

Maddie Sibilja – Northwest Zone Candidate for At-Large Director



The Election Committee has deemed that Maddie Sibilja is a member in good standing of U.S. Masters Swimming. The candidate has indicated she is planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year and, if elected, is planning to attend all HOD Meetings during her tenure in office.

The candidate is running for reelection as an at-large director of the board. She has provided a letter of nomination from her zone in accordance with the Rule Book (see 506.1.1B). As an incumbent, the candidate is not required to submit letters of recommendation in accordance with the USMS Election Operating Guidelines.

The candidate provided the following responses on the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form:

Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year: X Yes ___ No

I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year: X Yes ___ No

I am planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office: X Yes ___ No

I have attended 1 or more HOD Meeting in the past five years? X Yes ___ No

Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:

- 2016 Convention in Atlanta, GA (Sept 16th)
- 2017 Convention in Dallas, TX (Sept 14th – 17th)
- 2018 Convention in Jacksonville, FL (Sept 26th – 30th)
- 2019 Convention in St. Louis, MO (Sept 11th – 15th)

Section Three: Questions

Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?

Two years ago, when I submitted this nomination packet for what would be my first term on our Board, I had absolutely no idea how much more passionate about our organization and members the experience would lead me to become. My love for swimming and desire to serve this community have not changed. Rather, they've only been strengthened. As many of you might know, I moved across the country from Atlanta to Seattle last year, away from all of my friends and family and into the great unknown. It has been a tough transition, so without a doubt, swimming outside at 5am has often become the brightest spot in

navigating the uncertainty of my career and life ahead of me, as have the people I've met across the country through USMS. And I hope to continue serving our organization in a way that provides lasting value for current and future members to take part in the sport we all love.

Why do I believe I am a strong candidate? There is one underlying thing I've learned about my approach and perspective through serving on the Board these past two years: I am not afraid to question the status quo, put forth new ideas, or ask "why" or "why not." During elections and as I started my term on the Board, I think at first I was intimidated by the breadth and tenure of experience surrounding me and was more hesitant to speak up, but I quickly learned to really take ownership of my "newness." It's helped me, and hopefully helped our organization, challenge beliefs and assumptions, consider new perspectives, and think outside the box. I've gained confidence in asking questions and sharing my own thoughts and ideas as a member of a demographic that previously has not had much of a hand in shaping our strategy from the top down, and I hope to continue to be an advocate for future generations of masters swimmers. Even two years into serving on the Board, I still believe I bring a valuable, fresh perspective that our organization needs in order to continue to grow, develop, and thrive in the years to come, and I'd love the opportunity to be an integral part of formulating our path in these next two years and beyond.

What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future? As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?

One area for growth I see lies in streamlining our local and national strategies surrounding membership and volunteers, both from the top down and bottom up. It's no secret that our local volunteers make up the heart of our organization as they interact directly with members on a daily basis. That said, there are opportunities for USMS to provide more support to our local level volunteers and members through education, programming, and events in order to ensure our members can have a consistent experience regardless of where they swim. Having now lived in two LMSCs and practiced with multiple different clubs/workout groups just in the past year, I feel I now have a better understanding of just how different the member experience can be based on the information and tools their clubs or coaches have and use. Whether it be in relation to communication from clubs or LMSCs to members, resources given to coaches to help them tailor workouts to meet their swimmers' needs, supporting officials in obtaining and maintaining certification, dissemination of information directly to members, or providing new benefits, the first step in ensuring our volunteers are more than prepared to carry out their roles will be educating them about the opportunities and resources they can take advantage of and the avenues to go about doing so.

The second important area of growth I see is in succession planning. We are lucky to have such an incredible group of volunteers and members that have supported our organization for many years. We will no doubt continue to need that volunteer support, but we must also find the best way to maintain and house that institutional knowledge for future generations of USMS volunteers. Simultaneously, we need to invest in getting new faces and new voices involved in the conversation to shape the future and determine the course of where we're headed. There are perspectives we haven't heard, ideas we haven't considered, and demographics we haven't included, and I think there is more we can do at all levels to encourage passionate members to get more involved.

The last, and perhaps biggest, area for improvement is in our internal resistance to change, and while I've personally seen amazing strides made in the last two years, there is still room to grow. We are fifty years strong, yes, but I believe there is always more that we can be doing to position ourselves well in the ever-evolving fitness industry to attract new members and keep current members coming back year after year. For me, a big part of positioning ourselves well comes down to the Unified Fee concept that many LMSCs have already adopted, and I'm excited to see how this will give us flexibility to better serve each of our members' unique needs in joining USMS. But the Unified Fee is not the end of potential change. It's how we utilize our volunteers both nationally and locally, how we take advantage of technology, how we engage our members and encourage involvement, and how innovative we can be with our offerings. I hope to challenge the status quo, ask questions, learn as much as I can, share ideas aloud, resist complacency, give fair consideration to new opportunities, be open-minded, and draw from perspectives and experiences of others in our organization in order to enact and encourage changes, big or small, that will benefit our organization and its members.

Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:

Futures Task Force (2019-present) under Dan Cox

Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.

College Club Swimming - founding Advisory Board (2017-2018), 2017 & 2018 National Championship Meet Director, 2019 National Championship Liaison (2018-2019)

Georgia LMSC - At-Large Director (2018-2019) and Social Media Coordinator (2018-2019)

Pacific Northwest LMSC - At-Large Director (Jan. 2020- present)

Please list any other information you would like included.

For the sake of being fully transparent, although I am running for the position of At-Large Director from the Northwest Zone, I'm not entirely certain how long I'll be living in the Northwest Zone. Having moved from Dixie to Northwest for my first job out of college, I have already made a geographic move in the middle of a term, and want to put it out there that I foresee it being a possibility again. I do not want to be perceived as the candidate that "hops, skips, and jumps" around the country. Rather, I do want members of the HOD to take into consideration that I am in a very different stage of life than most, if not all, other candidates in that I am still exploring career options and have yet to settle down somewhere. Furthermore, our rule book does not require At-Large Directors to reside in the zone corresponding to their position, and we represent more than just our zone on the BOD. Geographic moves do not affect my love for this sport, and I would love the opportunity to serve on the Board again because I believe that my younger viewpoint, experience with College Club Swimming, and innovative, forward-thinking mindset still allow me to provide a unique and fresh perspective to US Masters Swimming. I recognize that some voting members may not be comfortable with the potential of another mid-term geographic move, but I want to leave it up to the HOD to decide whether it believes my perspective to be valuable enough to the organization to accept that risk.

Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting

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**U.S. MASTERS
SWIMMING**

From: Neal Freeland

Date: August 30, 2020

Subject Line: Nomination for Maddie Sibiliala to the USMS Board of Directors

To: The Elections Committee

It is my pleasure to nominate Maddie Sibiliala to the position of At-Large Director from the Northwest Zone on the USMS Board of Directors.

Closing,

Neal Freeland

USMS Member – Pacific Northwest, GLAD (Green Lake Aqua Ducks)