

Event Showcase

Saturday, September 26, 2026

8:40am – 10:00am MDT

Jay Eckert | Kim Elsbach | Karyn Austin | Karin Wegner | Janet Goodridge & Liz Dillmann



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EVENT DEVELOPMENT
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USMS Event Services

- Supports event directors, volunteers, and members
- National Championships (pool, OW, virtual)
- Sanctioning and Insurance
- Results, Records, and Recognition
- Accounting/Finance
- Marketing



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USMS Event Development Program

- Event Consulting
- Marketing
- Grants (matching LMSCs)



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Event Showcase: Open Water Lake Berryessa Open Water Swims

Kim Elsbach – Get Fit Davis Masters, Pacific LMSC



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LAKE BERRYESSA OPEN WATER SWIM



7:49 66°

HUNDREDS OF SWIMMERS



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Considerations for Hosting an Open Water Swim

- Location
- Date
- Contracting
- Sanctioning
- Registration
- Emergency management
- Safety personnel
- Timing
- Volunteers



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Enhancing the Safety of Your Event

- Designated warmup area
- Thermal plans for heat & cold
- Shorter loops vs. longer straight-aways
- Emergency action plan
- Cancellation plan



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Enhancing the Safety of Your Event

Tow Float Options



CORRECT

INCORRECT



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Enhancing the Reputation of Your Event

- Facilities — even if Refreshments
- Awards
- T-shirts / Merch
- Just for fun categories



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Event Showcase: Small Local Swim Meets

Karyn Austin

Swamp Water Aquatics Gainesville (SWAG)

Florida LMSC



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SHOW YOUR



SWAG

swamp water aquatics gainesville

Third Annual Swim Meet ▪ April 23, 2023



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How to Get Started

- Secure facility, date and time
- Find a Head Referee
- Apply for sanctioning through USMS
- Secure timing system
- Create meet logo/theme
- Create committees within your team
- Post meet event
- Advertise
- Communicate with athletes
- Be **PRESENT**, **EXCITED**, and **WELCOMING** on event day, make it a whole team event!



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Show Your SWAG Meet

What was our WHY?

- Create a half day event that encourages all levels, ages and first-time participants in a fun and non intimidating way.
- Create an event that represents our team culture, the values of USMS and build something that our whole team takes ownership of.



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Show Your SWAG Meet



LOTS of pictures from team photographer



High Point Age Group Awards



Post Meet Social at Local Brewery

Create a theme, build the logo, then get creative!



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SWAGtoberfest Fall Meet



Props for photo ops = more social media posts!

