



PRECHAMPIONSHIPS 2026-27 MANUAL

NCAA General Administrative Guidelines

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THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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September 2026

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Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2026-27 academic year, the Association will sponsor 94 national championships – 43 for men, 49 for women and two for both men and women. Of the men's championships, four are National Collegiate Championships, 13 are Division I championships, 12 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. Of the women's championships, 10 are National Collegiate Championships, 12 are Division I championships, 13 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. The combined men's and women's championships are National Collegiate Championships.

The Prechampionship Manual will serve as a resource for institutions to prepare for the championship. This manual is divided into three sections: General Administrative Guidelines, Sport-Specific Information and Appendixes.

Sections one through nine apply to policies applicable to all 94 championships, while the remaining sections are sport specific.

Section 1.1 Definitions

Prechampionship Manual. Resource for institutions to prepare for the championship.

Administrative Meeting. Prechampionship meeting for coaches and/or administrators.

Appendixes. Any supplemental documents to be provided and distributed through the various resources.

Championship Manager. The NCAA staff member(s) responsible for the operational oversight of the championship.

Games Committee. The committee assigned to supervise the conduct of each championship session at a specific site. For finals sites, the games committee is typically the NCAA national committee.

NCAA National Committee. The sport committee with direct oversight responsibilities for the championship.

Nonpredetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host at the time of the participant/team selections announcement.

Playing Rules. The rules under which the competition will be conducted.

Predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host before the participant/team selections announcement.

Preliminary Rounds. The rounds of the championship before the final or championship round.

Regional Alignment. The geographic location of institutions or regional advisory committees.

Schedule of Events. Official event schedule – includes all required activities (e.g., practices, banquets).

Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the team selection process.

Site Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the site selection process.

Squad Size. In any championship in which a squad limit has been established by the governing sport committee or by the bylaws, the number of eligible student-athletes in competitive uniform eligible to participate at the start of competition.

Tournament Physician. The physician designated by the host institution/conference to serve as the chief medical advisor for the championship event(s) to be hosted at the host venue.

Section 2 • Championship Core Statement

The championships and alliances staff strives to administer competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner so that the experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

This is attained by:

Ensuring student-athletes' optimal experience.

Executing championship events reflecting appropriate quality and values to/for stakeholders – student-athletes, coaches, administrators, member institutions, sport committees, fans, broadcast partners and corporate champions/partners.

Coordinating all aspects of the championship in an efficient, effective manner through common operating policies and practices, using internal and external resources.

Integrating championships with broadcast and corporate relationships in a manner that maintains the integrity of the championship.

Assuring effective management of the business aspects of the operation.

Enhancing the assets of the NCAA and their value by collaborating with internal and external expertise to achieve heightened exposure (e.g., community programs, fan events, banquets, anniversaries).

Section 3 • Conduct

Section 3.1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20.2.4, 31.2.1.7.1, 31.2.1.7.1.2 and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaws 7.3.1.5 and 18.2.1 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Division II Championships Committee Policy and Bylaws 31.2.1.5, 31.2.1.5.2, and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. Member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before the beginning of each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition.

Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.

DISCOVERY OF INELIGIBILITY OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

If an institution fails to report an ineligible student-athlete and the omission is not discovered until after the institution is selected to participate in the championship, necessitating the institution's withdrawal from the championship, that withdrawal shall be considered as one of the years of ineligibility, provided another institution participates in the championship in place of the disqualified institution. If the discovery of the ineligible student-athlete occurs so near the beginning of the championship that the governing sport committee does not have a reasonable period of time to replace the disqualified institution in the bracket, that fact shall be taken into consideration in determining the number of years the disqualified institution shall be ineligible to participate.

Section 3.2 Drug Testing

As part of preparation and planning to participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable policy and legislative requirements pertaining to banned substances, drug testing and related eligibility requirements with their student-athletes. Student-athletes who compete in NCAA championships may be subjected to drug tests in accordance with legislation and may be determined to be ineligible as a result thereof. Only student-athletes who have consented in writing to such testing are initially eligible for these championships; and thereafter, student-athletes who are tested shall remain eligible only if they test negative.

Section 3.3 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

Section 3•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in an NCAA championship is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct, unprofessional behavior or breach of law, occurring from the time the championship field is announced through the end of the championship, that discredits the event or intercollegiate athletics. Each games committee shall hold an administrative meeting with the representatives of participating institutions to review and explain the policies related to misconduct.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A governing sport committee may assess a financial penalty against an institution for failure of any of its representatives to adhere to the policies and procedures governing the administration of the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with the procedures and deadlines for submitting scores, score sheets, schedules, rosters and entry/march-in forms for qualification and other materials necessary for the efficient administration of the competition. [Click here](#) to see the full misconduct/failure to adhere to policies and procedures online.

