

GENERAL EVENT INFORMATION

The 2026 Swimming South Africa National Aquatic Championships for Water Polo (hereafter “the Championship”) for both **Under 16 and Under 18** Men and Women will be held at the venues as stated below in Point 1.3 from **Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd March 2026**.

1. TEAM ENTRY CRITERIA

1.1 The Teams in the respective Men’s and Women’s sections will be representative of **Club/ Provincial/ District teams.**

1.2 Entries are limited to a maximum of **6 Women’s teams and 6 Men’s teams.**

1.3 Tournament Venues:

- a) Clifton School, Durban (Men)
- b) Durban Girls College (Women)

2. ENTRY PROCEDURES

2.1. All SSA Affiliates, who have water polo players, coaches, managers and technical officials fully registered with SSA for the current season are invited to compete at the championship.

2.2. Interested foreign-based water polo players would be permitted to participate in the championship, provided they have clearance from their respective Federations. Clearance from the respective federation must be submitted to SSA and the LOC.

2.3. All teams that wish to compete in this tournament must **complete the Intention to participate** form as attached and send details via their Affiliate to SSA ghakazile.nzama@swimsa.org or daphne.bird@swimsa.org on or before **30th January 2026.**



- 2.4. All costs for the team's participation and accommodation will be the responsibility of the Affiliate.
- 2.5. The Entry Fee for the Championship is **R15, 000.00** per team entered.
- 2.6. Affiliates that require invoices for payment purposes must request from mafata.modutoane@swimsa.org by latest **2nd March 2026**.

3. TEAM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Players must be registered with SSA for the current season.

The following criteria will guide the composition of our team:

3.1 Team Numbers

Each team will consist of fourteen **(14)** players in total: twelve **(12)** outfield players and two **(2)** goalkeepers,

Each team will consist of one coach and one team manager.

3.2 Inclusivity

At least three (3) players and one (1) team staff must be Black.

3.3 The closing date for payment into the following bank account is **15th February 2026**.

Bank Details:

Bank: ABSA

Account Number:1003790807

Branch Code: 508005

Reference: SAWP26 (Team Name & Affiliate)

Proof of payment must be sent to SSA through the affiliate.



3.4 The relevant team manager must produce a copy of proof of payment and proof of registration of team staff and players at registration.

3.5 The deadline for the final named entries for teams, including athletes, coaches, managers, and referees, is **16th February 2026**. The Provincial President must sign off on these entries. Affiliates are responsible for confirming that participants are fully registered with SSA.

4. TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

- 4.1. Only technical officials registered with SSA for the current season will be eligible to officiate.
- 4.2. Referees will be invited by the LOC to officiate at the Championships. All teams will contribute equally to the cost of these referees (travel, meals and accommodation).
- 4.3. Referees must be correctly attired, in black shorts, closed black shoes and a tournament shirt.
- 4.4. To enforce the rules, the referees shall be in absolute control of the game and their authority over players, team officials and spectators shall be effective from the moment they enter until they leave the venue of the match.
- 4.5. Referees' Workshops will be held one day before the commencement of the tournament. Attendance at the workshop is compulsory for all participating Referees.

5. TEAM OFFICIALS

- 5.1. Only team officials registered with SSA for the current season will be eligible to coach and manage teams.



5.2. Team Officials must be correctly attired, with long trousers, closed shoes, and identical shirts. Failure to comply will result in the exclusion of the official for that game.

5.3. Team Manager meetings will be held at the venue on the **morning of the 19th March 2026 at Clifton Aquatic Centre** before the commencement of the championship.

Attendance at this meeting is compulsory for all coaches and managers.

6. COMPETITION RULES

World Aquatics Water Polo Rules enforced on 1st July 2025 will apply to all sections. Specific competition By-Laws are detailed below. For further information, refer to World Aquatics Competition Regulations.

7. CAPITATION

Players, coaches, managers, and officials must be fully capitulated to SSA through their affiliate.

8. TEAM COMPOSITION

8.1 Each team must consist of a maximum of fourteen (14) players: twelve (12) outfield players and two (2) goalkeepers. A team must start the game with not more than seven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper and who shall wear the goalkeeper's cap.

