

Our Kids Initiative – Meeting Minutes  
Date: Monday – August 21, 2023 – 11:00 am  
Event: Annual Meeting  
Location: Via ZOOM

Attendees:

Jay Thomas – OKI Chair
Craig Hunter – World Aquatics - Technical Swimming Committee - Chair
Derek Paul – USA Swimming – Rules and Regulations Committee – Chair
Sandy Searcy – NFHS – Director of Sports
Greg Lockard – NCAA – Secretary Rules Editor
Christina Fox – USMS – Rules Committee
Meredith Griffin - YMCA-Manager-National Competitive Events
Eddie Hughes – YMCA - Rules Committee
Judy Sharkey – YMCA - Officials Chair
Doug Warham - ASCA Representative
Kathleen Scandary – USA Swimming – Program and Events Coordinator
Matt Wilson – USA Swimming – National Officials Committee – Chair
Carli Brashier – USA Swimming – Director International Games Operations
Pat Lunsford – OKI - Chair Emeritus
Samantha Barany – CSCAA – Executive Director

1. The annual meeting of the Our Kids Initiative group was called to order by the Chair- Jay Thomas at 11 AM. Jay thanked those in attendance for their dedication to keeping OKI relevant in today's world and to continue working for the betterment of the sport and its athletes.
2. Jay recognized Pat Lunsford - past OKI Chair, who provided the group with a brief history regarding the background and purpose of OKI.
3. The OKI member organization representatives that submitted reports (AQUA, NCAA, NFHS) provided a brief review and, in some cases, expanded information on the report. The reports are attached to these minutes.

**OVERVIEW OF OKI** – Jay Thomas – OKI Coordinator

**INTRODUCTIONS:** The chair then gave the opportunity to all attendees to introduce themselves and give statements.

**Craig Hunter—World Aquatics—Technical Swimming Committee Chairperson—**  
Craig stated that he was relatively new in the role of TSC chair and was honored to have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Carol Zaleski. He shares the goal of simplifying the rules and making them easier and more workable for the athletes.  
**Derek Paul – USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee Chair** - Derick's background was as a swimmer and outlets representative, then the Chairman of the National Board of Review. He is honored to be part of the OKI team,

**Sandy Searcy – National Federation of High School Activities Associations -**

Sandy is in her 9th year in the position with the NFHS. She previously worked at the Indiana High School Athletic Association as an Assistant Commissioner for about 16 years. Prior to that she was a coach and athletic director. She was also a swimmer at Indiana University

**Greg Lockard – NCAA Swimming and Diving – Secretary Rules Editor-** He recently assumed the same position for USA Swimming, working with Derek Paul in a supporting role. He is a former club and collegiate coach and collegiate athletic director. Additionally, he has worked with the college Swimming Coaches Association for approximately 30 years.

**Christina Fox—United States Masters Swimming—**She has been a master swimmer for approximately 25 years and has served on the USMS rules committee since 2017. In addition to being involved as a swimmer, she also has a background in coaching.

**Eddie Hughes—YMCA Swimming—**He has served as the YMCA officials chair for the last six years. The new YMCA Officials Chair is Judy Sharkey. He now serves on the USA Swimming Rules committee as the YMCA representative.

**Meredith Griffin - YMCA of the USA.** She currently serves as the manager for national competitive events with the YMCA. She comes from a coaching and swimming background from the developmental through collegiate level.

**Reports** – In addition to written reports, the following members provided comments summarized as follows.

1. **Craig Hunter – World Aquatics** – Craig submitted a written report and provided a description of some of the challenges of crafting rule language that works for 209-member National Federations. He described the collaborative process that was used for the latest rule changes. Craig mentioned that the next opportunity for technical rule changes would be after the close of the Singapore 2025 World Championships. There will be opportunities to clean up language prior to Singapore. Additional items presented by Craig.
  - a. A video of a swimmer submerging while reaching for the backstroke finish was presented and discussed.
  - b. Information regarding the significance of the change of starting rule wording regarding “initiating the start before the signal.”
  - c. The use of “wearable” electronic devices and approval of those devices.
2. **Derek Paul—USA Swimming—**Derek described how USA Swimming implemented the latest AQUA rules changes and collaborated with the AQUA TSC Chair to accomplish that, specifically regarding the backstroke finish rules change and the rules regarding the use of approved wearables.

3. **Greg Lockard – NCAA** – The NCAA is on a two-year rules cycle. There is a provision to adopt AQUA technical rule changes immediately. The most recent iteration of the rule book included additional provisions regarding permitting the use of underwater cameras to review calls made on deck. Greg also described the NCAA rules regarding the use of tape.
4. **Sandy Searcy – NFHS** – Sandy described the landscape and challenges of managing the rules for high school swimming in the United States. She briefly updated the group on some research scheduled to be completed regarding backstroke plunge depth and backstroke ledges. She also outlined the significant changes to high school rules in Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Butterfly. She described the collaboration of the OKI member bodies as we all work for the best possible solutions for all athletes.
5. **Christine Fox—US Masters**—Christine described where they are in the rules cycle and how that would affect the implementation of rule changes. She stated that the US Masters had five rule proposals this year and three additional changes that would trickle down from USA Swimming rules.

### **Final Questions and Comments**

Craig Hunter provided preliminary information regarding an Open competition category scheduled to be introduced at the AQUA World Cup meets this fall. This category would be available for competitors who do not wish to swim in male or female events. The primary focus is providing competitive opportunities for transgender and nonbinary athletes, but it is not exclusively for them.

**Next Meeting**—The group agreed that it would be useful to continue these meetings and that the next meeting should be held in August 2024 after the Olympic Games in Paris.

**Adjournment** - the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM Eastern Time.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Thomas  
Chair