Section 3•5 Sports Wagering Policy

Sports wagering includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest. Examples of sports wagering include, but are not limited to, the use of a bookmaker or parlay card; internet sports wagering; mobile betting; auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or contests; and pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize.

The current NCAA legislation against sports wagering prohibits NCAA student-athletes, member institutions' athletics staff and non-athletics staff with athletics responsibilities, and conference office staff from participating in sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics practice or competition in a sport in which the NCAA conducts championship competition, in bowl subdivision football and in emerging sports for women.

A wager is any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete found in violation of the prohibition against knowingly participating in any sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activity that involves intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition shall be ineligible for further intercollegiate competition, subject to appeal to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of eligibility.

POSTSEASON

In championships in which a bracket format is used, student-athletes, coaches and administrators may not participate in bracket competitions where there is both a required entry fee and an opportunity to win a prize. Student-athletes and administrators may participate under current NCAA rules in bracket contests where there is no entry fee but a possibility of winning a prize. Some NCAA member schools, however, have chosen to ban student-athletes from participating in these types of bracket contests.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is permissible for NCAA championships to be conducted at locations in states that permit sports wagering.

Section 3•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey

During the NCAA championships, the student-athlete experience is paramount. NCAA staff and hosts dedicate themselves to planning the best experiences for all involved. As part of our commitment to getting better, following the championship, participants will receive a survey to provide feedback on their experience and input on how championships can be improved for future NCAA student-athletes. Institutional administrators and coaches will receive

an email containing a link to the survey and will be asked to forward the survey to student-athletes. Additionally, this survey will be accessible via QR code found on the back of NCAA-issued championship credentials.

We also understand that sometimes certain circumstances or conditions occurring during the events may require real-time consideration. When this is the case, student-athletes may reach out to their site representative or NCAA national office staff on-site.

Section 4 • Elite Scholar-Athlete™ Award

The Elite Scholar-Athlete award was created to recognize the true essence of student-athletes by honoring individuals who have reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in their sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among their peers. The award is presented in every sport, every division, and goes to the student-athlete who has the highest cumulative grade-point average of all student-athletes competing at the finals site. One student-athlete per championship will receive the award, and the announcement of the winner will be made at the finals site.

Institutions that wish to nominate a student-athlete must do so through an online nomination process. For more information or to access the online form and submit a nomination, [click here](#).

Section 5 • Fan Travel

Through support from Marriott International as the Official Hotel Partner of the NCAA, NCAA championships are pleased to provide easy and affordable accommodations for family and fans to follow their favorite student-athlete(s) and team(s) as they participate in NCAA championships competition. Travel arrangements completed through Marriott and NCAA Travel help support NCAA student-athletes. Please direct your fans to ncaa.com/travel to search and book online hotel reservations.

Section 6 • Health and Safety

As part of preparation and planning to host and/or participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable health and safety policy and legislative requirements and guidance including, among others, those relating to concussion management, catastrophic injury prevention, inclement weather and independent medical care. These requirements and related information can be found in applicable division manuals, sports playing rules and the materials located on the [Health, Safety & Performance website](#). In addition, a summary of some of the key health and safety considerations related to traveling to championship events can be found in the [NCAA's Guidance for Medical Care and Coverage for Student-Athletes at Away Events](#).

Section 7 • Logo Policy

[Reference: Bylaws 12.5.4, 31.1.7 and 31.1.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 17.1.10 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Bylaw 12.5.3 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the court, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, baseball bats and gloves, batting or golf gloves, hockey and lacrosse sticks, goggles and skis) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public; and

2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warmups) and all other items of apparel (e.g., socks, head bands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats, swim caps and towels) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform and all other items of apparel shall not bear a design element similar to the manufacturer's trademark/logo that is in addition to another trademark/logo that is contrary to the size restriction.

Section 8 • Research

In order to avoid inappropriate and unnecessary participant distraction and disruption of championship events, it is expected any data collection or other research efforts conducted at or during championship events will be coordinated through the national office, with notice and a description of any research proposal to be submitted to the NCAA research staff at least six weeks before the championships event begins.

Section 9 • Travel Party

Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. NCAA Travel policies are updated annually and can be found online [here](#). Please reference Appendix A of the travel policies for reimbursable travel party numbers. The travel policies supersede all other documents.

Section 10 • Religious Conflicts

[Reference: Bylaws 31.1.4.1 and 31.1.4.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

Institutional Policy. If a participating institution has a written policy against competition on a particular day for religious reasons, it shall inform the NCAA national office on or before Sept. 1 of each academic year in order for it or one of its student-athletes to be excused from competing on that day. The championship schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate that institution. *(Adopted: 4/22/98, Revised: 8/11/98, 10/28/99, 5/2/13)*

Individual Championships. In individual championships, an athlete must compete according to the institution's policy regarding Sunday competition (if the institution has no policy against Sunday competition, the student-athlete shall compete on Sunday if required by the schedule).