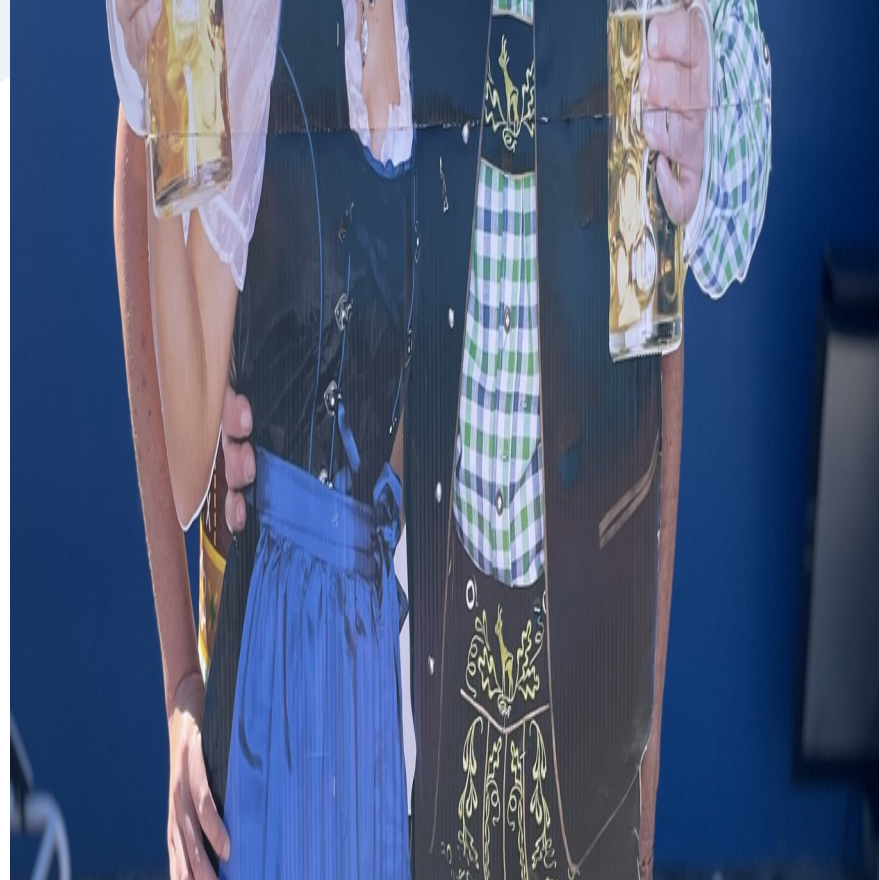


Photo and Hospitality Table

SWAGtoberfest Fall Meet



Lots of fun SWAG from
Oriental Trading Co.



Stand up Cardboard Cut Out



RAFFLE PRIZE Winner.
We had over \$500 in raffle prizes
donated by the team.



Coach Jeremy in the spirit



Our Queens of the Meet received
flowers and homemade soft pretzels



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Event Showcase: Mid-Sized Swim Meets

The Fabulous Las Vegas Masters SCM Meet at UNLV

Karin Wegner
Las Vegas Masters Meet Director
Southern Pacific LMSC



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The **Fabulous** Las Vegas Masters SCM Meet at UNLV

What makes our event special?

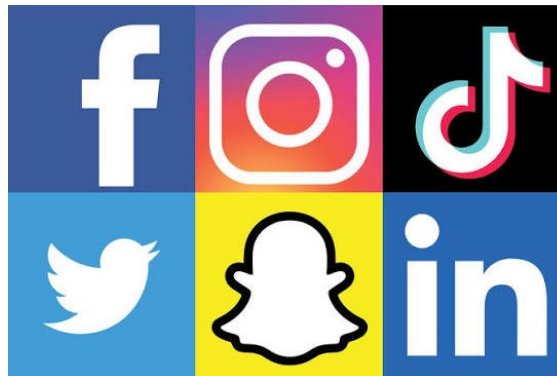
- Our goal is to be **EDITORIAL**.
- Everything our committee plans and implements is in line with the one mission to be editorial.



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What do we mean by EDITORIAL?

- In traditional media, EDITORIAL refers to content that is based on subjective judgment and storytelling, rather than paid advertising or objective hard news reporting.
- For Las Vegas Masters, EDITORIAL means we have included ELEMENTS that drive attendees to healthy judgment and ample storytelling, thus requiring no paid advertising nor news reporting.



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The Fabulous Las Vegas Masters Meet

Example elements - COSTUMES:

- We distribute silly hats, headbands and sunglasses to our timers.
- We encourage swimmers and volunteers to wear costumes.
- Our meet director wears a Ringmaster costume.
- Our officials and admin staff all wear gold sequin vests that we prepare for them.



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The Fabulous Las Vegas Masters Meet



Example elements:

ENTERTAINMENT

Elvis Presley & Vegas Showgirls

Characters / Cosplay

Music / DJ

Announcer

Props — e.g., Ringmaster's whip



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Example elements: PHOTOGRAPHY

Tag us on Instagram
#lvm_swim

- Extra large banner with huge Las Vegas Masters logo for photo backdrop.
- Elvis and Showgirls walk around and pose for photos.
- Ringmaster, other costumed guests available for photos.
- Published QR code and hashtag of our Instagram for sharing photos.



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The Fabulous Las Vegas Masters Meet

The OUTCOME of these unique elements:

- Our officials, staff, and volunteers are happy, having fun while working.
- Swimmers post photos and stories to Facebook/Instagram, tell friends/teammates.
- Teams begin organizing trip for next year.
- LMSC board members write website articles and social posts.
- Marketing of the swim meet is done by word-of-mouth, social media, gutter talk.

