

AWSA Midwest

August 2025 Edition

From the Desk of Your EVP – Darren Janzig

Hello Midwest Skiers!

What a whirlwind our short Midwest season always is! In just a few fast-paced weeks, we pack in local events, Regionals, and Nationals—and every year I'm reminded of the dedication it takes from both athletes and officials to make it all happen.

Congratulations to all of our skiers on their performances at the Midwest Regionals and AWSA Nationals, and a big thank you to the many officials and volunteers who kept everything running smoothly. The Midwest spirit of hard work and teamwork truly shined this season!



Ski you later,
Darren Janzig
EVP, Midwest Region – AWSA
midwestevp@gmail.com

Officials Corner

Announcements

The officials' advancement grid has been updated to reflect recently approved changes. Here are a summary of changes made this year and reflected in the chart:

- the minimum age for judges and scorers has been removed at all levels
- appointed and chief officials must still be 18+
- chiefing requirements have been replaced with ACJ requirements for advancement to senior ratings. This allows for qualified minors to advance through the process.

Please find the officials' advancement criteria here:

https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/blteb7d012fc7ebef7f/bltb06c793dbec3c4a6/6859ae6f490a130122047169/AdvanRenewal_-final_6-23-25.pdf

We want to hear from YOU! Got thoughts, ideas, or feedback? Don't hesitate to reach out to Maggie Cramer at tierneym2@gmail.com

.....

Celebrating Out Newest Officials or Upgraded Officials

New or Upgraded Officials

Emily Dammeyer - Pan Am Scorer STJ

Regional Awards



The Kevin Klingbeil Midwest Volunteer Award

Presented this year for the first time in honor of Kevin Klingbeil — recognizes volunteers who go above and beyond to make our tournaments, clubs, states, and region thrive! Our inaugural recipient, Grant Schipper, has immersed himself in every aspect of three-event skiing: leading the jump installation project at Trophy Lake Estates IV, serving as club treasurer, maintaining the site, hosting tournaments, judging at all Minnesota events, announcing at Nationals, and representing Minnesota as the newest

councilman along with still being involved in collegiate!

In true “above and beyond” fashion, the week of Regionals he called the Chief Judge to ask if earning his Senior Judge rating would help. When the answer was “yes,” he organized and drove the next night to test with the nearest examiner!

Quote from brother Brandon Schipper: "Grant is a reflection of Kevin and doesn't hesitate to do what needs to be done, he just does it. While also thinking about how he can help out at an even bigger scale and what may be needed in the future."

Grant's passion, initiative, and willingness to jump in anywhere (pun fully intended) make him the perfect inaugural recipient. Congratulations, Grant!

The Mary Jo Power Officials Award 2025

This year's Mary Jo Power Award was presented to Katie Brittain, recognizing her outstanding service and dedication at the 2025 Midwest Regional Championships. Although a longtime tournament worker, this was Katie's first year as an appointed official — serving as Assistant Chief Judge on the Trick/Slalom lake for Saturday competition.



From the first day on site, Katie made it clear she was committed to being the best official possible — asking thoughtful questions, seeking feedback, and soaking in every opportunity to learn. When multiple unexpected issues arose throughout the event, she handled each one with grace, fairness, and a calm, positive presence.

Her professionalism, growth mindset, and unwavering work ethic made her a standout choice for this year's award. Congratulations, Katie!



2025 Tommy Dorwin Sportsmanship Award

The Midwest Region is proud to recognize Sophie Janzig as the recipient of the 2025 Tommy Dorwin Regional Award. Sophie's contributions as Regionals Assignments Judge, her passion for mentoring new officials, and her tireless work behind the scenes have made a lasting impact on our community!

What makes Sophie's achievement especially inspiring is that she has accomplished so much at such a young age. She is living proof that junior and young adult skiers have an important role to play in the future of our sport. Whether by volunteering at tournaments or pursuing officials ratings, there are many ways to get involved and give back — and Sophie's example shows just how rewarding that can be and she always willing to speak to anyone interested in getting involved!

Congratulations, Sophie, and thank you for your leadership, dedication, and commitment to the Midwest water ski family!

