



## Meet Director FINAL Report

### 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships

#### Summary

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#### **Was The Meet Successful?**

- Utah Swimming, a mid-sized LSC which has not hosted a meet the size and scope of zones in 11 years, has successfully hosted the 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships AND the planners lived to tell about it! (It was questionable for a while if they would.) :)
- By The Numbers:
  - **Participants**
    - Male Athletes: 312
    - Female Athletes: 354
    - Total # of Swimmers: 666
    - Total # of Individual Entries: 3793
    - Total # of Relay Entries: 504
    - Coaches: 45
    - Total # of LSC's (Competing Teams): 17
    - Total # of Volunteers:
      - # of Volunteer Meet Workers: 272
      - # of Meet Worker "Slots" (1 position for 1 session) filled (approximate #): 802
      - # of Volunteer Officials: 82
      - # of Volunteer Official "Slots" (1 position for 1 session) filled (approximate #): 208
  - **Financial Bottom Line** : Net Profit of about \$9,500
  - **Economic Impact to Community**: Positive \$387,497+ (not including spectators)
  - **NBC News Affiliate KSL TV onsite** 2 different days recording for broadcast--Their meet Opening Ceremonies story played on primetime news directly after Olympic coverage on 8/9/2016.
  - **Meet Evaluation Survey Results**: 92% of respondents gave the meet highest marks when asked to "Rate the overall success of the meet."
- By The Meet Planners' Objectives:
  - **Meet Vision Statement**: Create opportunities for each to discover something great within, and also among, through inspiring passionate performance, expanded connection and lasting legacy.
  - **Host Focal Points** :
    - Passion
      - Have fun while inspiring the next generation of athletes, and all others associated with the meet, to tap into their potential, experience the intensity of competition and share the joy of being part of America's swim team, especially in this, an Olympic year.
    - Connection
      - Building on Utah's Olympic legacy, create a unique and exciting event that fully utilizes the opportunity for all involved to unite in the Olympic Spirit. The Olympic connection will be leveraged through the use of local venues and mirroring fun traditions.



- Enabling connection for the athletes to their team and to other swimmers in the Western Zone.
- Facilitating connection for all associated with the meet to each other, our country and the sport of swimming.
  - Legacy
- Leave a positive, enduring legacy by:
  - Making this one of the most fun and memorable, quality swimming events for everyone involved no matter how large or small a part they play.
  - Utilizing the USA Swimming community within Utah to plan, prepare and host the event to increase interaction, experience and certification (where applicable) among members.
  - Seeking partnerships with community organizations for volunteers, donations and purchasing locally where feasible.
  - Running a fiscally responsible event.
- By The Experience:
  - See **meet videos** at: <https://vimeo.com/wzag2016> & <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2xZ7tL1-ae2hO9HgSAgwjw>
  - See **meet souvenir program** file (FYI: File does not include psych sheet or team sheet, but original program did. File is available in *Meet Plan Appendix Q: Meet Souvenir Program* at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) see *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* category or search: WZAG2016)
    - Includes general information about **TrueSport** (they were at the meet to help promote the gratitude campaign, clean competition, sportsmanship & peak performance.), **meet messaging & objectives, including Gratitude Campaign**, meet mascot: **Rocky**, meet specific **Deck Pass Patches**, unique **Delicate Arch team trophies**, **Meet Volunteer T-Shirt**, **Meet pin** and the **Severe Weather/Outdoor Deck Evacuation Plan**.

### **Was Hosting The Meet “Worth It”?**

- MEET DIRECTOR NOTE: This meet took a lot from key volunteers to pull it off. Was it worth it? The jury is still out. My thoughts are below.
  - **Was it worth the toll it took on key volunteers to run this meet the way it was run?** This meet was run differently than most. A lot of extra experiences were provided including an Opening Ceremonies, The Hub, Gratitude Campaign, Athlete Reps, news coverage and seeking to provide as much training and experience to as wide a group of Utah Swimming membership as possible.
    - **If the goal was to simply run a meet:** No. It required too much from key people over too long a period of time. The meet could have been run in a much simpler way and not required so much from key volunteers.
    - **If the goal was to provide lasting benefit to the host organizations and the people who attended:** Yes. This type of benefit is much harder to measure. Here’s what we hope was accomplished:
      - Utah Swimming
        - Membership has an increased awareness of the Western Zone meet and our capacity to host meets like this.
        - Membership, including officials, has increased vision of competitive swimming. Increased vision leads to increased motivation.