SPMS
SOUTHERN PACIFIC MASTERS SWIMMING

Home Calendar Membership Meets Open Water Fitness Newsletter Articles Awards Admin Donate

Announcements

July/August 2026 SPMS Newsletter

Desktop Version Mobile Version

Upcoming Events

- Aug 23 - Sun**
[CDM Don Burns Ocean Swim \(1 mile\)](#)
- Sep 05 - Sat**
[Silver State Senior Games](#)
- Sep 06 - Sun**
[Silver State Senior Games](#)
- Sep 13 - Sun**
[Redondo Beach Swim the Avenues \(1.2 or 0.5 miles\)](#)
[SPMS Coaches Call](#)
- Sep 20 - Sun**
[Mission Mile/SW Zone Open Water \(1 or 0.5 mile\)](#)
- Oct 04 - Sun**
[MVN Masters SCM](#)
- Oct 17 - Sat**
[MPSF Open Water \(Marine Stadium, Long Beach-1km or 5km\)](#)

Fabulous Las Vegas Masters SCM Meet



Event Showcase:

The Fabulous Las Vegas Masters Meet

Other editorial and special things we do:

- Gold, silver, bronze fancy poker cards in lieu of ribbons or medals. Results stickers go on the cards.
- Lane number placards with famous Vegas performers on each lane — e.g., lane 2 is Elton John, lane 3 is Cher.
- Free food and beverage for volunteers and staff.



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LANE 04



Share with us!
@lvm_swim



LANE 05



Share with us!
@lvm_swim

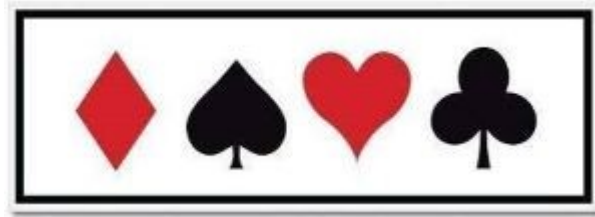


Example
lane
number
placards
hung
above
each
racing
block



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What is something fabulous you can incorporate into your swim meet?



How can you make your swim meet editorial?

Karin Wegner

Las Vegas Masters Meet Director

LVMswimming@gmail.com



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Event Showcase: Large Regional Swim Meets

ILMSA Short Course State Championships 2026

Liz Dillmann & Janet Goodridge
Fossil Fish Swim Club
Illinois Masters



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ILLINOIS MASTERS 2026 STATE MEET FMC NATATORIUM



FMC Natatorium at Ty Warner Park - Following

🎵 FMC Natatorium at Ty Warner Park - Original audio

The calm before...welcome Masters State athletes. #fmcforever
#ilmsastatemeet



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Hosting a Large Event: Why Host a State Meet

Hurdles include:

- Prior host's success conducting ILMSA State Championship meets.
- Fossil Fish's unproven ability to host an ILMSA State Championship meet.
- FMC typically prioritizes larger swim meets.
- Q1 of each calendar year, many large age-group meets including the TYR Pro Swim Series.



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Hosting a Large Event: Why Host a State Meet

Reasons to submit a bid:

- FMC Natatorium Pool - Facility & Location
- Return the ILMSA State Championship to Illinois – Requests from Local Clubs
- Strengthen the ILMSA swimming community
- Recruit key staff and volunteers familiar with the facility
 - Timing system
 - Meet entry chair
 - Meet director (FF)
 - AOs (mix of FF / others)
 - Announcer (FF)
- ILMSA Meet Referee and Officials



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Hosting a Large Event: Why FMC Natatorium

- Olympic-quality Myrtha Pool
- Two 9-lane Competitive Pools
- Separate 8-lane Warm-up Pool
- Omega Electronic Timing
- Deep Water
- Excellent Spectator Seating
- Controlled Air Temp & Ventilation
- Accessibility (airports/highways)
- Plenty of Parking
- Location (Airports, Hotels, Restaurants, Entertainment)
- Nationally Recognized Fast Pool (National/World Records)
- 2025 World Aquatics World Cup Series
- Annual TYR Pro – Series