8.2 After the game has started, teams are **not required** to have a designated goalkeeper. They may play with **seven (7) outfield players**, none of whom will have goalkeeper privileges.

8.3 Each team must have at least **one (1) coach and one (1) team manager**.

Coaches and team managers **may not** coach or manage any other team in the tournament.



8.4 Players **may only compete for one team** throughout the tournament.

8.5 The Men's and Women's sections will compete as **Club or Provincial Teams** affiliated to SSA through their provincial affiliate.

8.6 Where a provincial team is not strong enough to compete at the championship, an affiliate invitation team (a combination of capitated provincial players) may be entered.

8.7 Players registered with one affiliate may request permission from SSA to be released and play for another provincial team in a different affiliated region.

Requests for player transfers must be submitted to SSA no later than 30 January 2026.

9. TEAM DRESS CODE

9.1 All players on a team must wear costumes of the same design and colour.

9.2 Team managers and coaches must wear matching shirts and bottoms with closed shoes.

10. CAP COLOURS AND GAME START POSITIONS

10.1 The first team listed in the official programme must wear white (light-coloured) caps and start the game on the left side of the jury table.

10.2 The second team must wear blue (dark-coloured) caps and start on the right side of the jury table.

10.3 Each team is responsible for providing its own caps.



11. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- 11.1 Before participating in a game, players must remove any articles that could cause injury.
- 11.2 Fingernails must be kept short.

12. FIELD OF PLAY

Field of play is 25 m x 20 m for both men and women.

13. MATCH TIME

- 13.1 The duration of the game shall be four periods each of eight minutes actual play.
- 13.2 Time shall commence at the start of each period when a player touches the ball.
- 13.3 At all signals for stoppages, the time shall be stopped until the ball is put back into play by the ball leaving the hand of the player taking the appropriate throw or until the ball is touched by a player following a neutral throw.
- 13.4 The maximum ball possession time on attack has been reduced from 30 to **28** seconds whilst all corner throws, rebounds and exclusion times have been reduced from 20 to **18** seconds.
- 13.5 There shall be a two minute interval between the first and second quarters and between the third and fourth quarters and a three-minute interval between the second and third quarters.
- 13.6 The teams, including the players, coaches and officials, shall change ends before starting the third quarter.



14. SUBSTITUTIONS

- 14.1 A visible high five is no longer required when making a substitution in the re-entry area; however, both players' heads must be visible in the re-entry area.
- 14.2 A high five touch is still required in the flying substation area.
- 14.3 If a player leaves the field of play through the re-entry area or flying sub area, the SAME player may re-enter from the exclusion area or flying substitution area.

15. METHODS OF SCORING

- 15.1 by a player **who visibly puts the ball into play** from:

- a goal throw;
- outside of 6 metres;
- after a swim off or the commencement of a period;
- after a timeout;
- restart after a goal;
- after an injury;
- after replacement of a cap;
- after the referee calls for the ball or calls for a neutral throw;
- when the ball leaves the side of the field of play;
- taking a free throw outside of 6 metres;
- after any other delay.

- 15.2 A goal is counted **only when the entire ball** fully crosses the goal line, passing **between the goalposts** and **under the crossbar**.



16. FOULS

- 16.1 If a player is fouled **inside the 6m area**, they must first play the ball, swim outside the 6m area and take a direct shot.
- 16.2 If a foul occurs **inside 6m**, but the ball is **outside 6m**, the player must retreat outside 6m, play the ball first before taking a direct shot.

17. TIMEOUT

- 17.1 A timeout may be called by the attacking team coach once a penalty is awarded and both teams may make substitutions.
- 17.2 Where a timeout is called at a 2m throw, the restart will take place at halfway.

18. IMPROPER ENTRY

Penalty throws will be awarded in the following scenarios regardless of possession:

- 18.1 No high five in flying substitute zone.
- 18.2 Substitute enters field of play before other player reaches the exclusion area.
- 18.3 Excluded player enters field of play before the possession time has expired.
- 18.4 A player re-enters from an area other than the exclusion zone unless they are in the flying substitution area.



19. ILLEGAL PLAYER (8TH PLAYER)

Any player who commits an illegal entry will no longer be punished with a red card for misconduct, but rather just a personal foul, and if not their third personal foul, they may continue to participate in the game.

