during warm ups. The plan is to grow the program and continue it at all Gulf sanctioned swim meets.

For 2024, we plan on continuing to find ways to give back to our Gulf community including our newly established ALTS program headed up by our Diversity and Inclusion chair. We will be entering new territory with a swimming themed Art Car for the Houston Art Car parade which will undoubtedly build awareness outside of the regular USMS community.

We are excited to have our Spring Zone Championship swim meet here at the Woodlands in the world class Conroe ISD Natatorium, which makes it easy for our Gulf members to attend. Additionally, we are pleased that the Summer Zone Championship will be at the SMU pool in Dallas because we do not frequently get an opportunity to swim there.

For our Open Water Swimmers, in addition to the free open water clinics that we put on, we have really grown the Zone Grand Prix Open Water Challenge. It now consists of five events with three of them being right here at home in Lake Longhorn down in League City. Event dates are April 14 Lake Longhorn Round-Up, May 5 Swim De Mayo in Joe Pool Lake, June 2 Shark Attack 1 in Lake Longhorn, July 14 OWS Challenge in Joe Pool Lake and finishing up back in our Lake Longhorn with Shark Attack 2. More information is posted on the Zone website at [www.usmssouthcentralzone.org](http://www.usmssouthcentralzone.org)

We ask that all Gulf coaches promote our initiatives and events to their swimmers and make sure that their swimmers are receiving the Gulf emails. Our desire is to support and encourage adult swimming for people of all abilities from those just learning to swim to those looking to achieve world records or swim 5K or more in open water. We are your resource for adult swimming in the Gulf. Reach out to us at [GulfMastersSwim@gmail.com](mailto:GulfMastersSwim@gmail.com) anytime you have a questions, comments and ideas.

ALSO – we ALWAYS are looking for people to get involved. Some possible ways you can help out are:

- Triathlon Liaison to reach out to the TRI clubs in our area
- Coach On Deck program
- Coach committee members
- Club outreach
- AND any other way YOU would like to get involved, however small or big

Please contact anyone on the board at any time if you would like to find out more.

Happy Swimming to All!

- **Vice Chairman** – Stacey Eicks - no report
- **Secretary** – Kris Wingenroth – no report
- **Treasurer** – Karlene Denby –

The Gulf leadership approved and paid the following major expenditures to benefit the membership as of November 2023.

\$520 Member reimbursement of entry fees for the “First Meet Free” promotion.

This resulted in twelve members doing their first swim meet.

\$3,450 Grant funds for coaches to receive USMS coaching certification. These grants have resulted one Level 1, six Level 2, and four Level 3 certified coaches, as well as three coaches who have learned how to conduct stroke clinics and one certified ALTS instructor.

\$1,280 Team incentive payments of \$4 per each USMS registered swimmer to the four Gulf teams that took advantage of the program.

\$1,750 Payment of the annual 2024 USMS club registration (\$70) for 25 Gulf teams.

\$450 Meet sanctioning fees for nine Gulf swim meets.

\$225 Open water sanctioning (\$100) and individual swimmer fees (\$5 per swimmer) for the Lake Longhorn Swim.

\$1,300 Gulf Swim University participation awards and post-event social.

\$850 Payment of the registration fees for the 17 Gulf swimmers who participated in the USMS Stroke Development Clinic

\$200 Thanksgiving Swim at Dad’s Club.

Moving a significant amount of funds from a non-interest bearing account to CDs and an interest bearing savings account has resulted in over \$1,200 of additional revenue that can now be used for the benefit of our members.

## **Committee Reports**

- **Membership Coordinator** – Linda Visser - Gulf LMSC ended out the 2023 registration period with 897 swimmers. We currently have 139 swimmers registered for 2024. We are up to 27 teams registered for 2024 as compared to 25 for 2023.
- **Sanctions Report** – Kevin Lunsford - Ten competitions were sanctioned in the Gulf this year. There were four short course meets, three long course meters meets, one short course meters meet and two open water swims.
- **Top 10 Recorder** – Kyra Wakefield – All Top Times reports for 2023 have been submitted. This is the end of Kyra’s service to the Gulf. A new Top Times Chair will need to be selected.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – Anna Bass – ALTS classes were held at Northside High School for two weeks after Thanksgiving. Although seven people were signed up, the classes only had two participants each week. Announcements have been made using social media. She is planning a swimming themed art car to promote learning to swim. She is hoping the publicity from the car will help with enrollment in the ALTS classes.
- **College Club Swimming** – Jill Gellatly – Twenty-three college club swimmers from TAMCS (Texas A&M University Club Swim) had their USMS bridge membership (\$25) paid by the Gulf so that they could compete in the 2023 Sweetheart Swim Meet in Houston. For 2024, TAMCS hopes to grow their bridge memberships and send another contingent to the Sweetheart Swim and possibly other Gulf LSMC sanctioned events. Additionally, TAMCS is looking to have an integrated CCS and USMS meet in College Station next October, 2024. Other colleges and universities in the Gulf are encouraged to

look into creating their own CCS team and can reach out to [GulfMastersSwim@gmail.com](mailto:GulfMastersSwim@gmail.com) for more information.

