

## Maddie Sibilias - Dixie Zone Candidate for the At-Large Director



The Election Committee has deemed that Maddie Sibilias is a member in good standing of USMS. The candidate has indicated she is planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year and, if elected, is planning to attend all HOD Meetings during her tenure in office.

The candidate was nominated by *Megan Copeland* and received letters of recommendation from *Tom Boak* and *Rob Copeland* in accordance with our Election Operating Guidelines.

The candidate provided the following responses on the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form:

### Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

*I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year:*     Yes     No

*I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year:*     Yes     No

*I am planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office:*     Yes     No

*I have attended 2 or more HOD Meeting in the past five years?*     Yes     No

***Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:***

2016 Convention in Atlanta, GA (Sept 16<sup>th</sup>)

2017 Convention in Dallas, TX (Sept 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>)

### Section Three: Questions

***Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?***

My interest and involvement with US Masters Swimming began two years ago, at the time College Club Swimming was deep in development. When I was brought on to the CCS Advisory Board, some of the first people I met were past presidents of USMS and members of the National Office staff. I've always known, as have those around me, that swimming is a passion of mine, but something about those first meetings and interactions with our parent

organization lit a fire within me. After being invited to attend the 2016 Convention briefly, later attending the 2017 Convention for the full duration, practicing regularly with a local Masters team, and even competing in my first Masters meet, I have become increasingly invested in and passionate about the development and maintenance of this community.

The past two years on the College Club Level, I have served as the meet director for the Collegiate Club Swimming & Diving National Championship, boasting over 2000 athletes in 2017 and nearly 2200 in 2018. Holding this role and getting a glimpse of the values of the larger College Club community outside of my team, along with serving on the CCS Advisory Board, showed me the immense similarities between College Club swimmers and US Masters swimmers. These roles also taught me that serving others through the sport of swimming is something I want to continue to do for many years to come. This sport and its people have poured so much into me, especially through my involvement with the development of College Club Swimming, and I'd love nothing more than to be able to continue paving new ground for future members of both organizations.

Since I am still a college student, and have only been a registered USMS member for less than a year now, some may wonder why this is the next step I want to take, or how I am qualified to take on the role, knowing much less about the inner workings of USMS than most running for election. While this lack of experience within USMS could be seen as a disadvantage, I see it as just the opposite; I believe that I could bring a completely fresh perspective to a table that has seen the same thing for so many years now. Additionally, College Club Swimming, in some ways, has been modeled off of the structure of USMS, so I've seen a similar structure and division of roles on a smaller scale. When I took over as the meet director for College Club Nationals, I had never held anything close to that kind of a role before, but I completely transformed the meet and set an expectation and a standard for future years. I strongly believe my ability to do this stemmed from my perspective, my experience just as a swimmer, and from the time and dedication I willingly put in to serve the College Club community.

***What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future? As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?***

A couple issues I see USMS facing now and in the years to come are 1) relevance to younger members and 2) communication and cohesiveness.

In regard to relevance to younger members, I am referring to the lack of membership and retention that is typically seen in the 18-24 age range when compared to older age groups. A large chunk of this age group overlaps with the primary age range seen in College Club swimmers. Now that USMS is a parent organization to CCS, I believe there is a significantly larger opportunity to market to, invest in, and learn about the unique needs of this age group, and how they can be more effectively welcomed into and hooked on the USMS community. Already, CCS has begun to gather input and interest about the possibility of a discounted USMS membership for registered CCS swimmers; this is just the start of what could be a much more involved and impactful partnership. As a current College Club swimmer, likely an up-and-coming alumna advisor to the newly-elected CCS student advisory board, and a hopeful future lifelong Masters swimmer, I am already heavily invested in this transitional age group. Members of these two groups, CCS and USMS, already have abundant qualities in common, so now is the time to begin bridging the gap and helping the younger age group recognize that their swimming experience can continue with USMS. My perspective and knowledge about the College Club community and its members could greatly aid future partnership opportunities between the two organizations.

