

## **South Central Zone Meeting – Thursday, August 21, 2025**

### **Attendees**

Arkansas LMSC: **Scott Halliburton**

Gulf LMSC: **Nicole Christensen**, Karlene Denby, **Stacey Eicks**, **Andreas Lorenz**, **Alana Wilson**, **Kris Wingenroth**

North Texas LMSC: Michael Anton, **Diana Brodeur**, Ginnie Holmes, **Jacky Merianos**, Lynn Morrison, **Cindy Myer**, **Tom Wolf**

Oklahoma LMSC: **Denise Smart**

South Texas LMSC: **Jeff Campbell**, **Ed Coates**, **Gretchen Sander**

***Names in bold indicate delegates for the 2025 USMS Annual Meeting.***

Zone Chair, Jacky Merianos, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Jacky welcomed all attendees and thanked them all for their involvement in their LMSCs, the South Central Zone, and USMS.

Jacky explained how votes taken during the meeting would occur and stressed that only delegates to the 2025 USMS annual meeting were eligible to cast votes.

Jacky announced that the 2025 winner of the South Central Zone Jesse Coon Award is Alana Wilson of the Woodlands Masters Swim Team (WMST). Her nomination letter was read to the meeting attendees. Congratulations to Alana for this well-deserved recognition.

Nicole Christensen ran the election for the position of Zone Chair. There was only one nomination, which was Jacky Merianos. There were no additional nominations from the floor. As Jacky was unopposed, she was elected by acclamation for another two-year term as Zone Chair.

Jacky presented the Zone Chair report which highlighted the following items.

- **Membership:** As of mid-August, the Zone had 3,481 members. For comparison, in 2024 the Zone had 3,492 members for the period of November 1, 2023-October 31, 2024. The Zone should easily surpass the 2024 total membership in the next 2-1/2 months. Both the Oklahoma and South Texas LMSCs have exceeded their membership totals from 2024, the Arkansas and North Texas LMSCs have almost achieved their 2024 totals, and the Gulf LMSC is at about 86% of their 2024 membership. It was noted that the number of clubs has increased from 77 to 84 clubs within the Zone, with all LMSCs either holding steady or increasing their number of clubs. As clubs have increased, the number of unattached swimmers has decreased significantly from 680 swimmers in 2024 to 601 swimmers in 2025.

- Events: To date, there have been 25 events held within the Zone. There have been 12 SCY meets, three LCM meets, three SCM meets, two Zone championship meets, one National Championship meet, and four open water events. Per the USMS results database, the Spring Zone Championships had 143 entrants, and the Summer Zone Championships had 135 entrants.

Jacky presented the Zone expenses to date for 2025. They are:

- \$23.17 Website Domain
- \$12.99 Website Protection
- \$217.34 Website and Marketing
- \$102.21 E-Mail and Microsoft 360
- \$96.34 Jesse Coon Award
- \$100.00 Grand Prix Series Finisher awards (estimated cost)
- \$100.00 Grand Prix Series High Point awards (estimated cost)

#### Distribution of 2026 and 2027 Zone expenses

Jacky brought up the distribution of 2026-2027 Zone expenses for discussion and a vote. As has been previously done, it was proposed to continue to place a cost of 25 cents per 2025 LMSC member as the maximum that each LMSC would be expected to pay. Once both the expenses and the LMSC membership totals are finalized for 2025, each LMSC chair and treasurer would be contacted by the North Texas LMSC (which has paid these expenses) with their share of the expenses, as determined by percentage of total Zone membership, to be reimbursed to the North Texas LMSC. **A motion was made by Nicole Christensen to continue with our current practice of distributing expenses as outlined above for 2026 and 2027. The motion was seconded by Andreas Lorenz. The motion was passed unanimously.**

#### 2026 Zone Championship Meet bids

There was only one bid for the Spring SCY Championship meet. The bid was submitted by WMST. The meet will be held April 27-29, 2026 at the Conroe ISD Natatorium in Shenandoah, TX. There have been no bids to date for the Summer LCM Championship meet. A brief discussion of WMST's bid ensued. **The motion to accept WMST's bid was made by Andreas Lorenz and was seconded by Diana Brodeur. The bid for WMST to host the 2026 Spring SCY Zone Championships was approved by a unanimous vote.**