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Warm Up/Down Pool

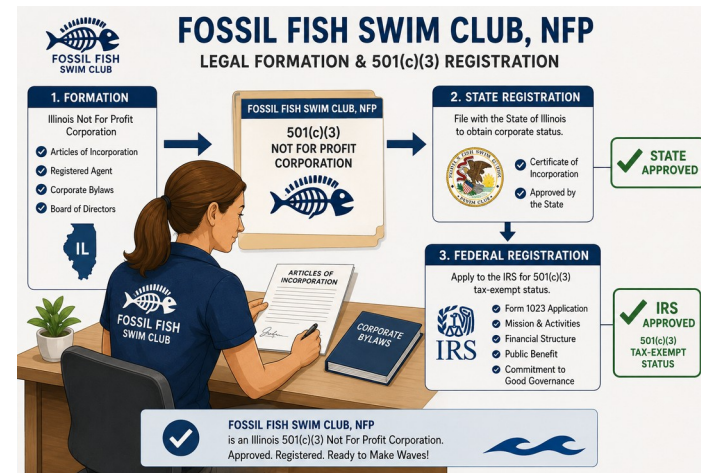


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Hosting a Large Event: ILMSA Bid Acceptance

Set up Not-for-Profit 501c-3

- Filed with State and Federal
- Reached out to local College for free legal assistance
- Setup bank accounts:
 - Swim meet entry proceeds
 - Payments to vendors and officials



Hosting a Large Event – Start with Planning

9 Months

- Secure Facility
- Meet Director
- Key Volunteers
- Facility Approval
- Submit Bid

5 - 7 Months

- Forming 501c-3
- Leadership Roles
- Sanction
- Volunteer Plan
- Contracts

4 Months

- Meet Packet
- Awards (Design)
- T-Shirts (Design)



Hosting a Large Event – Start with Planning

3 Months

- **Registration**
(Opens to IL Masters)
- **Event Caps & Lottery**
(Communication)
- **Volunteers**
(Sign-up Genius)
- **Awards**
(Ordered)
- **Hospitality & Concessions**
(Planning)

1-2 Months

- **Registration**
(Opens to all USMS)
- **Communications**
(Weekly email updates)
- **Walkthrough**
(ILMSA)
- **Volunteer Recruitment**
(Continues)

1-2 Weeks

- **Communications**
(2x wk email updates)
- **Entries Close**
- **Relays Open**
- **Psych Sheet**
- **Seed Verification**
- **Final T-Shirt Order**

2 Days

- **Final Walkthrough**
(Fossil Fish)
- **Heat Sheets**
- **Communications**
(Continues)



Hosting a Large Event: Getting Ready



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Hosting a Large Event: Swim Meet Time

VOLUNTEERS

- Availability – Age-groupers are heavily committed
- Prefer not to rely on Masters swimmers' families to staff meet
- Signup Genius (Janet)
 - Key positions first, recruit from team and front desk, then HS
 - Timers, runners, safety, concessions, hospitality, front desk (welcome/volunteer check-in/t-shirts together)

AWARDS

- Ordering Medals, Ribbons, Trophies (from known company), design and count
- Separate individual and relay awards; use different-colored labels; two volunteers for setup & distribution
- Staffing — Use someone trusted. Additional help at end of each day and end of meet.

T-SHIRTS

- Ordering / design (known company)
- Staffing — Use someone trusted.



Hosting a Large Event: Swim Meet Time

Hospitality

- Used known caterer

Concessions

- Work with FMC menu.

Pool Setup / Meet Days

- Signs – Create and post clear directional signage throughout the facility.
- Worked as runner between AOs, posting results, front desk, checking on hospitality, concessions, timers, etc.

Communication

- Janet and I shared our ideas and agreed on how to proceed through the entire process (start to finish)



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Hosting a Large Event – Swim Meet Time

Communications

- End of Day - Share daily reminders, schedule updates, highlights, and notable accomplishments (e.g., National Records) via Club Assistant - emails



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Hosting a Large Event: Financial Responsibilities

ILMSA Responsibilities

- ILMSA coordinated staffing for all deck officials across two pools, with Fossil Fish covering the associated costs.
- Awards Banquet: ILMSA organized and covered all food and beverage expenses and kept entry costs low allowing more to attend. Two volunteers were scheduled to assist but were ultimately not needed.
- ILMSA covered the costs of the Hall of Fame and High Point Awards.
- ILMSA approved the meet packet and subsidized Fossil Fish to help keep registration fees reasonable, which allowed Fossil Fish to cover higher FMC facility costs and overall event expenses.

