

Athletes Committee Meeting Minutes

PanAm Aquatics

Date: August 9, 2025

Time: 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM CT

Location: Zoom

Facilitator: Valerie Gruest (Chair)

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

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call / Attendance

Members Present:

- David Heron
- Edgar Crespo
- Yona Knight-Wisdom
- Bill May
- Kyra Christmas
- Percy Escobar

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.

Motion to approve: Passed with no corrections.

4. Committee Updates and Shoutouts

• **Shoutouts:**

- Recognition for all athletes who participated at the World Championships and other recent events.
- Instagram DMs and photos used for quick reactions and engagement.

- **Individual Contributions:**
 - **Everyone:** Involved in the mentorship program.
 - **Dylan Woodhead:** Recruitment for Impact Sessions.
 - **Edgar Crespo:** Led the outreach survey initiative.
 - **Bill May & Percy Escobar:** Worked on the newsletter, public relations, and flexible support roles.
 - **Kyra Christmas:** Recruiting for Underwater Chats.
 - **Javi:** Brainstorming topics for Underwater Chats.
- **Masters Working Group:**

Brief update was given on status and plan moving forward.

5. Brainstorming & Committee Development

- **Committee Growth & Representation:**
 - Goal to grow PanAm disciplines by establishing athlete reps as key points of contact for ACs across the Americas - 30 NFs onboard.
 - Proposal to have a rep present at each competition for outreach, award presentation, and athlete engagement.
- **Building Familiarity & Community:**
 - Town Halls and Q&A Zoom sessions proposed to increase interaction.
 - Exploring ways to hear full athlete stories through unrestricted platforms like UWC (Underwater Chats) and podcasting.
- **Engagement Tools & Content Delivery:**
 - Use of QR codes at competitions for athlete bios and content.
 - Short-form live content on Instagram/FB Live (approx. 30 mins).
 - Bonus content ideas include live feedback during events, commentary, and reactions via DM.
- **Survey Development:**

Proposed topics for athlete surveys include:

 - Scheduling preferences
 - Where athletes consume content

- Interest in webinars (live vs recorded)
- Desired topics for athlete education
- Preferred communication channels (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram)
- **Retention Discussions:**
 - Encouraging athletes to stay in the sport by transitioning into coaching and judging roles.
 - Adapting rules for longevity and knowledge retention.
 - Building experiences and events that support career transitions beyond competition.

6. Action Items

Item	Responsible Party	Notes
Continue development of Certification & Mentorship Program	Committee Leadership	Ongoing
Recruit speakers and plan topics for Underwater Chats	Kyra Christmas, Javi Ruisanchez, Jack Dahlgren	In progress
Promote committee initiatives via social & events	Bill May, Percy Escobar, Estefania Alvarez	Active
Develop internal structure and roles within the committee	Valerie Gruest, Percy Escobar	Active
Involve high-profile athletes in UWC and events	All Members	Priority

7. Announcements

- Next meeting October 11th + a check-in meeting in 2 weeks to discuss the PAQ Athlete Forum (brainstorm and program)
- Athlete survey development to continue circulating

- Members encouraged to provide feedback on UWC topics and outreach methods

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **3:35 PM CT** by Chair Valerie Gruest.

Minutes Submitted By:

Valerie Gruest & Bill May
Athletes Committee Chair & Secretary
Date Prepared: August 9, 2025