

Please review each candidates answer as to why they want to serve on the ACA Sprint Competition.

Anuar Akchurin: 10-year athlete

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I am interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee due to my deep passion for canoeing. I also enjoy collaborating with others on meaningful projects that support the growth of our community.

While reviewing the 2024 meeting notes, one project in particular caught my attention - a proposed series of competitions organized on the East Coast, the Central States, and the West Coast. If this initiative is still in development, I would love the opportunity to contribute and learn while helping bring it to life.

My goal is to support the growth of our sport, both internally through national competitions and externally through coast regattas and international regattas.

Thank you for making it possible to apply for such a cool thing!

Greg Barton

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

From my first nationals at age 11, to this year as a masters competitor, I've seen many ups and downs in US Sprint Canoe/Kayak.

After training and competing at the highest levels (4 Olympic medals and 4 World championship golds), I'd like see our sport prosper into the future. I'm excited to offer my insights and work with the sprint competition committee to get the most benefit for our athletes from available resources.

My experience includes time on the sprint committee and board of directors during the late 80's to mid 90's. Then a member of the USOPC Athlete's Advisory Council from 1997-2000. From there my focus shifted to growing a family and starting a business in the paddlesports field. I've continued to paddle and compete in multiple disciplines including marathon, surfski and outrigger in addition to sprint.

I appreciate your support for a position on the Sprint Competition Committee.

Alison Bergquist

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

We have been involved with Sprint Kayaking for the past 4 years. Both my son and I are athletes and my husband is on the board of LCKC. Being actively involved in our club has led me to want to take another step forward and be involved on the ACA level. I have time and administrative skills, along with a get it done attitude that can be helpful to the Sprint Committee.

Cami Collins

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I've been involved with sprint competition as a parent, volunteer, and board member at a club level for many years. I would like to become involved with the sport at a national level to help guide the future and grow our sprint programs.

Brian Ecker

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I am excited to apply for Sprint Committee Representative. My diverse experience in coaching, volunteering, executive leadership, and as a competitive athlete enables me to contribute meaningfully to the committee. I have competed at national and international levels, including Olympic team trials, giving me firsthand insight into the dedication and fairness needed in sprint sports.

As a coach and regatta volunteer, I understand sprint discipline from both participant and organizational perspectives, working closely with athletes, organizers, and officials. My coaching spans various endurance sports and age groups, fostering resilience, teamwork, and sportsmanship, and helping me advocate for inclusive policies. In my professional life as a C-suite executive, I've developed skills in risk management, fairness, and considering multiple perspectives. I value transparency and integrity in governance and am committed to upholding these as a committee representative. I believe committees thrive on diverse viewpoints, respectful dialogue, and impartiality, and I am prepared to listen, learn, and advocate for solutions that benefit athletes, coaches, and organizers. Thank you for considering my self nomination and allowing me an opportunity to further support the sport!

David Henson

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee? *

My name is David Henderson and I would appreciate your consideration to become a member of the ACA Sprint Competition Committee.

I became involved in Sprint Canoe/Kayak in 2021 by becoming an ACA National Certified Official. Since that time I have officiated at mid-season regattas and every Trials & Nationals. In 2024, I became an ICF International Official. Since becoming an ITO, I have officiated at the Junior Pan American Championships and the Pan American/South American Championships in Paraguay and a Pan American Cup regatta in Uruguay. I was also a USA Delegate to the COPAC General Assembly in Paraguay.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Sports Management from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. My experience in a different Olympic sport allows me to bring a unique perspective to the Sprint program. I had a 42 year career as a USA Swimming club Head Age Group Coach, Head Coach, Official, Team Coordinator, Meet/Competition Director, and a club owner. I worked with swimmers from the age of five through their mid-twenties. I also worked at and ran a large number camps, clinics and was on the Virginia Zone All-Star Championship staff eight times. I understand athlete development. My whole career was building a club program to make it successful at the local, state, regional and national level. Developing athletes to a level where they are able to compete in college and internationally has been a passion. I was involved with the governance of the sport at the local, state and national level for 38 years holding a number different board positions and committee memberships. I was awarded a life time membership to USA Swimming by Virginia and USA Swimming. For 17 years I worked in aquatic facility management and I finish my career as the General Manager of a new Aquatic Center in Hampton, Virginia. In retirement I continue to volunteer my time as a consultant, coach mentor and meet director for a local swim club.

Being a member of the ACA, ICF and COPAC has been a wonderful experience. It is my hope that I will be able to work and help the ACA Sprint program as a member of the Competition Committee for the benefit of the athletes, clubs, the ACA and international success for the USA.

Shelley Oates-Wilding

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I see the benefits of our sport as far and many. I believe we have many great processes and procedures utilized in the past and great ideas from our large community for the future. I'm interested in being on the sprint committee to assist in the communications between athletes/coaches/officials/ families and the committee as well as the timely, well communicated implementation of those processes and ideas.

Mark Parrish

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I would like to nominate myself, Mark Parrish, to the Sprint Racing Committee.

I have several decades of experience as an athlete, coach, official, club board member, and previous sprint committee member. As an organization I feel that we have generated positive momentum, and I would like to get actively involved to help develop and execute strategies to keep moving things forward. There are both great challenges and great opportunities facing sprint competition. My experience working with diverse groups across complex organizations has given me the tools to collaborate and implement effective strategies to achieve common goals.

I believe my experience in canoeing, management, and non-profit leadership are well-suited to helping drive growth in Sprint canoe/kayak. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the Sprint Competition Committee.

Steve Scoggins: 10-year Athlete

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

I'm interested in development, depending on who I had to work with on the committee.

Lia Sowers: 10-year Athlete

Why are you interested in serving on the Sprint Competition Committee?

Many of the previous Sprint Competition Committee members were in university and training but now have graduated and train full time. Their input as world class athletes is important, but it will be very difficult, nearly impossible to create another generation of world champions if we ignore the youths needs in balancing school, work, and training. Students in university require additional funding and support if they are to fully commit to the regiment of athlete training and I feel as though having someone who works, studies and still trains everyday having a voice on the sprint board is important. I'm ready to vouch for the younger talents (U18's) as their challenges and opinions are often overlooked as they don't compete internationally. If we want championship winning athletes, we want them in all ages and I'm ready to work towards creating a better national youth program as a generation ages out and a new one begins their journey.