Section 11 • Team Replacement Policy

Division I developed a team replacement policy considering the possibility of unforeseen circumstances impacting championship fields. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the terms set forth in the policy document available [here](#) when, despite best efforts, a team within the championship field is impeded or hindered from participating in the championship for reasons beyond its control.

National Collegiate Water Polo

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Section 1 • General Administration

Section 1.1 NCAA Tournament Operations Staff Contact Information

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Director, Championships and Alliances
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317-917-6706 / ctolliver@ncaa.org

Kerstin Hunter
Coordinator, Championships and Alliances
P.O. Box 6222 / Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
317-917-6645 / khunter@ncaa.org

Section 1.2 National Committees

The list of current men's committee members may be accessed [here](#).

The list of current women's committee members may be accessed [here](#).

For additional information about the National Collegiate Men's and Women's Water Polo Championships, contact:

Chad Tolliver
Director, Championships and Alliances
317-917-6706 / ctolliver@ncaa.org

Wes Yourth, men's chair
Deputy Director of Athletics, COO
University of the Pacific
209-946-7408 / wyourth@pacific.edu

Ted Minnis, women's chair
The Friends of Harvard Water Polo Head Coach
Harvard University
617-496-1875 / minnis@fas.harvard.edu

Section 1.3 Important Dates

MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Wednesday, Oct. 21	Initial nominations of officials from conference offices are due to the NCAA.
Friday, Nov. 20	Institutions must notify the national office if any student-athletes are ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.
Sunday, Nov. 22	Final evaluation/rankings of officials by conference offices are due to the NCAA. Selection call (tentatively scheduled for 8 p.m. Eastern time). Final selection of recommended officials.
Monday, Nov. 23	Selection show on ncaa.com (noon Eastern time).
Tuesday, Nov. 24	Administrative videoconference with participating teams (2 p.m. Eastern time).
Friday-Sunday, Dec. 4-6	Championship, hosted by the University of California, San Diego.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES

2026

Dec. 4-6	Canyonview Pool; University of California, San Diego, host.
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DATE FORMULA

Opening-Round Game (if applicable): Saturday after Thanksgiving or the Wednesday before the championship, if hosted at the championship site.

Championship: First weekend in December (Friday, Saturday and Sunday); the championship may be conducted the first weekend in December (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) only if a participating institution has a policy that precludes the institution from participating on Sunday.

FUTURE DATES

2027

Dec. 3-5 Schaal Aquatics Center, University of California, Davis, host.

2028

Dec. 1-3 TBD

2029

Nov. 30-Dec. 2 TBD

WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Tuesday, March 9	Initial nominations of officials from conference offices are due to the NCAA.
Friday, April 9	Institutions must notify the national office if any student-athletes are ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.
Sunday, April 11	Final evaluation/rankings of officials by conference offices are due to the NCAA. Deadline to submit opening-round game bids; 5 p.m. Eastern time.
Monday, April 12	Selection videoconference, 4 p.m. Eastern time. Selection show on ncaa.com (noon Eastern time). Final selection of recommended officials.
Wednesday, April 14	Administrative videoconference with participating teams (2 p.m. Eastern time).
Wednesday, April 21	Opening-round game at the championship site.
Friday-Sunday, April 23-25	Championship, hosted by Stanford University.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES

2027

April 23-25 Avery Aquatic Center; Stanford University, host.

DATE FORMULA

Opening-Round Game): Wednesday before the championship, at the championship site.

Championship: Last full weekend in April (Friday, Saturday and Sunday); the championship may be conducted the last weekend in April (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) only if a participating institution has a policy that precludes the institution from participating on Sunday.

FUTURE DATES

2028

April 28-30 Greensboro Aquatic Center, Greensboro, North Carolina
Guilford College and Greensboro Aquatic Center, hosts.

2029

April 27-29 TBD

2030

April 26-28 TBD

Section 1•4 Eligibility for National Collegiate Championships

[Reference: Bylaw 20.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

An active member institution in good standing, regardless of division, is eligible for the National Collegiate Championships if a division championship in the respective sport is not offered in its division. Such an institution normally is required to meet only the institutional individual eligibility requirements of its division that govern the sport in question.

Section 1•5 Equipment

The Kap7 ball is the official ball of the 2026-27 National Collegiate Men's and Women's Water Polo Championships. One ball will be given to each participating team after the finals. The remaining balls become the property of the host institution.