Fossil Fish Swim Club Responsibilities

Facility Rental • Hospitality • Administration Officials • Concessions • Awards • Volunteers • T-Shirts

FFSC started with no funds and organized a 501c-3 not-for-profit corporation when ILMSA accepted the bid.



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Hosting a Large Event: Post Swim Meet

Financial Reporting

Send Meet Results to Swimmers/USMS

Thank You, Communications (Swimmers & Volunteers),

Medals/t-shirt mailings

Pay Facility & Officials



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Hosting a Large Event – Post Swim Meet

- ILMSA Survey Feedback
- Lessons Learned (what went well / what can be improved)



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Hosting a Large Event – Meet Summary

669

Swimmers

3588

Individual Entries

5.4

Avg Entries/Swimmer

198 (30%)

First-Time State Meet

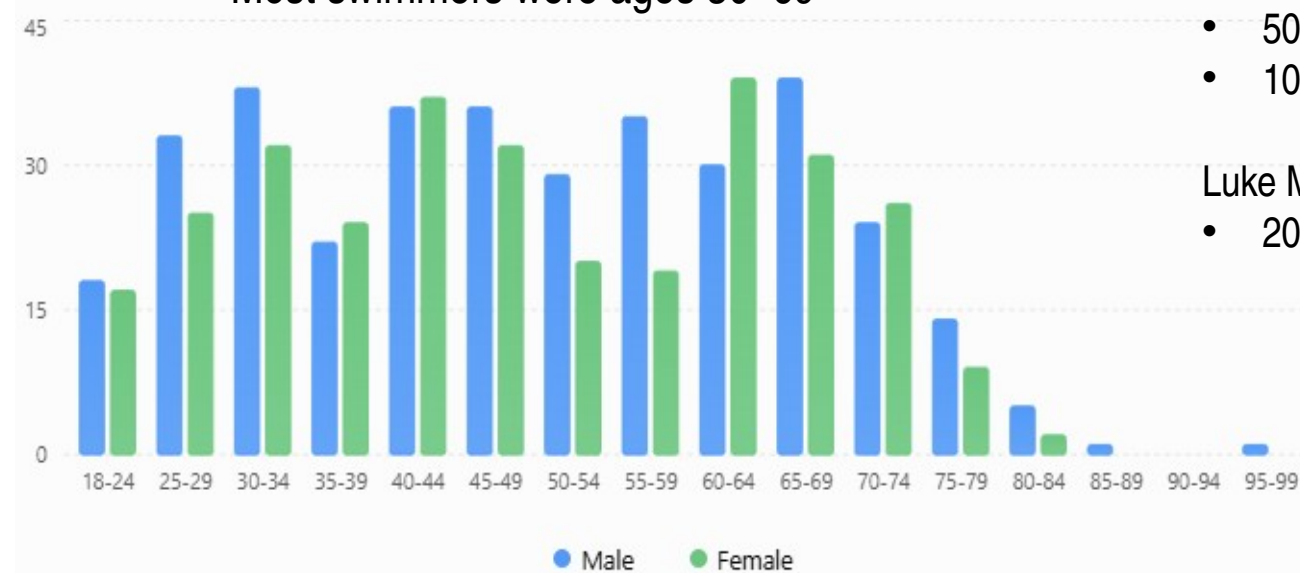
Meet Demographics

- Participants:
356 Men, 313 Women
- Age range: 18–95 (avg 49.2)
- Largest age groups:
40s (140)
60s (138)
30s (116)
- Swimmers from outside IL:
27 (4.6%)

Largest male age group: 65–69 (39)

Largest female age group: 60–64 (39)

