

# Athletes Committee Meeting Minutes

## PanAm Aquatics

**Date:** February 4, 2025

**Time:** 3:00 PM – 3:40 PM CT

**Location:** Zoom

**Facilitator:** Valerie Gruest (Chair)

**Minutes Recorded By:** Valerie Gruest (Chair) and Bill May (Secretary)

## 1. Call to Order

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The meeting was called to order at **3:00 PM CT** by Chair Valerie Gruest.

## 2. Roll Call / Attendance

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### Members Present:

- David Heron
- Dylan Woodhead
- Edgar Crespo
- Mel Goldstein
- Jack Dahlgren
- Percy Escobar
- Bill May
- Estefania Alvarez

## 3. Approval of Previous Minutes

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The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved with **no corrections**.

## 4. Committee Highlights & Announcements

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- **Athlete365 Feature:**

The PAQ Athletes Committee was featured in an **Athlete365 article** and

selected as a **case study** for the upcoming **Athlete365 AC Toolkit**.

Recognition reflects the committee's growing impact and visibility in global athlete representation.

- **Internal Development Goals:**

Focused discussion on supporting **committee development and growth**, including new programs, support systems, and communication tools.

- **Instagram Vote:**

The committee held a vote regarding social media content.

**Decision:** By majority vote (including follow-up in group chat), the committee **will continue to share Athletes Committee content via the main PAQ Instagram account**, rather than creating a separate account.

## 5. Initiative Updates & Action Items

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### Mentorship Program

- Members reminded to:
  - Schedule mentee check-ins and **log them in the tracker**.
  - Share motivation, themes, and insights via the mentorship group chat.
  - Submit **resources, quotes, and tips** for the next phase.
- **Action Items:**
  - Share suggestions for next theme (send to Val).
  - Keep tracking check-in progress.

### Underwater Chats (UWC)

- Expanded plans to include **topic-specific webinars** with a focus on mentee development.
- **Action Items:**
  - Submit **speaker suggestions** and **topic ideas** (send to Val).

### Winter Newsletter – Theme: Self-Wellness

- Call for contributions: quotes, stories, tips, and resources.
- **Action Item:**

- Share content with Val by **next week** for inclusion.

## PAQ NF & Club Certification Program

- Encourage NFs and local clubs to join the program.
- Info available via PAQ bulletins and email: **office@panamaquatics.com**
- **Action Items:**
  - Share info within your networks.
  - Express interest in contributing specific content or sessions to the program (message Val).

## 6. Regional AC Development & Outreach

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- Valerie has initiated outreach to all 45 PanAm Aquatics NFs regarding:
  1. Whether they have an active Athletes Committee (AC)
  2. Current athlete-led initiatives
  3. Desired areas for support
  4. Contact info for athlete reps

### NF Responses to Date (9/45):

- **CAN-AS & CAN-SW:** Active ACs; open to sharing best practices and resources.
- **BLZ:** No AC; only 1 athlete; seeking governance and athlete safety support.
- **ANG:** No AC; interested in learning and forming one.
- **JAM:** Yes AC; no initiatives yet; supportive of outreach.
- **HAI:** Undergoing NF restructuring; requested a call with Val.
- **USA-AS:** Yes AC; open to program development discussions (via Natalia & Bill).
- **TTO:** Yes AC; open to support (via Dylan C.).
- **SVG SF:** Pushback noted; negative stance toward athlete involvement - we need to directly address this and through conversation and examples gain their support (priority).

### Next Steps & Action Items

- Complete identification of athletes in NFs, even without full cooperation.
- Prepare for non-cooperation or resistance from some NFs.
- Encourage multi-discipline representation within NFs' ACs.
- Develop **educational content**:
  - Testimonials from other ACs
  - “Why ACs Matter” videos or quotes
  - Clear 101-style explanation of purpose and benefits of athlete committees.
- Foster peer-to-peer support between established ACs and developing ones.

## 7. Committee Role Assignments & Structure

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- **Confirmed Roles:**
  - **Chair (Valerie Gruet):** Communications, initiative planning & coordination, lead facilitator.
  - **Vice-Chair (Percy Escobar):** Athlete outreach, newsletter content.
  - **Secretary (Bill May):** Meeting minutes, internal communications, newsletter support.
- Members were encouraged to take on **specific roles or tasks** within future meetings and initiatives.

### Next Steps for Structure:

- Formalize roles for remaining members.
- Divide into **3 task forces**, each with a leader.
- Increase presence in leadership discussions across PAQ committees.
- Support athlete inclusion in governance meetings and initiatives.

## 8. General Updates & Miscellaneous

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- **Medellín Outreach:** Plans to engage with athletes during upcoming events.
- **Instagram Strategy:** Content for the Athletes Committee will remain part of the main PAQ account, with a focus on relevant, consistent posts.

- **Community Channels:** Emphasis on streamlined communication (not overwhelming members with notifications).
- **Clinic in Bolivia:** Percy reported on a clinic and discussed outreach, training, and open water strategies.
- **Sponsorship Check-ins:**
  - PAQ caps (promo discussed)
  - Gatorade - pending confirmation for use or sponsorship.

## 9. Adjournment

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The meeting was adjourned at **3:40 PM CT** by Chair Valerie Gruest.

### Minutes Submitted By:

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Valerie Gruest (Chair) & Bill May (Secretary)

*Date Prepared: February 4, 2025*