Section 1•6 Rules

Per NCAA Division I Bylaw 17.35, member institutions shall conduct all of their intercollegiate competition in accordance with the playing rules of the Association in all sports for which the NCAA develops playing rules. For those sports in which the Association follows rules developed by other governing bodies and modified by the governing sport committee, the adopted playing rules shall be used. The governing sport committee will not consider any results for selection purposes not played in accordance with the NCAA rules books.

The official NCAA Water Polo Rules shall be followed. Questions regarding the interpretation of rules should be addressed to the secretary-rules editor.

David Alberstein
559-901-8159 / albersteind@gmail.com

COORDINATOR OF OFFICIALS

The national coordinator of officials for men's and women's water polo will work closely with the secretary-rules editor, rules and sport committees, and the officiating and coaching communities. This individual will assist the sport committees in official assignments for the championships, assist conference assignors in leading clinics throughout the regular season (if applicable), conduct evaluations of officials throughout the year, and assist in the creation of a rules test and supplemental educational materials for officials and coaches on the current rules and areas of emphasis for the year.

Steve Redding
National Coordinator of Officials
NCAAh2opolo@gmail.com

Section 1•7 Uniforms

Each team shall supply light and dark water polo caps, complete with protective ear guards as specified in the NCAA Water Polo Rules. The higher-seeded team in the bracket will wear dark caps.

LOGOS

[Refer to General Administrative Guidelines, Section 7.](#)

Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

Section 2•1 Championship Format

MEN’S CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2026 National Collegiate Men’s Water Polo Championship is a nine-team, single-elimination tournament. Seven conferences have been granted qualification into the bracket or opening-round structure and two teams will be selected at large without geographical restrictions. Seven teams will qualify directly to the championship; the remaining two teams will compete for the last championship berth via an opening-round game, with the winner earning the remaining berth in the eight-team championship bracket. The opening-round matchup will be determined by the NCAA Men’s Water Polo Committee during the selection process.

NOTE: Due to the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference declining its automatic qualification for the 2026 championship, all eight teams will qualify directly into the bracket with no opening-round game.

Teams shall be selected by the Men’s Water Polo Committee Nov. 22. The teams selected to participate will be announced via a selection show at **noon Eastern time, Monday, Nov. 23**, on [ncaa.com](https://www.ncaa.com).

OPENING-ROUND GAME

The following parameters will be applied for the opening-round game, if applicable:

- Based on rankings and geographic proximity, the committee will determine the pairing of the teams that will participate in the opening-round game, and which team will serve as the host.
- The opening-round game may be contested Saturday, Nov. 28, or Wednesday, Dec. 2. The location will be determined by the committee.
- A 90-minute closed practice time will be reserved for each team the day before competition.
- The host team will receive reimbursement, including, but not limited to, score-table personnel fees, security, ticketing operations and venue staffing costs.
- The visiting team will receive per diem for the travel/practice day before the opening-round game, the day of the opening-round game and the travel day after the opening-round game, if applicable. The NCAA will pay for travel expenses as long as arrangements are made through the official NCAA travel provider, Short’s Travel Management. The host should assist the visiting team in procuring hotel rooms.
- A site representative will be appointed by the NCAA Men’s Water Polo Committee to oversee the conduct of the opening-round game. The site representative will meet with the coach, administrator and athletic trainer of both teams the day before competition.
- Officials for the game will be recommended by the national coordinator of officials and approved by the Men’s Water Polo Committee. Teams will be notified of the game officials by 8 p.m. Eastern time the day before competition.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (ALL TIMES ARE PACIFIC TIME AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Monday, Nov. 23

9 a.m. Selection show on [ncaa.com](https://www.ncaa.com).

Tuesday, Nov. 24

11 a.m. Participant videoconference.

Thursday, Dec. 3

Practice Times (Closed practices, each team allotted one hour; teams to be determined)

8-9 a.m.

9:10-10:10 a.m.

10:20-11:20 a.m.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE WATER POLO

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

12:40-1:40 p.m.

1:50-2:50 p.m.

3-4 p.m.

4:10-5:10 p.m.

7 p.m. Championship banquet.

Friday, Dec. 4

Practice Times (Open practices, 30 minutes shared time; teams to be determined)

8-8:30 a.m. Game 1 teams practice together.

8:40-9:10 a.m. Game 2 teams practice together.

9:20-9:50 a.m. Game 3 teams practice together.

10-10:30 a.m. Game 4 teams practice together.