#### Addition of a SCM Zone Championship Meet to the Zone Championship Lineup

Jackie said that, historically, there have been difficulties in receiving bids for the Summer LCM Championships, due, in part, to the lack of affordable facilities. This has resulted in several years in which only one Zone Championship meet was offered. It is being proposed that we add an additional option to the Zone Championship line-up, a SCM Zone Championship meet. This addition will allow the Zone to offer two championship meets each year, and even possibly three meets if an LCM meet bid is submitted and accepted. Like other Zone Championship meets, there will be certain requirements that will need to be met in the bid, including a minimum two-day meet, adequate warmup and cooldown space, and an automatic timing system. **A motion was made by Andreas Lorenz and seconded by Diana Brodeur to add a SCM**

**Championship meet to the Zone Championship lineup in 2026. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ed Coates, USMS President and South Texas LMSC member, joined the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

#### Bid for 2026 SCM Zone Championship Meet

The WMST has submitted a bid to host the Zone's first SCM Championship meet in November 2026. WMST has offered a SCM meet each November for over a decade. The event would be a two-day meet held at the Conroe ISD Natatorium in Shenandoah, TX. A firm date is not yet available, as the school district does not set its calendar until around March of each year. Tom Wolf mentioned that this meet could potentially become a premier fall SCM meet and attract swimmers, not just regionally, but nationwide. Two other high-profile fall SCM meets have either lost pool access or moved to early January, creating the possibility that our November SCM Zone Championships could attract up to 300 swimmers. **Nicole Christensen motioned that we accept WMST's bid, and Andreas Lorenz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### Southern LMSC to Join South Central Zone

Informal discussions have been underway between the South Central Zone and Southern LMSC Chair, Aaron Schneider, about the possibility of the Southern LMSC joining our Zone. The Southern LMSC is comprised of the states of Louisiana and Mississippi. There are several high-quality aquatic facilities within the Southern LMSC, including LSU in Baton Rouge, Tulane in New Orleans, and the HP Billiton YMCA Aquatics Center in Shreveport. Discussion ensued about the possible upsides of such a merger. Events in Shreveport would be closer for swimmers in Arkansas and Oklahoma than locations such as Austin, Houston, or San Antonio, TX, creating more competition opportunities for these swimmers. None of the meeting participants brought up any downsides regarding the merger. In order for this to occur, the proposed re-alignment would need to be submitted to the USMS Legislation Committee in June 2026 and would then be voted upon at the 2027 USMS annual meeting.

#### 2025 and 2026 Open Water Grand Prix Series

Nicole Christensen reported that three of the five events in the 2025 series have already been held, with the final two events being the OZ open water events in late September and the Shark Attack tentatively being held the last weekend of October at Lake Longhorn. Nicole anticipates the same events being held in 2026 and teased us with the prospect of an additional event in the South Texas LMSC that she touted as a destination event.

#### South Central Zone Voting Policies

An inquiry was received about changing the Zone's voting policies, which are currently limited to annual meeting delegates. Kris Wingenroth, chair of USMS' Elections Committee, pointed out that as an arm of USMS, the Zone must follow USMS' voting policies which are clearly defined in the USMS Rule Book. As the Zone does not have the option of deviating from the USMS voting procedures, further discussion of any changes would be a moot issue.

#### Update on Texas Attorney General's Lawsuit

USMS President, Ed Coates, presented a very brief overview of the current status of the lawsuit. He thanked everyone involved for their cooperation and reassured that LMSC chairs and meet directors should not be concerned about personal liability. USMS has retained attorneys who are working on the Texas and Florida lawsuits. Ed mentioned that 2026 USMS registration will include additional questions to address concerns made in the lawsuits. There will be limited details offered at this time and also at the USMS Annual Meeting due to ongoing litigation.

#### Important Zone Dates and Events

- April 27-29, 2026 – South Central Zone Spring SCY Championship Meet, Conroe ISD Natatorium, Shenandoah, TX
- November 2026 – South Central Zone Fall SCM Championship Meet, Conroe ISD Natatorium, Shenandoah, TX (precise date will be finalized by March 2026)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Karlene Denby, Gulf LMSC