- LSC Officials have increased awareness and understanding of national evaluation process and some have increased willingness and ability to participate.
- Members who volunteered to help both at the meet, and also in the pre-meet planning and preparation:
  - Have increased understanding of what it takes to do a meet of this level and the knowledge that we were able to do it.
  - Know each other better and have stronger relationships from working together on a successful event.
- Teams who chose to encourage participation among their members will continue to reap the benefit of the increased vision, understanding, certification (where applicable), skills and relationships developed by their members who worked the meet.
- Western Zone
  - Adults: Probably not much additional benefit over what would have been achieved with running a “regular” meet.
  - Swimmers: We hope the swimmers got to know each other better as a result of “The Hub” and will feel more connected to each other, and a part of the Western Zone, as they go forward and compete both back home and also around the country.
- Individual Swimmers & others who attended
  - We hope individual swimmers will be benefitted by practicing gratitude at this meet and that some may remember to be more grateful during future meets, and in life, as a result of their participation in the 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships.
  - We hope volunteers, officials and others who participated gained increased vision, understanding, knowledge, skill, capacity and connection--both to other individuals with whom they served, and also to the organizations connected to the meet including their home LSC, the Western Zone and USA Swimming.

### Detailed Report by Area

- **Communications/Publicity**

- NOTES FOR NEXT TIME: Developing Meet “Talking Points” based on meet objectives, FAQ documents and Team Information Sheets is highly recommended.
- 237 people signed up on website email list
- Meet website, [utahzones2016.com](http://utahzones2016.com) proved to be a great way to distribute information.
  - It was a limited time addition to the LSC Team Unify website (low cost)
- Meet **FAQ documents** for parents, officials & volunteers as well as monthly **Team Information Sheets** (TIS) saved a lot of meet administrator time by 1) Being widely distributed up front & 2) Providing a place to “point” people when they asked questions answer on an FAQ or TIS.
  - FAQ Documents located at *Meet Plan: APPENDIX C: Event Messaging* (Located on [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* or search: WZAG2016)



- Team Information Sheets (TIS) located at *Meet Plan: APPENDIX F: Info Distributed to Teams* (Located on [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: 2016 WZ Age Group Champs or search: WZAG2016)

- Almost 1800 people have viewed the original meet promotional video via the website or YouTube in the past 9 months

- **Meet “Talking Points”** developed in the fall of 2015 and based on above objectives, proved very useful in guiding meet planning as well as communicating and sharing the meet vision with other meet planners, LSC members and leadership, community organizations, potential donors, True Sport and USA Swimming.

- More details in *Meet Plan: APPENDIX C: Event Messaging* (Located at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: 2016 WZ Age Group Champs or search: WZAG2016)

- **Fundraising**

- NOTES FOR NEXT TIME: Would be best to have this area handled by someone other than the Meet Director.
- Developed fundraising policy and brochure in fall of 2015. This proved very helpful--especially when paired with a spreadsheet to track promised donor perks to ensure all were delivered as outlined in brochure.

- More details in *Meet Plan: APPENDIX E: Fundraising* (Located at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: 2016 WZ Age Group Champs or tag: WZAG2016)

- Utah Swimming partnered with The Utah Sports Commission to host meet
- A great volunteer stepped forward in July. She willingly solicited potential donors and was extremely helpful in procuring donations for meet

- **Hospitality**

- NOTES FOR NEXT TIME: Although not required by WZ Policies and Procedures, Tuesday hospitality is needed to some degree for meet workers there all day & invigilating official(s). We didn't plan on it, but it was needed.

- It doesn't have to be big or complicated, a volunteer ran to Chic Filet and got 20 sandwiches and fries for lunch. This worked great. Box meals were supplied for dinner utilizing the meet provided team box meal service.