Newest Hall of Fame Members

Our 2025 Hall of Fame Inductees, although they have not had their ceremony yet, have still been officially voted to become members of the AWSA Midwest Hall of Fame. To see a recap of all Hall of Fame members, please see the following link. [2026 Nominations Due 12/15/25](#)

Jim Babcock

The Midwest Region is proud to recognize the incredible contributions of James "Jim" Babcock, nominated for the AWSA Midwest Hall of Fame in the Official category.

A lifelong skier since 1954 and AWSA member since 1972, Jim is best known for his unwavering dedication to tournament safety and officiating. Over the past five decades, he has served as a

National Safety Director, Instructor, Trainer, Judge, Scorer, and Driver, working at every level of the sport — from state tournaments to world championships across AWSA, NSSA, Adaptive, Wakeboard, and Collegiate events.

Jim's leadership has shaped the sport in Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest. He's a two-term President of the Wisconsin Water Ski Federation, served 33 years as Midwest Council Representative, chaired safety committees at the state, regional, and national levels, and even produced the Midwest Regional Guide for 20+ years.

Along the way, his outstanding service has been honored with the Wisconsin Water Ski Hall of Fame (2017), Robert L. King Award (2014 Nationals), and numerous accolades for officiating excellence.

A humble "worker bee," Jim has spent decades training future safety directors — teaching 100+ clinics in 17 states — and quietly shaping the safety standards that keep our sport progressing. His nomination celebrates a career built on passion, commitment, and tireless volunteerism — a true icon in Midwest water skiing!



Greg Chapman

The Midwest Region proudly recognizes Greg Chapman, nominated for the AWSA Midwest Hall of Fame in the Official category.

A dedicated member of the Ohio Water Ski Association since the late 1980s, Greg has spent more than 20 years serving the sport as a Senior Driver, bringing his MasterCraft boat to nearly every tournament and being a cornerstone of events across the region. From his early days learning to slalom at Rainbow Lake to sharing the sport with his son Mark — who inspired his deeper

involvement — Greg has driven at every level of competition. His impressive résumé includes:

- 30+ Ohio State Championships
- 18 Midwest Regionals (Chief Driver in 2004)
- 9 AWSA Nationals (Chief Driver in 2008)
- Pan Am Championships (only Midwest Pan Am-rated driver)
- Numerous Pro, Jr. Worlds, Jr. U.S. Opens, and international tournaments

While he jokes his lone first-place finish was back in 1982 as a skier, Greg has helped set countless state, regional, national, and international records from behind the wheel — embodying the idea that "the skier doesn't get the record if the driver doesn't drive a record-capable performance."

Known not only for his skill but for being a kind, selfless, first-class human being, Greg Chapman's nomination honors decades of service, passion, and leadership in Midwest water skiing.

International Activities

Team USA Strikes Gold at U21 Worlds

Calgary, Canada — Team USA delivered a powerhouse performance at the 2025 IWWF Under 21 World Waterski Championships, capturing the overall team gold medal! With poise under pressure and big scores when it mattered, the American squad rose above fierce competition from rivals Austria, Australia, France, and Canada — thanks in part to team member Ty Kosek from the Midwest!



Under 21 Worlds 2025
Calgary, Canada

The Midwest was proud to have four representatives in Canada this year! Ty Kosek competed in all three events as a member of Team USA, with his scores contributing to the team's overall points. Jaret Zoellner joined as a Wildcard Member and competed in the jump event. Supporting the athletes, Christy Kingsmill served as Team Manager, and Erin Kalkbrenner took on the role of Team Coach.

We even had Midwest representation on the officials panel! Dan Van Dyke and Jeff Smith both were appointed judges for the event.

To view all of the results please visit: <https://iwwfed-ea.org/competition.php?cc=T-25IWWF01&page=25IWWF01>



Jaret Zoellner & Ty Kosek



TEAM USA WINS GOLD



Opening Ceremonies

Future Events

Junior Pan American Games - Aug. 18-21 - Asuncion, Paraguay

39th IWWF World Waterski Championships - August 26-31 - Parco Nautico del Sesia - Recetto, Italy

2025 Senior Pan Am Championships – October 1-5 at Pickos Ski School in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