Game Times

Noon Game 1

2 p.m. Game 2

4 p.m. Game 3

6 p.m. Game 4

Saturday, Dec. 5

Practice Times (Open practices)

8-8:30 a.m. Winner Game 1

8:40-9:10 a.m. Winner Game 2

9:20-9:50 a.m. Winner Game 3

10-10:30 a.m. Winner Game 4

Game Times

2 p.m. Game 5: Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 2

4 p.m. Game 6: Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 4

Sunday, Dec. 6

Practice Times (Open practices; practice times to be determined based on championship game time)

TBD Winner Game 5

TBD Winner Game 6

Game Time

TBD Championship Game: Winner Game 5 vs. Winner Game 6

WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2027 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship is a nine-team, single-elimination tournament. Six conferences have been granted qualification into the bracket or opening-round structure and three teams will be selected at large without geographical restrictions. Seven teams will qualify directly to the championship; the remaining two teams will compete for the last championship berth via an opening-round game, with the winner earning the remaining berth in the eight-team championship bracket. The opening-round matchup will be determined by the NCAA Women's Water Polo Committee during the selection process.

Teams shall be selected by the Women's Water Polo Committee Monday, April 12. The teams selected to participate will be announced the same day via a selection show at 8 p.m. Eastern time on ncaa.com.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (ALL TIMES ARE PACIFIC TIME AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Monday, April 12

8 p.m.	Selection show on ncaa.com .
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Wednesday, April 14

11 a.m.	Participant videoconference.
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Wednesday, April 21

TBD	Opening-round game at the championship.
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Thursday, April 22

Practice Times (Closed practices, each team allotted one hour; teams to be determined)

8-9 a.m.

9:10-10:10 a.m.

10:20-11:20 a.m.

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

12:40-1:40 p.m.

1:50-2:50 p.m.

3-4 p.m.

4:10-5:10 p.m.

7 p.m.	Championship banquet.
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Friday, April 23

Practice Times (Open practices, 30 minutes shared time; teams to be determined)

8-8:30 a.m.	Game 1 teams practice together.
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8:40-9:10 a.m.	Game 2 teams practice together.
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9:20-9:50 a.m.	Game 3 teams practice together.
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10-10:30 a.m.	Game 4 teams practice together.
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Game Times

Noon	Game 1
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2 p.m.	Game 2
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4 p.m.	Game 3
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6 p.m.	Game 4
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Saturday, April 24

Practice Times (Open practices)

9-9:30 a.m.	Winner Game 1
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9:40-10:10 a.m.	Winner Game 2
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10:20-10:50 a.m.	Winner Game 3
------------------	---------------

11-11:30 a.m.	Winner Game 4
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Game Times

2 p.m.	Game 5: Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 2
4 p.m.	Game 6: Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 4

Sunday, April 25

Practice Times (Open practices; practice times to be determined based on championship game time)

TBD	Winner Game 5
TBD	Winner Game 6

Game Time

TBD	Championship Game: Winner Game 5 vs. Winner Game 6
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TRAVEL PARTY/BENCH LIMIT

The official travel party for the National Collegiate Men’s and Women’s Water Polo Championships is 20 persons. Participating teams are limited to a maximum of 20 student-athletes in uniform. An institution that is advised it is in violation of this regulation and does not promptly conform to it automatically shall forfeit the competition. There shall be no inordinate delay of the competition to allow an institution to conform to the rule. The 20 student-athletes must be designated at the mandatory administrative meeting by submitting the official travel party form. Player changes can be made up to 60 minutes before the start of the first game. No substitutions or changes are permitted to the squad list once it has been declared throughout the duration of the championships. The roster must have the correct cap number and spelling of names. The bench limit for these championships is 24.

Section 2•2 Results

SCORE-REPORTING INFORMATION

Water polo sports information directors will be required to enter scores after each contest using the statistics database. Caleb Vaughn (cvaughn@ncaa.org) at the NCAA national office will be providing more information to all sports information directors in the fall.

Section 2•3 Selection Information

COUNTABLE COMPETITION

For NCAA team-championship selection purposes, competition is countable only when the teams played are varsity intercollegiate teams of four-year, degree-granting institutions that conduct a majority of their competition in that team sport against varsity intercollegiate teams (see Division I Bylaw 20.2.4.6) of United States four-year, degree-granting institutions. Competition against service teams, professional teams, semiprofessional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges and club teams shall be excluded.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

[Reference: Bylaws 31.3.4 and 31.3.5 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

The following conferences are granted automatic qualification to the 2026-27 championships:

Big West Conference	Northeast Water Polo Conference
Collegiate Water Polo Association (women only)	Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (men only)*
Golden Coast Conference (women only)	West Coast Conference
Mid-Atlantic Water Polo Association (men only)	Western Water Polo Association
Mountain Pacific Sports Federation	

*The Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference has declined its automatic qualification this season.

Refer to [Appendix C](#) and [Appendix D](#) for conference composition.

AT-LARGE SELECTION

Two teams will be selected at large without geographical restrictions using the established selection criteria.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

The official travel party is 20 persons (including a maximum of 20 student-athletes in uniform). Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. Travel policies are available online at [ncaa.org/championships/travel](https://www.ncaa.org/championships/travel).

