

International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics (IGLA)

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The International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics Association (IGLA+) is a global organization dedicated to promoting inclusion, diversity, and community through aquatic sports for LGBTQIA+ athletes and allies. Many USMS clubs continue to be active members of IGLA+, and its championships provide an important opportunity for international competition and fellowship.

The primary focus over the past year was the successful planning and execution of the aquatic competitions at the 2026 Gay Games in València, Spain. In addition to supporting the Gay Games, IGLA+ approved a modernization of its bylaws, re established several permanent committees, began forming continent-based committees, and started work on new Athlete Safety Policies and Procedures. To improve communication with member clubs, IGLA+ also began holding regular Town Hall meetings to provide updates and give members an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. The organization is also working toward standardizing championship swim meet requirements across future IGLA competitions.

Looking ahead, Montréal continues preparations to host the 2027 IGLA+ Championships. The bid process for the 2028 Championships has concluded, with Berlin, Germany being selected as the host city.

Overall, IGLA+ has had a productive year. Between the bylaw modernization, renewed committee structure, athlete safety initiatives, increased member engagement, and a successful Gay Games, the organization is well positioned as it looks ahead to Montréal in 2027 and Berlin in 2028.



Liaison and Special Appointments Reports

National Board of Review (NBR)

I became National Board of Review Chair effective October 1, 2025. I am very grateful that the prior Chair, Juliet Cox, agreed to remain as Vice-Chair. Her contributions and support over the past year have been invaluable.

The pool of hearing panelists over the past year has been:

Erin Sullivan, Breadbasket
Robin Tracy, Breadbasket
Alana Aubin, Colonies
Erika Braun, Southeast
Greg Weber, Southeast
Molly Hoover, Great Lakes
Elyce Dilworth, Great Lakes
Susan Ehringer, Great Lakes
Denise Brown, Great Lakes
Jim Clemmons, Northwest
Karen Chuang Harris, Oceana
Kerry O'Brien, Oceana
Gretch Sanders, South Central
Tom Boak, South Central
Mary Hull, Southwest
Arlette Godges, Southwest

Members Braun, Brown, Dilworth, Sanders, Sullivan, and Tracy served on hearing panels in 2026. Their thoughtful, conscientious service is recognized and greatly appreciated.

After the Annual Meeting, I will work with USMS President Ed Coates to assemble a new slate of panelists to present to the Board of Directors for consideration.

Grievance Activity

The NBR has addressed and resolved eight grievances since October 2025. Four of the grievances alleged that online posts to the USMS Community forum constituted “unsporting conduct” under USMS rules. One of those grievances was heard by a hearing panel, which concluded that unsporting conduct was not established and dismissed the grievance. The three other similar grievances were dismissed by the NBR Chair, with the concurrence of USMS President Coates, for failure to state a claim of unsporting conduct.

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One grievance alleged misconduct by individuals who are not members of USMS. That grievance was dismissed by the NBR Chair for lack of jurisdiction, again with the concurrence of President Coates. Then another grievance, based on the same factual allegations but against a USMS club, was dismissed by the NBR Chair (and President Coates) for failure to state a claim against the club.

One grievance was brought by an LMSC against a former member of the LMSC. It was the second grievance that the LMSC had brought against the same respondent: in this case, the LMSC alleged that respondent had failed to comply with the NBR's decision in the first grievance. This matter was heard by a hearing panel. The panel concluded that the LMSC failed to establish any violations of the NBR's decision in the first grievance. An appeal has been filed.

Finally, USMS CEO Dawson Hughes brought a grievance against a member facing criminal charges for alleged misconduct with an age-group swimmer. The respondent in that case chose to resign his membership in USMS, and the grievance was dismissed as moot.

David Benjamin
Chair, USMS National Board of Review

