



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA MEN'S WATER POLO COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Automatic qualification.**

(1) Recommendation. That the following seven conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2026 National Collegiate Men's Water Polo Championship: Big West Conference, Collegiate Water Polo Association, Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, Northeast Water Polo Conference, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, West Coast Conference and Western Water Polo Association.

(2) Effective date. Sept. 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. All conferences eligible for automatic qualification are being recommended. The remaining two spots shall be filled by at-large teams. If any conference identifies that it intends to not accept its automatic bid to the championship, the spot in the tournament field would not be filled by an additional at-large team.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Welcome and announcements. The chair welcomed the committee members and thanked them for their time.

2. Review and approval of previous meeting reports. The committee approved reports from its Dec. 5, 2024, and Feb. 5, 2025, annual meetings, as well as the Sept. 11, Oct. 2 and Oct. 23, 2025, videoconferences.

3. Review of the 2025 championship.

a. General review/comments. The committee was pleased with the championship experience at Stanford University. The host staff put on a great event and there was high quality competition. The banquet was noted as the best in recent years. The committee

requested that the same format (e.g., food available on arrival, multiple food stations, short program) be shared with future hosts. Additionally, the location of the team hotel was convenient for teams. The Wi-Fi speed was sometimes challenging at the hotel, so next year's participant manual will include a suggestion to upload and download game film at the venue if possible.

- b. **Review of survey results.** The committee reviewed the participant surveys and agreed that based on student-athlete feedback, the championship watches will be awarded on site for the 2026 championship. The watches were sent to the institution for the 2025 championship.

4. Review of the championship process and structure.

- a. **Game schedule.** The committee agreed that the game schedule for the 2025 championship worked well. The committee noted that for the 2026 championship, game times may need to be adjusted based on the championship game time (set by ESPN), as well as consideration for the sun glare at Canyonview Pool.
- b. **Selection criteria.** While the committee made no changes to the selection criteria for 2026, the committee will continue considering Rating Percentage Index adjustments for nonconference contests. The committee agreed that this should be reviewed and discussed for multiple seasons before any changes are made to the current selection criteria.
- c. **Film exchange requirements.** The committee discussed the language pertaining to mandatory film exchange and agreed to clarify the policy. Teams will not be required to film their games, as the committee recognizes there may be personnel or budget constraints. However, if a team films, it is required to share that film with its next opponent. Teams are not permitted to film games in which they are not participating due to the [NCAA Championships Team Content Policy](#). The committee also requested staff work with future hosts to provide game film that more closely aligns with the filming best practices as outlined in the participant manual.
- d. **Championship enhancements.** The committee noted the potential for video replay to be implemented at the 2026 championship, should the proposed playing rule be adopted. The committee agrees this will be a positive enhancement for the championship.
- e. **Bracket format.** The committee reviewed the current bracket format. If the SCIAC declines the automatic qualification bid as expected, the championship will remain an eight-team bracket for the 2026 championship.
- f. **Banquet.** The committee reiterated the feedback provided as part of Informational Item No. 3-a.

11. **2028-31 site selection process.** The committee received an update on the 2028-31 site selection process and discussed interest in exploring host sites outside of the state of California during the bid cycle. The committee noted that experience host support would be vital to the success of an event outside of California, but would align with the committee's goal to continue growing the sport.
12. **Foreign tours legislation.** The committee provided feedback on Division I Proposal No. 2026-8, which would permit institutions to participate in foreign tours once every year in Division I basketball. When asked about the committee's interest in proposing similar legislation in water polo, Division I committee members expressed interest, but also noted that allowing foreign tours annually could provide a financial advantage to those institutions with more resources. Committee members from Division III also expressed interest but noted that the limited number of Division III water polo teams participating in foreign tours may not justify a change that would allow participation in foreign tours every year. NCAA staff will continue to solicit feedback from committee members to determine if legislative action is appropriate at this time.
13. **National coordinator of officials report and officials selection criteria.** The committee heard a report from Steve Redding, national coordinator of officials. The report included officials selection criteria, review of championship officials and information that has been shared through RQ+ to continue providing educational content for officials. The committee provided feedback that the current policy that an official cannot be selected for one year after officiating the championship for three straight years should remain. The committee noted that this policy helps develop new officials and allows for variety in the officials selections process.
14. **Chair election.** The committee elected Wes Yourth, deputy director of athletics/COO at the University of the Pacific, as chair for the 2026-27 academic year.
15. **Future championship sites and dates.** The committee reviewed the 2026 and 2027 championship sites. The committee will continue meeting in conjunction with the 2026 Men's Water Polo Championship.

Committee Chair: Wes Yourth, University of the Pacific, West Coast Conference

Staff Liaison: Karen Kirsch, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Men's Water Polo Committee March 3, 2026, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Brian Kelly, Iona University.	
Andrea Lapointe, Harvard University.	
Daniel Leyson, University of California, Davis.	
Greg Lonzo, Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges.	

Wes Yourth, University of the Pacific.
David Alberstein, Secretary-Rules Editor.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Steve Redding, National Coordinator of Officials.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Karen Kirsch, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Kerstin Hunter and Brittney Jackson.