Section 2•4 Selection Criteria

[Reference: Bylaws 31.01.2, 31.01.3 and 31.3 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

The following criteria shall be employed by a governing sport committee in selecting participants for NCAA championships competition [Division I Bylaw 31.3.3; Criteria for Selection of Participants]:

- Won-lost record;
- Strength of schedule; and
- Eligibility and availability of student-athletes for NCAA championships.

MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

In addition to Division I Bylaw 31.3.3, the NCAA Men's Water Polo Committee defines the following primary criteria (not in priority order):

PRIMARY CRITERIA

- Head-to-head competition.
- Results vs. common opponents.
- Late-season performance defined as last 10 games, including conference championship tournaments (strength and results).
- Evaluation of Rating Percentage Index.

As listed above, the Men's Water Polo Committee will use the RPI as a primary selection criterion during the selection process. An institution's RPI ranking consists of three factors that are weighted as follows:

- Factor I - Winning Percentage - 25%
- Factor II - Opponents' average winning percentage - 50%
- Factor III - Opponents' opponents' average winning percentage - 25%

Once the teams are selected, the Men's Water Polo Committee will seed the top four teams, using the selection criteria listed above.

WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

In addition to Division I Bylaw 31.3.3, the NCAA Women's Water Polo Committee defines the following primary criteria (not in priority order):

PRIMARY CRITERIA

- Head-to-head competition.
- Results vs. common opponents.
- Rating Percentage Index.

If the evaluation of the primary criteria does not result in a decision, the following secondary criteria will be reviewed:

SECONDARY CRITERIA

- Late-season performance – defined as the last 10 games, including the conference championship.
- Results vs. teams already qualified and other teams under consideration.

As listed above, the Women's Water Polo Committee will use the RPI as a primary selection criterion during the selection process. An institution's RPI ranking consists of three factors that are weighted as follows:

- Factor I - Winning Percentage - 25%
- Factor II - Opponents' average winning percentage - 50%
- Factor III - Opponents' opponents' average winning percentage - 25%

Once the teams are selected, the Women's Water Polo Committee will seed the top four teams, using the selection criteria listed above.

Coaches' polls and/or any other outside polls or rankings are not used as a criterion by the Men's and Women's Water Polo Committees for selection purposes.

Appendixes

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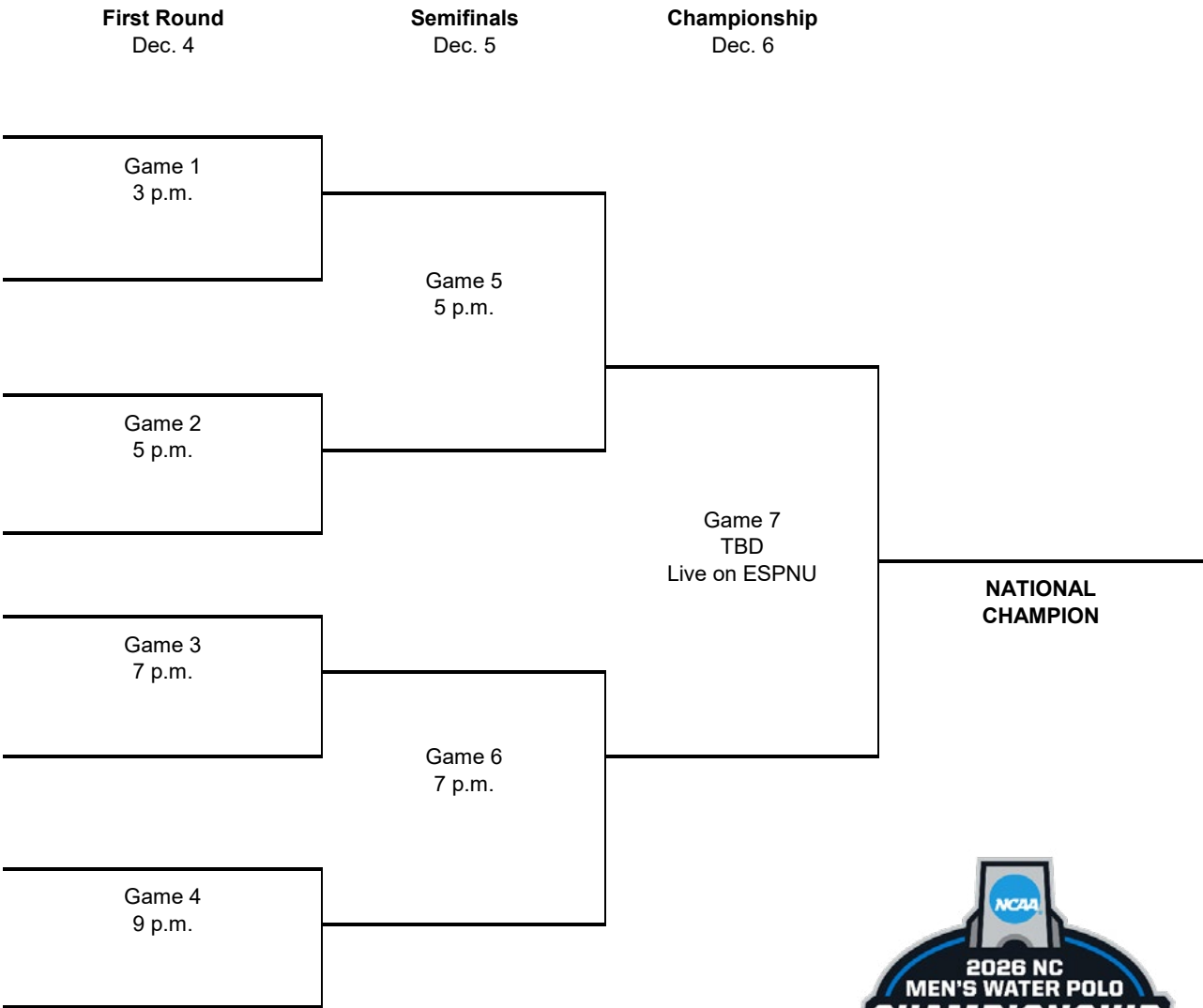
Appendix A • Men's Bracket



