

General Chair Report
LSC House of Delegates Meeting
April 6, 2025

State Championships

I want to thank the Pierre, Dakota Riptide, and Sioux Falls swim teams for hosting our State B, 12&U State A and 13&O State A Short Course meets this year. Thank you for welcoming us into your facilities and for hosting successful meets. Thank you to all your volunteers for giving their time to host everyone.

State Championship Numbers

In 2025, we had the following number of athletes competing in our State Championships:

State B (Pierre) – 170

12 & Under State A (Mitchell) – 363

13 & Over State A (Sioux Falls) – 297

During the season, we had a total of 1,195 athletes compete in South Dakota Swimming. This means we had 55% of our athletes qualify for one of our State A Championships.

How do our numbers rank with other LSCs in the Central Zone, and what is the format of their Championship meets? I asked those questions of the other General Chairs in the Central Zone. Below are the responses I received.

Minnesota – John Bradley, General Chair

Stanton -

My opinion may be unpopular, but I've watched our numbers drop over the last 10 years and I feel a large part of it is an unnecessary focus on "what the top" needs.

Here in Minnesota and many other places, we've hollowed out the swimming middle class over the last 10 years - kids who enjoy the sport, attend meets, and have other priorities besides swimming. They still pay as much money as the "better" kids, and they still come to as many (if not more) practices than the "better kids." Their parents volunteer just like others and they have friends and fans who support them. We could support these athletes in many ways but we don't, and as a result we are in the position we are in today. They've left and they will not return. We now have to rebuild.

I would urge you to keep going down the path you are going. I volunteered at the Speedo Sectional meet run in Rochester last weekend. I was astonished at the number of highly accomplished swimmers that are coming out of the Dakotas. You all seem to have some good things going on. Whatever path you choose I would urge you to make sure you continue to engage all of your members. Don't do what we did and make your top level meets just another meet for the ultra fast kids. They already have plenty of options between the USA Swimming National meets (including Speedos and Junior Nationals) as well as independent meets like NCSA's and ISCA's meet series. Best of luck.

Regards -

JB

Wisconsin – Dan Wohl, General Chair

This is spot-on for John Bradley. I hate that in Wisconsin Swimming we put such an emphasis on the Senior State meet for our athletes. I would love it if we had a cap on participation at the state meets - perhaps having a USA Swimming Winter Jr. cut prohibits you from racing that event at the LSC championships. The more we can encourage our best swimmers to attend Speedo Sectionals, Futures, or Jrs, the more we will see our middle-class of athletes return. On the senior level, the senior state meet should be meant for swimmers who compete at the state level, not swimmers who compete at a national level. This may also solve an issue we've had in recent years with people getting mad about college swimmers coming back, swimming at Senior State, and taking spots away from others in finals.

I've voiced this to coaches around Wisconsin before without much reaction. Everyone wants to stay in the Wisconsin Swimming bubble. I do think we know how to put out an exciting state championship meet. That being said, who does that serve? I think it handicaps our best athletes from getting to the next level and takes opportunity away from the growth of the swimmers who won't make it to NCSAs or Y-nats, or other higher-level competitions.

I don't have a solution in mind, but I know we are taking a hard look at how we can improve things at our Regional meets.

Iowa – Phil Barnes, General Chair

Hi Stanton,

In Iowa we try to manage to pool availability - 12 sessions for long course over 4 days. Short course is split between 2 meets. We use qualifying times for that. Our max capacity is around 800 athletes for long course and slightly higher (around 900) between the 2 short course meets. Our TPC looks at numbers to set qualifying times. We do use bonus times for those swimmers with one, two or 3 qualifying times and allow relay only swimmers.

Phil b.

Ohio – Jim Peterfish, General Chair

Stanton,

Coming out of our LSC Champs last week, I can share what we've done in Ohio the last couple years.

At the Senior level it's a delicate balance of providing that higher level championship and still offering a good experience for the base HS swimmers that we hope to keep engaged post high school season. Additionally, while a lot of Ohio swimmers attend NSCA and Sectionals both these meets require travel and significant expense so our Senior committee feel it's necessary to include everyone.

We had 875 Senior swimmers, which is a record subscription for this meet. We host it over 4 days; Day 1 timed finals only, Days 2-4 prelim/finals. Four heats (A-D) and a Para heat, return for finals. The D-heat is reserved for 16 and under swimmers only, who do not otherwise qualify for the top 3 final heats. We offer 50/100/200's in all strokes along with 200/400IM, 500/1650 Free and 200/400/800 relays and a mixed medley. Time standards are required for all events, however, 200+ events must be through SWIMS (OME), while 100 and shorter can use any proof of time, HS dual meets, YMCA meets, etc.

Our Junior meet was slightly smaller just under 800. It's a similar format 4 (3.5) days. Prelim/finals for 11 & older, 10U are timed final as a middle session. Fun themes for each meet, this year being "60's." A DJ plays era music and kids dress up and have a parade on a designated session, hot heat prizes and grab bag prizes through out. Swimmers and parents get into the festivities during and between heats.

Two-three weeks prior to the Jr Champs we host 7 Regional meets that serve as championships and qualifiers for the Jr Champ meet. Swimmers can qualify by making the meet standard or winning the final heat – Win It – Swim It! Event winners do not need to make the Jr standard to swim in the meet. This applies to para swimmers as well.

Best of luck!

Jim

Indiana – Tim Haley, General Chair

Hi Stanton,

I want to thank you for your question. It is causing me to really think on this question, philosophically. We are working on our LSC quad plan and are really taking stock on what we have and where we want to be in 2028, and this step is really important in that development.

In Indiana, our recent emphasis has been to increase the number of athletes which participate, especially on the girls side (we had some years where there were only 20 kids who qualified, despite a deep bench of members). Our predicament was caused by multiple factors, including the COVID general age group membership and development pauses meeting square against our qualifying standards that had been getting progressively faster. As a result, we've moved to single age time standards. Our age group meet has gone from ~800 swimmers in 2022 to about 1200 now, including relay only swimmers. I think 12-1300 is right for us, that would be somewhere between 35-40% of our age group members. We also have smaller, regional meets called Divisionals to cater to the kids who don't quite have state cuts. We probably had ~4000 kids participate at that level this year (from 10&U to senior age groups). I can't tell you the break up of that number, but I'm guessing roughly 2/3-3/4 of our swimmers qualify for some kind of championship meet.

Our Senior state is a bit trickier to predict: in the winter, that meet falls immediately after our high school season, and immediately before Speedo sectionals and NCSAs. While we get a bump in numbers from the high school athletes who stick it out another few weeks, some of our top talent sit that meet out to focus on sectionals or some other national/regional meet. I think we had ~800-900 swimmers in that meet this year. The summer senior state is bigger, because the top club hs and college athletes usually participate, depending on the national calendar. All of that ambiguity is ok- we want it to be a stepping stone into national development. It sounds like our meet is run almost the same as Ohio's format.

I'm generally of the opinion that more opportunities for more swimmers is a good thing, and that rising tides lifts all boats. That said, there are very good reasons to have different development levels along the way.

Happy to talk more on this with any of you at your convenience. Feel free to reach out at 317.753.0554.

Have a great weekend! Swim fast!

Tim Haley
Indiana General Chair