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. The Welcome & NCC/Relay Kick-Off with CEO Dawson Hughes and USMS Board President Ed Coates presented their aspirations for the weekend.

Next, I attended Event Showcase: Types & Success Stories which showcased 4 different types of events & 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. 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. Ransom J. Arthur Award plus Coach & Club of the Year were named. Venerable staff member Bill Brenner was recognized for his longevity and retirement.

After lunch I attended Event Economics: Running Sustainable Events, and I appreciated the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. Next was Sanctions & Results Best Practices which was helpful to get the perspective of National Office staff, Officials, and Meet Directors. Next was Technology & Troubleshooting, be prepared and be proactive with meet technology. Lastly, I attended USMS / USA-S Dual Sanctioned Pool & Open Water Events – 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 Team USA coach Whitney Hite and swimmers Lilly King and Cullen Jones. It was exciting to hear from these elites and have them comment on our swimming. USMS Facebook social media has published Reels from each explaining their drill presentations, check those out so you can hear it from them!

- 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