- Hospitality expenses were quite high. The following were factors:

- Few volunteers to work with--especially local volunteers. (The head of hospitality was from out of town as was much of the meet leadership.)
  - No real cleaning areas or prep area at the venue
  - By purchasing all food from vendors liability for food poisoning, etc. is assumed by the vendor, not the meet.

- Opted to feed all meet workers, not just coaches and officials. (NOTE: Coaches and officials are the only ones mandated to receive hospitality in the Western Zone Policies and Procedures.)

- **Meet Administration**

- The meet improved times percentage was 28%. Here is something to consider: Submitted entry times were sea level times. All swims were at altitude (4528 feet above sea level.) Therefore, in order to compare “apples to apples”, results for events 200m and longer should be adjusted for altitude before calculating the meet improved times percentage. This may affect the overall percentage of improved time.



- This information has been passed along to Meet Referee John Lorimer who may bring it up with Hy-Tek as an idea for a future software improvement.
- MEET DIRECTOR NOTE: I didn't have time to process the numbers but have a spreadsheet that has all the 200 m and longer events with swimmer seed, prelims & finals times along with the altitude conversion factors if someone else is interested in processing this.

- Results were very slow coming out the first session but the admin team did a great job of troubleshooting and probleming solving and were able to develop a system that worked great the remainder of the meet.
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: It was suggested that in the future, the main meet admin area could be moved over in front of the office. It was challenging having the office so far removed from the main "Hy-Tek" area. (Where the main meet computer was utilized.)
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: It was very hard not receiving approval to release the psych sheet and entry report until the Sunday morning prior to the meet. It didn't leave much time to do all that needed to be done prior to leaving for the meet on Monday.
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: The following meet host administrative structure worked very well: Meet Host Executive Committee consisting of Meet Director, Team Communications Specialist/Athlete Rep Mentor & Volunteer Coordinator. Each area directly reported to one of the three members of the meet executive committee. (For details on how areas were divided see the Roster and Area Plans in the *Meet Plan: APPENDIX C: Event Messaging* (Located at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: 2016 WZ Age Group Champs or search: WZAG2016 ) At the meet, the Team Communications/Athlete Rep Mentor person was over the Athlete Village area, the Meet Director was over the competition pool and deck area and the Volunteer Coordinator was over the building, and area in between the building and pool cover. This system worked well and generally facilitated quicker response time and "local" handling of problems was possible. All supported each other and helped where and when needed. The Athlete Reps were a great support in this system.

### ● Officials

- Utah Swimming provided an **OQM** in June 2015 to help prepare officials for the 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships. It had been several years since an OQM had been offered in this LSC. Preparing to host, and hosting, the zone meet greatly aided the **advancement** of officials in Utah.
  - Prior to the June 2015 meet, Utah Swimming had 8 Stroke and Turn Judges certified at the N2 level or higher and 1 N2 Chief Judge. At the June 2015 meet, the following advancements were achieved:
    - 10 advanced to N2 Stroke & Turn (all Utah, + 1 additional N2 Stroke & Turn advancement from Snake River Swimming)
    - 7 advanced to N2 Chief Judge (all Utah)
  - 20 Utah Officials worked on deck at the zone meet.
    - 10 of those 20 officials received 14 evaluations, one of which was educational rather than for advancement. The following advancements were achieved:
      - 3 advanced to N2 Stroke & Turn
      - 3 advanced to N3 Stroke & Turn
      - 3 advanced to N2 Starter
      - 1 advanced to N2 Administrative Referee
      - 3 advanced to N2 Deck Referee