Junior Skiers

Junior Skier Spotlight - Luke Owens

2025 has been a RECORD SETTING year for B1 skier Luke Owens. In June Luke set a new Midwest Tournament Record for B1 Slalom with 2@32 off @30.4MPH at Kim's Classic in Clio, MI. Just two weeks later in July he set a new Midwest Skier Record with 1@32 off at the Pleasant Shores Record in Van Wert, OH. One week later he broke his own Michigan State Record and set the new bar at 3@32 off in the State tournament. But he was not done yet. In Maize, KS at Mystic Lakes he

set a new Midwest Regional Tournament record of 5@32' off, which was previously 2.5@32' off set by Nate Smith in 2000 and tied by Bode Bulfer in 2021. Luke has won Midwest Regionals B1 Slalom 3 consecutive years. He tricks decently too as he has won Midwest Regionals two years in a row. In addition to waterskiing, Luke loves tubing, playing football, and basketball at home in Michigan. Luke is an excellent student and takes year around piano lessons and full immersion Spanish classes. Pictured is Luke with his 1 st Place medals in Slalom, Trick, and Overall, from the 2025 Regional tournament, and Luke thanking his driver Jim McClure for the drive in his record setting slalom run.



Collegiate Corner

AWSA Midwest Collegiate Team Regionals Participation Contest

The 2025 AWSA Midwest Collegiate Team Regionals Participation Contest recognizes the collegiate team with the strongest turnout at the 2025 Liquid Edge Midwest Regional Championships, celebrating programs that show up and support regional competition in full force. They receive \$750 from the region for their team to use however best needed for the team!



This year's winner was the University of Nebraska Water Ski Team, who earned the honor thanks to their impressive roster size and outstanding athlete attendance at the Regional tournament.

AWSA Midwest Scholarship Winners

Danil Roberts – UW-La Crosse

A finance major with a concentration in personal financial planning, Danil Roberts is not only excelling academically but also giving back to the ski community in meaningful ways. As Vice President of the UW-La Crosse Water Ski Club, Danil helped organize paid volunteer opportunities

to fundraise over \$2,000 for the team and continues to elevate its presence in the collegiate ski scene.

Beyond campus, Danil volunteers with the Bethany Water Ski Team in La Crosse, helping over 100 young skiers learn the sport — from first rides to barefooting basics. He also supports adaptive water skiing events with NASA, where his compassion and skill shine through while working with athletes with disabilities.



Danil's appreciation for tournament organizers and officials is clear in his own actions — volunteering at events like Nationals and helping with trick camera coverage to ensure smooth operations. His passion for water skiing runs deep, and he hopes to continue supporting the sport long after graduation through coaching and mentoring future skiers in the Midwest.



Reina Itai – University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

A civil engineering major and the current President of the Illini Waterski and Wakeboard Club, Reina Itai leads with heart, hustle, and a camera in hand. From managing registration and logistics to running the dock at tournaments, Reina ensures every event runs efficiently — often while also capturing the best moments to share with the larger waterski community.

Her leadership extends beyond her team. Reina served as the Midwest Representative on the NCWSA Marketing Committee, managing regional social media, boosting awareness of events, scholarships, and clinics. She's deeply committed to making the sport more accessible and inclusive, and her efforts have helped connect skiers from all backgrounds across the region.

Reina's impact goes far beyond her ski rope — she's a multi-year board member of the Japanese Student Association at UIUC and has juggled multiple internships, academic honors, and leadership roles with grace and determination.

📍 Collegiate ALUMNI Nationals

The first-ever Collegiate Alumni National Waterski Championships is set for August 28-30, 2026, at Bennett's Ski School in Zachary, Louisiana—a legendary host of NCWSA events.

It's time to reunite alumni from across the country for an epic showdown of waterski skills, nostalgia, and school pride. Whether you're chasing the alumni title, reconnecting with old friends, or daring to hit the ramp for the first time in decades, this event is for you!

The competition format is still in the works—team sizes, independent entries, and qualifications are all up for discussion. We need your input! Help shape this historic event by filling out our survey.

[Fill out the survey here!](#)

Any questions reach out to Jeff Surdej or Christy Kingsmill

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports

Advertisements and Announcements

AWSA Midwest Website

AWSA Midwest Facebook

Follow AWSA Midwest on Instagram

Please email [Christy Kingsmill](#) to become a part of the newsletter or if you are interested in writing for the newsletter! It is a great thing to put on a resume or an easy way to help out without a huge time commitment!



Christy Kingsmill

Christy is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters