



2026 USMS RELAY, September 25-27, Denver CO

Ozark LMSC Delegate Report – submitted by Maryanne Barkley, Ozark LMSC Chair

The 2026 USMS RELAY Annual LMSC Development conference topic “Event Development” in Denver CO was my first, and it was action packed! Ozark Delegates were incoming SLAM President Ashley Turpin and me. It was held in conjunction with the National Coaches Clinic (held every other year), the Ozark delegate was Patrick Sullivan. USMS National Office had provided all of us with SCHED accounts so we could plan our weekend. Friday afternoon was an optional session on Stroke Clinics, which was great since Ashley had recently helped lead a clinic at South City YMCA Storm Masters. We had a social hour, then dinner, followed by get-acquainted games. The teams were preassigned to help us meet new people. It was chaotic, but fun.

The first session on Saturday was titled, USMS 101 for New Volunteers, and all three of us attended to make sure we were all speaking the same language about USMS structure and operations. Patrick and I were awarded logo coffee mugs for speaking up with correct answers. Then the Welcome & NCC/Relay Kick-Off featuring USMS CEO Dawson Hughes and USMS Board President Ed Coates presenting their aspirations for the weekend.

Next, I attended Event Showcase: Types & Success Stories presented by Kimberly Elsbach, Jay Eckert, Janet Goodridge, Karin Wegner, Liz Dillmann, Karyn Austin. Each had a different type of event and outlined the work, success and obstacles involved. I was able to ask Karin Wegner from Club Assistant about the new operating procedure starting in 2027 requiring ALL swim meet registration must be conducted via Club Assistant (multiple events like at swim meet) or Run Sign Up (single events like Open Water). She reported that the fee is 6% plus a service fee for meet entry of less than 100 swimmers. When I expressed distress that this doubles the fees and service charges that Ozark LMSC event participants will pay, the retort was, “Just charge them more, triathletes pay \$200 for an event.” I agreed they do, but also advised that triathletes were a fraction of our attendees.

We all got a box lunch for the Recognition and USA Swimming Foundation Presentation with Ed Coates, Dawson Hughes, Kenny Brisbin, Tara Mack, Molly Hoover, USA Swimming Foundation. We enjoyed hearing the “thank you” speeches from those recognized; and were treated to USA Olympian Cullen Jones making the appeal for swim lessons funded by USA Swimming Foundation for children and adults. Venerable staff member Bill Brenner was recognized for his longevity and retirement.

After lunch I attended Event Economics: Running Sustainable Events with Kenny Brisbin, Peter Guadagni, appreciated the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. Next was Sanctions & Results Best Practices with Dawson Hughes, David Miner, Omar de Armas, Jessica Reilly, Robin Smith, & Chris McGiffin. It was helpful to get the perspective of National Office staff, Officials, and Meet Directors. Next was Technology & Troubleshooting with Jeff Strahota, Alina de Armas, Rick Osterberg, & Karin Wegner, very helpful to be proactive with meet technology. Lastly, I attended USMS / USA-S Dual Sanctioned Pool & Open Water Events with David Miner, Trey Taylor, Douglas Sayles & Robin Smith – they made sure it was understood that participants need to complete athlete safety training. Saturday night we joined the MOVY delegation for dinner and discussed ideas about co-hosting a meet in Columbia, MO in 2027.

On Sunday, I switched places with Patrick and attended the NCC pool session in Arvada, CO coached by Lilly King and Cullen Jones. It was exciting to hear from these elites and have them comment on our swimming. USMS has published both of their drill presentations on their social media, so check them out!

- Thanks for the opportunity to serve Ozark LMSC as a 2026 USMS Relay Delegate; link for info:
<https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/lmscs/lmsc-leadership-summit/relay-2026>