The second issue I identified is communication and cohesiveness. With this, I am referring to communication and cohesiveness between the Board of Directors/House of Delegates,

National Office staff, local volunteers, and members. In my two years with College Club, I know the National Office staff has changed significantly, and as I've met more and more of the staff through Conventions, visits to the office, and College Club work, I continually see that this staff is invested in the community they serve. However, just by attending Convention, it was evident to me that there was disconnect between the National Office and House of Delegates/BOD just based on the way delegates talked about the National Office and the work they were doing. I know that the National Office staff and its roles has expanded significantly in the last two years, so there have likely been some growing pains and general confusion. This is a similar issue that we faced when College Club Swimming was getting off the ground this year; numerous new things were happening with the student advisory board, with the National Championship, on the professional side with our USMS aids, and with member clubs and swimmers. Change is hard, but often necessary, and if anything, I've learned that this sport is not one that wastes time or resources on unnecessary items of business. I think there is more that may need to be done to ensure that each part of USMS feels included in and is communicating with the others, and I would be interested to further investigate this.

***Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:***

N/A

***Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.***

College Club Swimming - Co-Founder, Competition Committee member (2016-2018)  
Collegiate Club Swimming & Diving National Championships- Meet Director (2017 & 2018)

***Please list any other information you would like included.***

In addition to my work with College Club Swimming, I also work part time as an ATO (Automatic Timing Official) and volunteer with my summer swim league at the league level. I've coached at club and summer league level, taught swim lessons, and of course, swam for nearly 15 years. Currently, I am going into my 5<sup>th</sup> year at Georgia Tech studying Aerospace Engineering with a minor in Technology & Management.

***Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting***

It has been a privilege learning about and beginning to invest in the USMS community by way of College Club Swimming over the past two years, and I see this time now as the start of lifelong involvement with USMS. I am committed to the mission of this organization, to fostering an inclusive community, to growing membership, and to striving to help our members thrive, which is the ultimate mark of success.



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

## **Letter of Nomination**

From: Megan Copeland

Date: April 30, 2018

To: USMS Elections Committee & USMS House of Delegates

It is my pleasure to nominate Maddie Sibia as a candidate for the office of at-large director from the Dixie Zone. The USMS Election Committee has my permission to reproduce and distribute this letter.

Sincerely,  
Megan Copeland  
Dixie Zone / Georgia LMSC



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

## **Letter of Recommendation**

From: Tom Boak

Date: April 29, 2018

To: The Elections Committee

At the 2016 USMS Convention in Atlanta, I was asked (along with Rob Copeland and Kyle Deery) to meet with several students from Georgia Tech to discuss the possibility of starting a new governing body called College Club Swimming. One of the students in that group was Maddie Sibia. Since that initial meeting, she has been a member of the CCS Advisory Board (essentially the Board of Directors), served as a member of the Competition Committee and was the Meet Director for the National Championships in both 2017 and 2018. There is little doubt that she has been a major influence in the formative years of this organization and has been engaged at every level. In addition, she has worked closely with USMS members and staff to develop the organization.

As an organization, we are continually looking for ways to engage younger athletes at every level. In addition to having the right skill sets to be elected to the USMS Board of Directors, she also represents this age group. I am excited that she has decided to run and strongly support her candidacy.

Tom Boak

Past President



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

## Letter of Recommendation

From: Rob Copeland

Date: April 30, 2018

To: USMS Elections Committee & USMS House of Delegates

I'm delighted to write this letter of recommendation for Maddie Sibilja as a candidate for at-large director from the Dixie Zone.

Over the past two years it's been my pleasure to work with Maddie as she served as meet director for the first two College Club Swimming national championships and as a founding member of the USMS College Club Swimming initiative. In this time I've been impressed with Maddie's leadership, maturity, organizational skills, passion, and dedication in running the nation's largest college club swimming meets. Maddie demonstrated these same skills in the planning, organization and introduction of USMS College Club Swimming, the highly successful program to encourage non-varsity college swimmers to share in camaraderie and competition through swimming.

While Maddie is new to Masters Swimming, she has been actively involved as a swimmer, coach, volunteer, and as USA Swimming automatic timing officer for most of her life. Maddie is looking forward to continuing her involvement in both the aquatic and volunteer side of swimming at the local and national levels.

Maddie hopes to continue on our College Club Swimming Advisory Board. I believe having a USMS board member also serving on the CCS Advisory Board will be a crucial bridge to deepen the relationship between College Club Swimming and U.S. Masters Swimming. Beyond strengthening the bond between CCS and USMS, Maddie will bring a unique perspective and voice to the board.

I've been impressed with what Maddie has done for College Club Swimming and college club nationals and I look forward to seeing what she will bring to U.S. Masters Swimming.

Sincerely,

*Robert Copeland*

Rob Copeland  
USMS Member from the Georgia LMSC  
USMS Past President

PS. The USMS Election Committee has my permission to reproduce and distribute this letter.