- **Feedback from an experienced Utah official:** Overall we had a great turn out from officials and it was a great learning experience. Officials are now much more aware of the National Evaluation Process and have been encouraged to participate in it, at zones, and other meets as well. It was a great idea to have a class for officials before the meet. NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: Maybe if we do it again we can do a question and answer period with questions being submitted before the class and maybe just a little shorter session. I heard many remarks about how cool the opening ceremonies were. I wish I could have seen it. [NOTE: The officials clinic was at the same time as the Opening Ceremonies.]
- NOTE: Because of the high number of available officials and the need for help in other areas, as the meet progressed, some officials filled meet marshal positions and did a fantastic job there. Also, during some sessions, turn officials would press the 3rd button when the swimmer finished if three timers could not be provided for that lane.
- NOTES FOR NEXT TIME: For the CJ's and Refs it was stressful because of communication problems. For any future meet consider:
  - Moving the announcer speakers so they aren't right behind the starting areas.
  - Rent professional grade radios.
- Tuesday night **officials clinic** attendance:
  - 48 total participants including 19 Utah officials
- **Rio Connection & The Hub**
  - One committee that functioned very well was the Rio Connection committee. They worked to foster connection between the athletes and their USA Swimming teammates competing in Rio. Their main focus was creating, preparing, staffing and cleaning up, "The Hub." The Hub was a 20' x 60' tented area centrally located in the Athlete Village. There were 3 large screen TV's, one of which streamed the Olympics. Several couches were available there as well as bleachers at one end. At some points, movies were shown. An image of the scoreboard was also projected here so the athletes could keep track of how the meet was progressing.
  - Feedback from one of the adults manning "The Hub" throughout the meet:
    - I thought The Hub gave the meet more of a sense of an athlete 'village'. It was a great place to meet and mingle. It was also an area that a team member could get away and chill out away from their own team tent. I thought the couches and TV were the best! It was a total lounge. It was great to stream the Olympics live, but at future meets they could stream any sporting event or play movies and the athletes would love it! Yes, yes on adult supervision. We didn't have to do a ton, but I think that is because we were always there! Left unattended I [could see] swimmers messing with the TV, internet etc.... They were great kids, but also super messy!! I think we kept them on good manners and kept the place neat and orderly. I would absolutely recommend for future meets.
- **Ordering & Awards**
  - Positive feedback was received on the 3-D printed Delicate Arch team trophies
- **Safety**
  - **Both deck passes and wristbands for utilized for credentialing.** All entrances to the athlete village and competition deck were marshalled. Additional marshals patrolled the facility and locker rooms.



- Early in the meet planning process a **Safety & Partitioning plan**, as required by our LSC, was established. This turned out to be a very good thing and provided a basic plan to build upon and then follow at the meet.
  - We are very glad we took the safety measures we did as some potential breaches occurred, but the athletes were protected as a result of the plan, preparations, great volunteers, and facility support staff working the meet.
    - We learned that capable, mature older teens were not enough as Meet Marshalls--some spectators didn't respect them and worked their way past them to gain entrance to the closed area. This led to the utilization of some officials as meet marshals. This worked well as there were more than enough officials to staff both the admin and the deck officials positions. The added officials supplemented the strong staff of mature adults already functioning as meet marshals.
    - Lesson Learned: Mature, capable Meet Marshals are a very important, even vital, position at the meet if true athlete safety is sought. We believe this principle would hold true for all age group meets, not just those held in Utah.
    - For more information on specific incidents, contact meet director via email, or the "Contact" feature on [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com)
- In planning, preparing for and enabling athlete safety, we were grateful for the information provided by **USA Swimming Safe Sport &** also for the **support staff at the venue**. The facility medical and security staff were great.
- NOTE: Athlete Reps played key roles in both a medical and a security incident
  - Medical Incident: They conveyed appropriate information to athletes which helped to lessen the tension and fear felt by some. They also gathered worried teammates of the injured athlete and made a "Hope You're Feeling Better Soon" card together.
  - Safety Incident: Immediately brought the incident to the attention of the meet director so it could be quickly addressed. Conveyed information between the affected athlete/team and meet leadership. Later, all Athlete Reps were able to convey accurate, appropriate information to all teams about the incident as needed.
- **Socials**
  - **Athlete Celebration**
    - Positive reviews that it went well and the kids had a lot of fun.
  - **Officials Social**
    - Well attended and enjoyable. However, it took awhile to process individual payments at the end so there was a delay in when people could leave.
  - **Zone Business Dinner & Social**
    - Final cost was quite a bit more than originally anticipated. (Thank goodness the food was good.)
- **Travel Support**
  - **Hotels**
    - The meet received good income from contracting blocks of rooms through the local tourism bureau. NOTE: A little over half the teams opted to find their own lodging and not use meet provided rooms.
    - NOTE: Teams booking meet provided rooms worked directly with booking rep. Assigned team officials, Western Zone leadership, Officials Mentoring Program officials, meet announcer and evaluator, as well as key meet host personnel all had rooms booked via the meet director.



- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: Have someone other than meet director handle this area.
  - It ended up taking much more time than originally thought to coordinate travel for so many people
  - The meet director is too busy right before the meet to handle questions or issues that arise as people arrive.
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: The Officials Mentoring Program (OMP) people need someone other than the meet director as a point of contact for their travel arrangements.
- **Box Meals**
  - Useful for feeding Athlete Reps (opted not to use Hospitality so this area could be kept an adults only break area. By utilizing box meals, they could eat with the athletes.)
  - 5 teams ordered through this service.
  - One team manager thanked us for making the meet so easy for them to do. (Box meals were part of what made it “easy.”)
  - Box meals were also a source of additional income for the meet.
- **Volunteers**
  - 65% of the meet workers were from Utah Swimming (NOTE: Officials were not included in this number)
  - **Recruiting**
    - **Tried to work through teams to get volunteers.** Opted not to use quotas or required participation.
      - A few teams were very responsive and organized a “Team Day” when they would come as a group and work both sessions.
      - Meet planners opted to focus on seeking volunteers from the Utah Swimming membership as opposed to outside organizations. This was purposefully done so that Utah Swimming, and the clubs, could “keep the benefit.” (The increased, vision, understanding, experience, skill and where applicable, certification that came as a result of working the meet.)
        - Meet planners came to believe that this could be one of the most far-reaching and long-lasting benefits to the meet host organization (Utah Swimming) if the clubs would send their people to work the meet.
        - Used tagline: *Send us your people and we’ll return them better than we got them.*
          - We believe this happened for those who came
    - It was very challenging getting enough volunteer meet workers
      - As many are aware, the timing of this meet is challenging. It is sandwiched at the very end of one season and just prior to the start of another--the one time when many coaches, swim families and others seek to take a small break from swimming or vacation.
      - The demand for workers at this meet is high, especially with the current Western Zone policy requirement of 3 timers per lane.
    - **Certification of Volunteer Hours Letter**
      - It was brought up that many youth need “service hours” for school, scouts, church or other organizations so a letter certifying volunteer hours served was created (Letter located in *Meet Plan Appendix O: Volunteer Related* (Located at





[HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* or search: WZAG2016 )

- The promise of this letter peaked interest in many people, and was given out to several youth volunteers. We believe it helped draw some volunteers to the meet.
- **Shirts & Pins:** Early on meet planners were told that Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Organizer Mitt Romney said, “People will jump for candy.” The volunteer need at the Games was enormous. Volunteers were given distinctive clothing to identify them which they got to keep after the Games were over.
  - Many credit the 26,000 Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Games volunteers for the success of the games. They were recognized first, for their brightly colored coats and next by their smiles and warmth.  
(<http://saltlake2002legacy.com/overview/volunteers-and-staff/>)
  - Meet planners decided to apply this principle. The Volunteer Coordinator and her family painstakingly designed a winning shirt that enticed many volunteers both to the meet, and also out of the stands. Shirts were given to volunteers who worked at least 2 sessions of the meet. Meet pins were given to volunteers who worked four or more sessions. (Pins were also given to all athletes, coaches and others who attended the meet.)
  - NOTE: The shirts seemed to be much more motivating than the pins
- **Pre-Meet Publicity:** Utilized State Championship, and other meets leading up to zones, the Utah Swimming House of Delegates meeting and email, to recruit volunteers and encourage coaches and team administrators to send their team members to work the meet.
- **Organizing**
  - Because of the number of meet workers, and the tendency to sign-up last minute, it was very challenging to organize the volunteers required to run this meet.
  - Because we were drawing from the local swim community, and well as meet goers, an online sign-up was utilized. Behind the scenes: After the **online sign-up** closed each night, the volunteer coordinator would print it and shift people as needed to cover positions. This process was very time intensive, but needed. The quality lists available by morning enabled successful delegation to the Volunteer Table manager prior to the start of warm-ups.
  - NOTE FROM VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: The **volunteer sign-up list has to “Be Clean”** (all potential problems worked through and resolved) before being passed off to the volunteer table. If so, they can then handle the processing of “online sign-up” volunteers and any last minute volunteers and the Volunteer Coordinator is freed up to “handle the fires.”
- **Supporting**
  - Recruited sufficient volunteers so timers and meet marshals could have a brief break, or **breaks**, throughout the session. (They rotated, similar to what officials regularly do.)
  - Provided **hospitality** to all meet workers. NOTE: This is not required by the Western Zone Policies and Procedures, however, planners did not like the idea of recruiting people for up to six hour shifts without feeding them.
  - **Encouraged swimmers to thank volunteers.**
    - The Gratitude Campaign was developed with a 2 fold objective:



- To help athletes to grow in positive ways
- To give volunteers much deserved thanks
- Bottom line: An improved experience for all.
  - **Certification of Volunteer Hours Letter** (More details above in “Recruiting” section)
    - Because many key, multi-session volunteers, with swimmers in the meet worked inside the main building away from the pool deck, a **scoreboard image** was provided in their area on a flatscreen tv. This was very helpful to keep them connected to the meet and enable them to know when to go into the pool to watch their kids compete.
    - NOTE FROM VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: When you have a volunteer it’s important to “have their back” (To support them.)
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: Before seeking to host the meet, carefully consider the volunteer demands: both the number of volunteers needed to run the meet and also the high demand that will be placed on a few key volunteers. Prepare a plan to address both needs. If an acceptable plan cannot be generated, perhaps it’s best not to host the meet at that time.

### ● **Venue**

- Meet planners were initially very worried about the lower availability of poolside **spectator seating** as compared to other venues. While it would have been nice to have more seating, we found the seating to be sufficient for this meet. Spectators and athletes had access to outdoor areas for “camping” and a standing room only bleacher allowed people to cycle through on the spectator side.
  - There was room on the deck for meet workers. Spectators were welcome to join their ranks. :)
- Athlete Village set-up worked very well. Received positive feedback about the separate entrance for athletes and credentialed workers.
- Good reviews and more detailed feedback in *Meet Evaluation Survey Compilation*.

### ● **Announcer**

- Announcer Tim Vagen warrants a special “call-out.” He did a fantastic job at the meet and was incredible to work with--very helpful and supportive. He was a great asset and help to an area that could have been very challenging: parade music. His experience, resources and skill set him apart as a great announcer and asset to the meet.
- Feedback from one swimmer: “He made every race exciting!”

### **Meet Positions/Activities Unique To Meet**

#### ● **Athlete Reps**

- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: Use Athlete Reps! (Many times at this meet I thought to myself, how do meets run without Athlete Reps? They were an amazing help at this meet. It was a good experience for them too.)
- Logistics in Brief:
  - Application for meet Athlete Reps was distributed to all clubs w/i LSC with an invitation for all interested athletes age 16 & older to apply.
  - Seven, all who applied before the deadline, were accepted as meet Athlete Reps. Because of later conflicts, five were utilized throughout the planning process and at the meet: 4 girls and 1 boy.
  - They attended meet planning meetings and were included on email correspondence. All gave feedback at various times in the planning process.



■ As their role evolved and became clearer, it was determined that because of the high need for them at all sessions of the meet that housing and meals would be provided.

- More details in *Meet Plan: APPENDIX N: Athlete Reps* (Located on [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under Category or Tag: 2016 WZ Age Group Champs)
- Responsibilities
  - Detailed in *Meet Plan: APPENDIX N: Athlete Reps* (Located at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* or search: WZAG2016 )
  - They also attended various volunteer training meetings (like Timers and Meet Marshals) as well as an Official's Briefing. This was done :
    - To help the Athlete Reps gain an increased understanding and appreciation about what it takes to be a meet volunteer
    - To give the meet workers and officials an introduction to the Athlete Reps
    - To give the Athlete Reps the chance to thank the meet workers and officials on behalf of the attending athletes and the meet host
- Some Benefits of Utilizing Meet Athlete Reps
  - Benefits To Meet and Those Attending the Meet
    - We knew they would be helpful in planning the meet--and they were. It was very helpful to receive input from an athlete perspective what I didn't realize is how incredibly helpful they would be at the meet, and what a great leadership opportunity would be provided to them. There were many times throughout the meet when I would ask myself, "How do people run meets without Athlete Reps?" They were indispensable at this meet. Here are some examples of why:
      - They could quickly disseminate information to teams
      - They could step into meet worker positions quickly as needed, until more long-term help could be found.
      - They had pre-assigned positions and rotations determined in advance by their mentor and the volunteer coordinator and then adjusted as needed at the meet.
      - They communicated easily with the athletes and the athletes were comfortable with them.
        - There was a medical incident at the meet that necessitated clearing out 4-5 team tents in one section of the athlete village. The athletes from these teams were kept out of the section for about ½ hour or so. I watched as team adults crossed from the restricted area to the area where the athletes waited. They were left alone as they passed through. But when 2 Athlete Reps, who had be prepared and given correct information to share, crossed from the restricted area into the athlete area, the athletes flocked to them. This indicated to me that they athletes felt comfortable with the Athlete Reps. The Athlete Reps were able to disseminate correct, and shareable information to help calm the athletes and then took those who wanted to, over to The Hub to make a card for the athlete who was receiving medical help.
  - Benefits To Athlete Reps



- Feedback received from one Athlete Rep--and agreed to by 2 others when it was read to them: Being an athlete rep was such a great experience! Not only did it give me an opportunity to give back in an area I'm passionate about, but it taught me many leadership skills I will be able to use for the rest of my life. I felt our role as athlete reps was a huge success. We had the opportunity to build incredible relationships with athletes, coaches, officials, our mentors and other members of the planning committee, and especially each other. I believe that we were a great help doing anything we needed to help the meet run smoothly. Whenever information needed to be shared with each team, each of us were able to let the teams we were assigned know. Each team was able to be informed in just a few minutes. We were also able to help the gratitude campaign really take hold and be a bigger part of the meet. If I ever had an opportunity like this again I would definitely take it. It was so much fun, and a really eye-opening experience. I would recommend this experience to other high school athletes, but only if they were willing to work. Being an athlete rep was so much harder than I thought it would be, but it was absolutely worth it. Some of my favorite parts of being an athlete rep were getting to know the swimmers on my teams and lining up the walkouts. [MEET DIRECTOR NOTE: The Athlete Reps led championship heat parade to the blocks--often with inflatable mascot Rocky dancing before them.] I would greatly encourage people who are considering using athlete reps in their meets to do so. It is such a good experience for the athlete reps, the athletes of the meet, and a great help to meet personnel.
- Feedback from the parent of an Athlete Rep:
  - This was a good experience. My child is changed, in a good way, a result of this experience.
  - There are lasting benefits that come from the kids introducing themselves to other people (especially other adults.) ***It changes how they see themselves and how others see them.***
  - On why the athletes were so much more comfortable talking with the Athlete Reps as opposed to adult meet leadership: There is a different trust level peer on peer. Other swimmers aren't perceived as a threat. They are perceived as being there to help. The other adults representing meet leadership are either in uniform or likely visibly stressed. :)
- Ideas on why the idea of Athlete Reps worked well and what might be needed to duplicate the idea successfully in the future:
  - The Athlete Reps were not competing in this meet--this was a meet for 14 & unders. They were all older and not eligible to compete.
  - There was both a "mentor" and a "chaperone" at the meet to support them. The chaperone was there to ensure their physical needs were met (sleep, food, driving them, etc.) The mentor was there to facilitate their success in their role. Both were vital.
  - They were given "real" work and responsibilities with real delegation.
    - They were allowed to do it how they saw fit, within given parameters. Tip: Check back, but don't do it for them.