20. FREE THROWS

The first or second player closest to the ball must play the ball. If any player thereafter plays the ball, then a turnover foul will be called against the team in possession.

21. INJURY AND BLOOD REPLACEMENT

Both situations will be treated in the same way, and players will be substituted at the referee's earliest convenience without any undue delay.

22. OTHER

The following is now permitted

22.1 Passing a ball back to an outfield player or goalkeeper behind the halfway line.

22.2 An attacking player is permitted to swim the ball back behind the halfway mark.

22.3 An attacking player is permitted to remain in the same position without intention to attack.



23. TRANSFORMATION POLICY:

- 23.1 A **minimum** of three **(3)** black players per team and one **(1)** black official per team.
- 23.2 Teams that arrive at their match without a black official or teams that do not have a black official on the team bench during a game will forfeit their game.
- 23.3 Teams that arrive at their match without meeting the **(3)** black player requirement will forfeit their game.
- 23.4 SSA reserves the right to take additional action against the offending affiliate.

24. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

- 24.1 Failure to adhere to the Transformation Policy as directed under Section 23 of the Rules document will result in exclusion from the championship, and the team management will appear in front of the disciplinary committee.
- 24.2 The team captains shall be playing members of their respective teams and, together with the team coach, will be responsible for the good conduct and discipline of the team.
- 24.3 **Misconduct** – exclusion from the game and, if necessary, a hearing will be held for the following behaviours:
 - a) Unacceptable language – including being directed during general play.
 - b) Equipment abuse - intentional damage to pool/team/club equipment.
 - c) Disobedience of referee instruction.
 - d) Disrespect to a referee – including lack of respect or courtesy to an individual/team.
 - e) Dissent – gesturing/splashing at an individual, including a referee or Official.

24.4 **Aggressive Play** – Exclusion from the game, and if necessary, a hearing will be held for the following:

To do or attempt to do any act of aggression to another player with malicious intent. Examples include, but are not limited to elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, head butting, eye gouging, sustained sinking, or any other form of malicious physical abuse of that player.

24.5 **Violent Action** – Exclusion from the game which will also include a mandatory one (1) game suspension and if necessary, a hearing will be held for the following behaviour:

To do or attempt to do any act of extreme violence to another player with malicious intent.

Examples include but are not limited to elbowing, punching, kicking, head butting, eye gouging, biting or any other form of malicious physical abuse of that player. Dependent on the outcome of the disciplinary hearing, a further sanction may apply.

24.6 Coaches, assistant coaches, or managers who receive a red card for one or more of the following behaviours toward an official during the tournament will serve a mandatory one (1) game suspension. In addition, the district affiliate will be sanctioned with a **fine of R1000**, payable before their next game. If necessary, a hearing with the Disciplinary Committee will be held at the tournament:

One or more of the following behaviours towards an official:

- a) Unacceptable language and/or abuse
- b) Equipment abuse
- c) Disobedience
- d) Disrespect
- e) Continuous disrespect
- f) Abuse and/or assault of a Referee or Official
- g) Bringing the game into disrepute.



24.7 Official misdemeanors are as per World Aquatics Rules.

24.8 Water Polo is a contact sport. The incidence of traumatic injuries is the highest of all the SSA aquatic disciplines. A Medical Team shall be ready to address any injuries that may occur.

25. SELECTORS

All National Selectors must be present at the championships for the full duration of the event.

SSA reserves the right to co-opt additional selectors if required.

26. RESULTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Medals will be awarded to **1st, 2nd, 3rd place** for all events.

Once the competitions have been completed, the official results will be posted on the Swimming South Africa website as soon as practically possible following the completion of the tournaments.

The Medal Presentation will be held at the venue once the results have been ratified and published. Podium finishers are requested to wear their Affiliate attire for the presentation.

Disclaimer:

Swimming South Africa and any other event organisers will not be held liable for any costs and expenses incurred by any person following cancellation of an event outlined in this Event Information Notice. The limitation of liability includes, but is not limited to, any costs and expenses incurred by any members, participants, coaches, and administrative personnel or medical staff of Provincial Affiliates or individual clubs in respect of the cancellation of the event. Swimming South Africa reserves the right to amend the above entry conditions as required.