2026 National Collegiate Men's Water Polo Championship

Canyonview Pool
San Diego, California
Hosted by the University of California, San Diego

All games Dec. 4-5 streamed live on NCAA.com. Championship game will air on ESPNU.



All times are Eastern time.
Information subject to change.
For more details, visit ncaa.com.

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Appendix B • Women's Bracket



2027 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship

Avery Aquatic Center
Stanford, California
Hosted by Stanford University

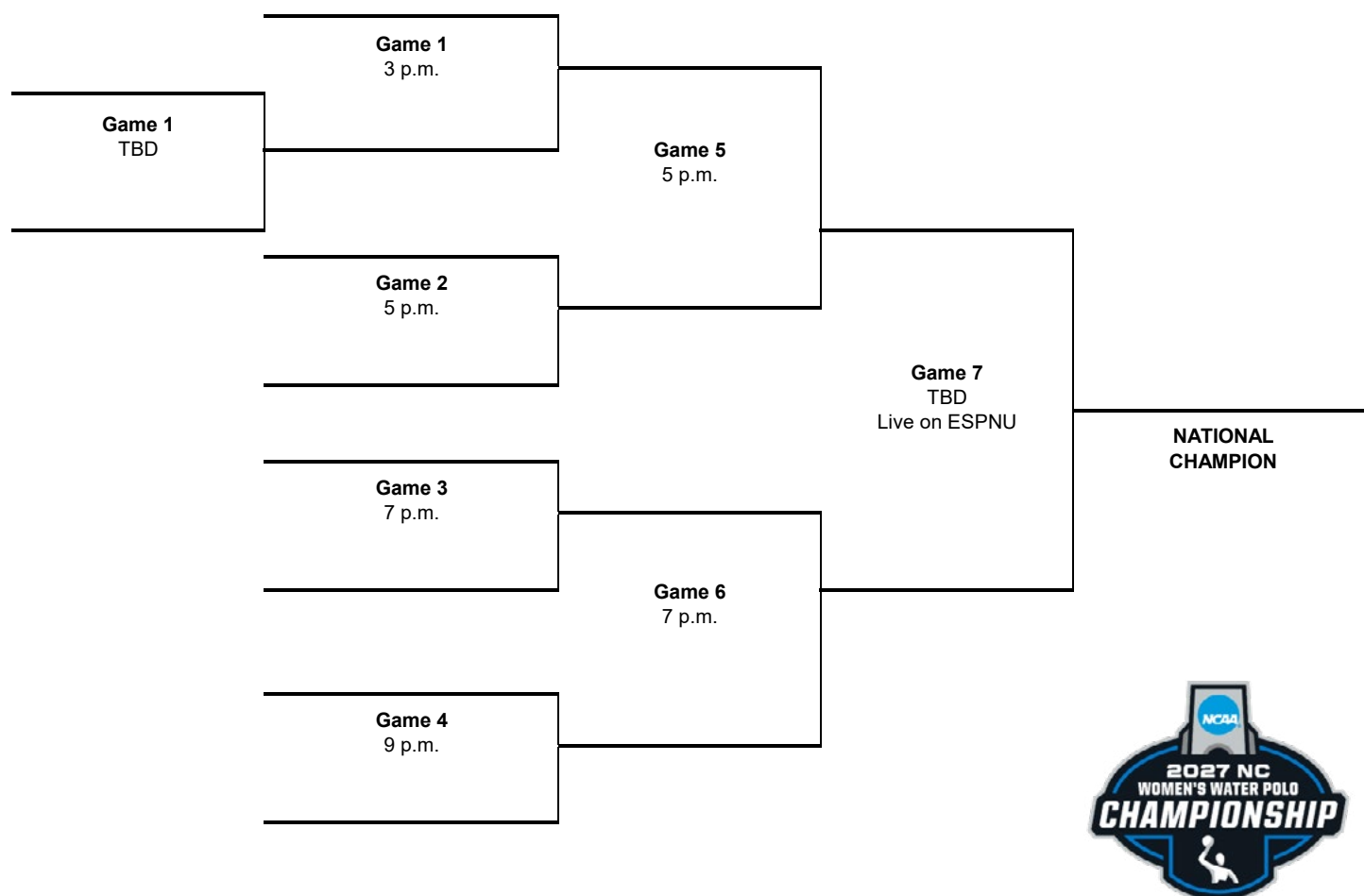
All games April 23-24 streamed live on NCAA.com. Championship game will air on ESPNU.