Most swimmers were ages 30–69



National Records Broken

Richard McClow - Men's 95-99

- 50yd Breaststroke 1:02.17
- 100yd IM 2:30.20

Luke Maurer - Men's 18-24

- 200yd IM 1:48.81

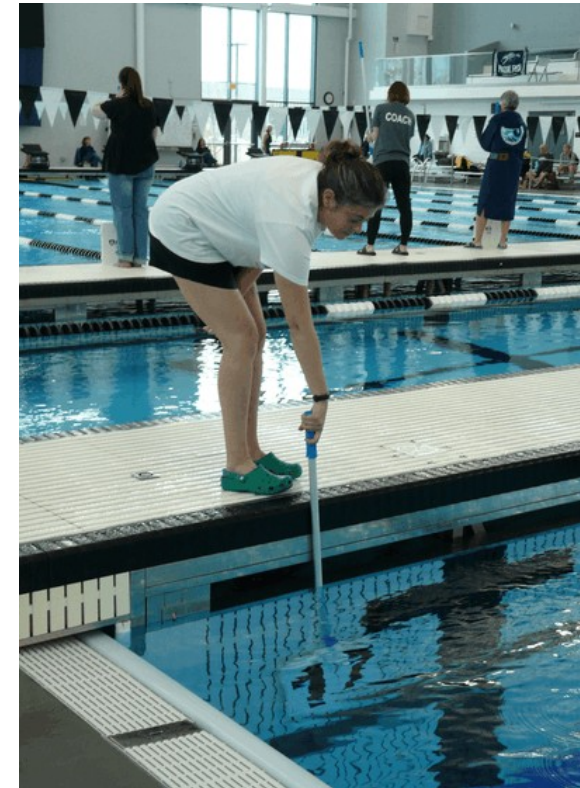


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Hosting a Large Event – Key Takeaways



Plan Early
Build a Great Team
Communicate Frequently
Focus on Swimmer Experience
Document Everything



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60 Years
Behind the Blocks

2026
Illinois Masters
State Championship



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Wrap Up / Q&A

Don't be afraid to ask. If
you're thinking it, someone
else is too!



Thank You!

Slides, Resource Links, and
Panelist Bios will be posted
on the USMS website

Panelist Bio

Kim Elsbach is a long-time Masters and open-water swimmer. She is the former chair of the USMS Open Water Committee and current chair of the Pacific Masters LMSC Open Water Committee. She is a past director of the Lake Berryessa Open Water Swim and a long-time volunteer. Kim has also chaired the Pacific Masters Adult-Learn-to-Swim (ALTS) Committee and is a Certified ALTS Instructor. She is currently a coach with Get Fit Davis Masters and a current ALTS Instructor. Kim has won over 50 USMS Open Water National Championship events and is a 9-time USMS Long Distance All-Star.



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Karyn Austin

- Founder & Head Coach of Swamp Water Aquatics Gainesville (SWAG)
- 2023 Florida LMSC Coach of the Year
- 2020 USMS Kerry O'Brien Coaches Award
- Level 3 Coach, ALTS Coach
- Swim Smooth Certified Coach
- USAT Level 3 Coach



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Panelist Bio: Karin Wegner

Karin Wegner lives in sunny Las Vegas with her husband, three teenage children, and two cats. Karin has been a passionate Masters swimmer since 2005, when she joined Garden State Masters, training at Rutgers University in New Jersey. During that same period, Karin was a career swim coach for Masters and age group swimmers in NJ, and served as meet director for YMCA and JCC meets. After settling in Las Vegas in 2010, Karin became the meet director for Las Vegas Masters. Coach Victor Hecker's 80th birthday inspired a Vegas-themed party atmosphere at the annual LVM meet. It was an instant hit, and the trend has continued. Karin is a founding member of Team Redbird, a private USMS club, and she spends business days supporting Club Assistant and SwimPhone.

LVMswimming@gmail.com



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Panelist Bios

Liz Dillmann — Liz is a Level 2 USMS and Level 2 USA Swimming coach out of Naperville, Illinois. She has been coaching 11-12 yr club swimmers for almost 20 years, and coaching Masters for slightly less. Coaching with FMC since its opening in 2020, Liz has served as the primary coach for the last 3 years and is on the Fossil Fish board with a focus on membership. Liz, along with Janet, has been an integral part of planning and execution of projects like the Annual New Years Day 100x100's and the 2026 ILMSA State Championships. Her swimming background reaches back to the Australian National Team in her teens to National and Pan Am Games titles in Masters swimming.

Janet Goodridge — Janet is a USMS Level 3 Coach at FMC Natatorium in Westmont, Illinois. She is the founder of Fossil Fish Swim Club, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and serves on its Board of Directors. Janet previously served as a Board Member of Chicago Masters Swim Club. As an active Masters swimmer, Janet competes in USMS local, state, and national pool competitions, as well as local and national open-water championships.

Janet.Goodridge@live.com



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