

Athlete Report 2023

Athletes Executive Council Report:

Submitted by AEC President Emmanuella Tchakmakjian

The AEC is immensely proud of the resilience shown by our athletes as they navigated scoring system changes. Their adaptability, dedication, and positive attitude in embracing these shifts not only highlight their commitment to excellence but also set inspiring examples for our organization.

With the evolving nature of our sport, the AEC has been actively discussing strategies to support athletes within USAAS. Our focus has gravitated towards the concept of promoting a sense of community. In pursuit of that focus, we launched our first “AEC office hours.” This was all about creating a space for athletes to hop on a call, chat informally, get to know the AEC, and share their thoughts. Our goal is to keep these sessions going on a quarterly basis.

Doing things a bit differently from previous years, we set up a call specifically for athlete representatives who were gearing up for Convention. The aim was to give them a solid grasp of their roles and clear up any questions before the big event. The response was fantastic – lots of athletes joined in. Our aim during that call was to foster a sense of community and motivate them to fully embrace their roles and responsibilities once they arrive. We discussed three upcoming projects and will use our Discord channel for collaboration and updates.

The first involves providing athlete representatives with more opportunities throughout the year. We'll gauge their interest and pair them with Vice President officers to collaborate on projects chosen by the respective VPs. The second project is creating an alumni network for athlete representatives. Given our large community, this could be a great way to offer mentorship, facilitate connections, and build a strong community. The last project is launching a quarterly newsletter for athlete representatives. We're eager to draw upon the ideas of our athlete representatives, aiming to make these projects as beneficial as they can be. We'll use convention as a time to discuss and develop these initiatives.

During the 2022-2023 term, the AEC consisted of the following individuals.

President: Emma Tchakmakjian

Athlete-at-Large: Claire Barton

2- General Board Athlete Representatives: Natalia Vaga & Bill May

Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative: Mariya Koroleva

Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative Alternate: Monica Velazquez-Stiak

Vice President, Olympic International: Amy Gao

Vice President, Competitive Operations: Katie Wiekowski

Vice President, Member Services: Ryan Lewis

Vice President, DEI: Luz Portilla-Villota

Collegiate Representative: Atira O'Neil

Secretary: Zofi Steffen

Team USA Athletes' Commission Leadership Group Representative: Morgan Fuller-Kolsrud

I'd like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the team for their exceptional dedication amidst the numerous changes this year. Their outstanding contributions have been impressive, and I'm so appreciative of their commitment to the organization in this capacity. We have a wide range represented on the AEC, from different zones and clubs, and this is incredibly valuable as we discuss ideas for all athletes within this organization. In addition, it was lovely to introduce Atira O'Neil as the first AEC Collegiate Representative to our team. The inclusion of the collegiate perspective in our discussions has brought about a remarkable transformation for the future of our organization.

The VP Competitive Operations, VP Member Services, and Athlete-at-Large positions are up for election. We plan to execute and complete these elections by the BOD/BOG meeting and will share the results at that time. I'd like to thank Claire, Katie, and Ryan for being wonderful leaders in their roles and for contributing to the organization in this capacity. I'm incredibly appreciative of their collaboration and willingness to share their voice as we've worked to improve the athlete experience!

Looking forward to seeing what we will achieve together in the year ahead.

Team USA Athletes Commission Report:

Submitted by Team USA AC Representative Mariya Koroleva

This year the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council was rebranded to the Team USA Athletes' Commission. The name and logo change reflects alignment with naming conventions for athlete voice groups internationally and enables better representation of the athletes our commission represents (e.g. Pan and Parapan athletes).

The AC was involved in several key initiatives and met with stakeholders from the USOPC, IOC, USADA, and Team USA partners. Some of the topics we discussed and debated were athlete services, health insurance and benefits, athlete agreements, and crisis management. We also participated in several discussions and feedback sessions about the USOPC's work to revise their resource allocation process. I believe it was important for the USOPC to hear feedback from smaller NGBs like USAAS to ensure that the allocation process is more equitable and that a variety of factors are taken into consideration besides medal potential.

Lastly, our group was heavily involved in gathering feedback for the Congressional Commission on the State of U.S. Olympics and Paralympics, as well as advocating for the opposition of California Assembly Bill 252 (a big shoutout to Morgan Fuller Kolsrud for her work on both of these projects). As we look ahead to Paris 2024 Olympic year, the AC is committed to focusing on athlete rights, safety, and advocacy for all of the athlete groups we represent.

In addition to our work on the Team USA AC, Monica and I served as athlete observers in USAAS National Team Trials for the 13-15, Junior and Senior age groups. We are proud of the performances these athletes have demonstrated on the international stage and we are excited to see the continued success of our national teams in the 2024 competitive season. We are looking forward to exploring new ways for us to connect with our elite athletes and provide them support during their time on the national team and beyond.