- **Newsletter** – Karlene Denby – The Chlorine Chronicles newsletter continues to be published four times each year to provide our members with workouts, nutrition and health advice, and information regarding upcoming pool and open water competitions, fitness events, Top Ten results, and other news of interest to Gulf swimmers.
- **Fitness** - Karlene Denby – The 2023 Gulf Swim University had 53 participants who collectively swam over 6440 miles between January 1 and April 30. All participants received a large towel with custom art work by Kerry Suhr and were invited to a post-event social gathering at Fuzzy's Pizza. A new fitness event was added for 2023, a 60-mile "circumnavigation of Galveston Island" was competed between October 1 and December 31. All participants will receive a t-shirt designed by Nicole Christensen and will be invited to a post-event social in Galveston in January. Plans are underway for the tenth anniversary of Gulf Swim University beginning January 1, 2024. Hopes are to make this the largest event yet.
- **Open Water/Long Distance** – Andreas Lorenz – Open Water: 2023 in review The year started with The Second 1-Hour Virtual Swim at Dad's Club. Like the year before we had 11 participants. But unlike 2022 we also had an event in Kingwood (organized by John Dissinger) that also featured 11 participants. The swimmers varied in age from their twenties to their seventies. Due to shoulder surgery I had to cancel the planned Open Water intro clinic, scheduled for the spring. But on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 3 brave souls overcame their fears and swam in Lake Longhorn as participants of the Fall Open Water Intro Clinic.

Other Items: As a participant in the The Coach on Deck program, I consider that initiative a success. We helped out at three pool events and have gotten nothing but great feedback from swimmers and organizers (when they were not too busy organizing). The challenge will be to recruit enough coaches to keep it going.

- **Webmaster/Emails** – Nicole Christensen –

**Web Site** - The Gulf Masters web site continues to be hosted on Club Assistant which also allows for creation of events if desired. Main menu bar items are Home, Swim Meets (with drop downs to Upcoming Meets and Meet Results), Calendar, News, Administration (with drop down to Bylaws & Policy, Meet Director Info, Minutes, Officers, Registration, Rule Book, Documents), Events, Contact Us, and South Central Zone Web Site. Permanent links for the USMS Volunteer Educational Webinars and USMS Workouts are also on the site. Bylaws, Minutes, Newsletters, etc. continue to be updated. If an item needs to be updated, added, or removed, please contact Nicole asap at [ncr@creativewaters.net](mailto:ncr@creativewaters.net)

2024 is a good year to analyze the need for any changes that should be made to the web site to make it more appealing and/or user friendly.

**Email Program** - Our email program was transitioned over to MailRelay in April. The change was prompted by the previous program, MailChimp, changing from a free service to a paid service. MailRelay is free although we did have to purchase a business email that attaches to a domain that the Gulf owns and controls. We purchased [gulfmsc@usmssouthcentralzone.org](mailto:gulfmsc@usmssouthcentralzone.org) as the email to send our communications out with.

A notice is on the top of our home page asking people to add this email to their safe sender list. Continued communication from the Gulf Board and coaches to their members should go out for people to add this email to safe senders and to check their Bulk or Spam folders.

To date, we have sent eleven emails out to the membership since April with unique open rate of over 50% for every email, sometimes over 60%. Click rate varies from 9% to 21%. Unsubscribes are under five people each time with a total send of over 1400 each time.

New email addresses are added by checking the USMS registration each time for new members. Members are added with whatever email they provided to USMS when registering as a member.

- **Coaches** – Patrick Harrington – Towards the end of this year and suggested by another board member, Andreas and I began the “On Deck” coach program. It is in its infancy, but we would like to see at least one coach on deck at each Gulf Masters swimming event to support the attendees. I plan to reach out to all Gulf coaches, in swimming and tri-athletic programs, to build this On Deck program. For 2024 I will be molding and creating more within that On Deck coach program. I was also inspired by an article in the USMS magazine about a Masters program in Greenville South Carolina that catered to veterans. That is something I could really get behind also and this coming year will be a time to work on that. At this point, I have no idea how it might work or look like but that is the fun of creation.
- **Officials** – Herb Schwab (not present) – no report
- **Social Media** - Claire Parker (not present) – no report

### **ACTION ITEM:**

It was moved and seconded to approve all the Officer and Committee Reports. Motion carried.

### **DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The date for the next meeting was not announced at the meeting but has subsequently been scheduled for Thursday, January 11 at 7 pm via zoom.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS SCHEDULE:**

For details see the following:

[www.usmssouthcentralzone.org/zone-event-calendar](http://www.usmssouthcentralzone.org/zone-event-calendar) and  
[www.usms.org/events/national-championships](http://www.usms.org/events/national-championships)

#### **2024 Pool Competitions:**

February 10, 2024	Sweetheart Swim Meet	WW. Emmons Natatorium	Houston
March 9, 2024	Rice Aquatics Masters March Madness	Rice University	Houston
March 23-24, 2024	Texas Senior Games (not a USMS meet)		San Antonio
April 26 – 28, 2024	South Central Zone Spring Championships	Conroe ISD Natatorium	The Woodlands (Houston area)
May 11, 2024	Two Rivers Meet (*new event!)		New Braunfels, TX
June 20 – 24, 2024	2024 USMS Spring Short Course Nationals, Indianapolis, IN		

June 29, 2024	Summer Splash	Conroe ISD Natatorium	The Woodlands (Houston area)
July 26 – 28, 2024	South Central Zone Summer Champs (long course)	SMU	Dallas, TX
August 21 – 25, 2024	2024 USMS Summer Long Course Nationals, Mission Viejo, CA		

**College Club Swimming:**

April 5 – 7, 2024	2024 College Club Swimming National Championships	Indianapolis, IN
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**Open Water Swims:**

April 14, 2024	Lake Longhorn Open Water Round-Up (Grand Prix #1)	Clear Lake, TX (Houston area)
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**2024 USMS Events**

September 13-15, 2024	USMS Annual Meeting	Virtual
October 18-20, 2024	USMS Relay	Houston Marriott IAH Airport

**2025 Competitions:**

Apr 24 – 27, 2025	2025 USMS Spring Short Course Nationals	San Antonio, TX
Aug 6 – 10, 2025	2025 USMS Summer Long Course Nationals	Federal Way, WA