Opening Round
April 21

First Round
April 23

Semifinals
April 24

Championship
April 25



All times are Eastern time.
Information subject to change.
For more details, visit ncaa.com.

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Appendix C • Men’s Sport Sponsorship

EAST REGION

Mid-Atlantic Water Polo Association (7)

Bucknell University	Mount St. Mary’s University
Fordham University	U.S. Naval Academy
George Washington University	Wagner College
Mercyhurst University	

AQ – Conference Tournament

Northeast Water Polo Conference (6)

Brown University	Long Island University
Harvard University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Iona University	Princeton University

AQ – Conference Tournament

WEST REGION**Big West Conference (6)**

California Baptist University
 California State University, Fullerton
 University of California, Irvine

University of California, San Diego
 University of California, Santa Barbara
 Long Beach State University

AQ - Conference Tournament

Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (11)

Augustana College (Illinois)
 Austin College
 University of California, Berkeley
 University of California, Los Angeles
 Connecticut College
 Johns Hopkins University

Pennsylvania State University Erie, the Behrend College
 University of Southern California
 Stanford University
 Washington and Jefferson College
 Wheaton College (Massachusetts)

AQ - Conference Tournament

Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (9)

California Institute of Technology
 California Lutheran University
 Chapman University
 Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges
 University of La Verne

Occidental College
 Pomona-Pitzer Colleges
 University of Redlands
 Whittier College

AQ - Conference Tournament (*declined AQ for 2026*)

West Coast Conference (8)

University of California, Davis
 Loyola Marymount University
 University of the Pacific
 Pepperdine University

Saint Mary's College of California
 San Jose State University
 Santa Clara University
 U.S. Air Force Academy

AQ - Conference Tournament

Western Water Polo Association (7)

Biola University
 University of California, Merced
 Concordia University Irvine
 Fresno Pacific University

Gannon University
 McKendree University
 Salem University (West Virginia)

AQ - Conference Tournament

Appendix D • Women's Sport Sponsorship

Big West Conference (8)

California Baptist University
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Northridge
University of California, Irvine

University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Hawaii, Manoa
Long Beach State University

AQ - Conference Tournament

Collegiate Water Polo Association (Women's) (17)

Augustana College (Illinois)
Austin College
Brown University
Bucknell University
Carthage College
Connecticut College
Denison University
Grove City College
Harvard University

Macalester College
Mercyhurst University
University of Michigan
Pennsylvania State University, Erie, the Behrend College
Princeton University
Saint Francis University
Washington and Jefferson College
Wheaton College (Massachusetts)

AQ - Conference Tournament

Golden Coast Conference (9)

Azusa Pacific University
California State University, Fresno
University of California, Davis
Loyola Marymount University
University of the Pacific

Saint Mary's College California
San Diego State University
San Jose State University
Santa Clara University

AQ - Conference Tournament

Metro Conference (9)

Iona University
La Salle University
Long Island University
Marist University
Mount St. Mary's University

Siena University
Villanova University
Virginia Military Institute
Wagner College

AQ - Conference Tournament

Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (6)

Arizona State University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Los Angeles

Indiana University, Bloomington
Stanford University
University of Southern California

AQ - Conference Tournament

Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (9)

California Institute of Technology
California Lutheran University
Chapman University
Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges
University of La Verne

Occidental College
Pomona-Pitzer Colleges
University of Redlands
Whittier College

No AQ in 2027

Western Water Polo Association (8)

Biola University
California State University, Monterey Bay
University of California, Merced
Concordia University Irvine

Fresno Pacific University
Gannon University
McKendree University
Salem University (West Virginia)

AQ - Conference Tournament