- There was a training structure--they were well prepared to do what they were asked to do. The training structure lessened over time as the meet progressed and as they grew stronger in capacity and experience.
- Mentoring keys to success
  - Training/preparing them for what they'll be asked to do
  - Delegating real responsibility to them (Includes noting parameters and checking back, but not doing for.)
  - Foster relationship building
  - Give them a safe place to vent and to process ideas in productive ways on how to handle interpersonal conflicts
- A NOTE FROM THE ATHLETE REP MENTOR: A key role for the mentor, in addition to training and preparing Athlete Reps and delegating responsibility to them, is 1) Helping to clarify roles, responsibilities and goals and 2) Fostering relationship building.
- NOTE FOR NEXT TIME: It would have been helpful to have the mentor stay at the same hotel as the Athlete Reps ([MEET DIRECTOR NOTE: Because of comp rooms, this did not happen this meet.] It would have been helpful to
  - Debrief with the group at the end of each day &
  - Debrief with each Athlete Rep apart from the group (abiding by Safe Sport guidelines of course)
- Drawbacks to using Athlete Reps
  - Requires additional adult support (sometimes hard to find those willing and able to do this)
    - Athlete Reps were dropped off by parents at the venue at 8:30 am Tuesday morning and picked up from their hotel at 9 am Sunday morning.
  - Cost
    - Because of the demands upon them the meet paid for lodging and food throughout the meet. (NOTE: Lodging was partially covered through the use of comp rooms, breakfast was provided by the hotel, we opted not to utilize hospitality to feed them as it was determined that this was a break place for adults. Box lunches/dinners were provided except for Friday night when they had a meal together away from the meet. Their ticket to the Athlete Celebration Saturday night (including Saturday night dinner) was also paid for via meet proceeds.)
- **The Meet Mascot, Rocky, provided great opportunities for connection and was a great unifying feature of the meet.**
  - More information about the development and use of Rocky is in the Meet Souvenir Program. (*Meet Plan: APPENDIX Q: Meet Souvenir Program* Located at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) under category: *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* or search: WZAG2016 )
- **Daily Highlight & Other Videos + Audio/Visual Events Specialist**
  - We were very fortunate to have the help of an amazing swim dad and professional audio/visual events specialist.
    - His company, [Cornerstone](#), made a substantial donation to the meet, as well as several other professionals who came onsite. This made the outstanding videos and other







audio/visual contributions to the meet, including several scoreboard images (One in the athlete village, One in the volunteer area, Two on 7.5 foot plasma screens poolside and two additional screens at each end of the pool, one of which was utilized by the announcer,) quality speakers, and other equipment, possible.

■ In addition to the excellent videos already produced, over 14 hours of video of the meet has been recorded and is available for the promotion of USA Swimming and competitions.

- Feedback from one meet-goer: I loved having the video highlights for each day and having them posted online.

### ● Opening Ceremonies

- Very positive feedback. Athletes were attentive and had fun. Seemed to be a fun time for teams to come together and helped to build team unity early on. This is especially useful as all teams are all-star type teams--athletes often don't know each other well prior to the meet. It was a great start to a great meet! :)
- Teams were invited to create team shirts using a suggested color and the provided "Rocky Makes Waves" artwork (right.) All teams attending the Opening Ceremonies (14 of 17 teams) did this and it really added to the unifying effect of the event and made for great pictures too! See Opening Ceremony Highlights video at:



<https://vimeo.com/180434369>

### ● Gratitude Campaign & True Sport

- TrueSport was a great addition to the meet and made it very easy for me as the meet director--I really didn't have to do anything. They set up the gratitude scavenger hunt the first day, and the athlete reps did it the other days. It was popular. The kids enjoyed doing it, getting the SWAG provided by TrueSport and also the Deck Pass patch.
- The Gratitude Campaign was introduced at the Opening Ceremonies, and then integrated into the meet by TrueSport and the Athlete Reps. The Athlete Reps really helped to promote it throughout the meet and were indispensable in its success. One of the more noticeable ways of expressing gratitude was post-it boards. There were 2 white boards, and the end of a lane line wheel that were completely covered. There were also notes in the Officials room and one of the daily highlight videos featured athletes holding thank you signs they had made.

- Photos groups of athlete "Thank You Post-its" are available [Here](#) or in *Meet Plan Appendix C: Meet Messaging and Gratitude Campaign* at [HostGreatMeets.com](http://HostGreatMeets.com) see *2016 WZ Age Group Champs* category or search: WZAG2016. **Take the time to zoom in and read. You'll be glad you did! :)**

- Video of athletes holding signs expressing gratitude can be seen on the "Day 3" video at <https://vimeo.com/180433695>