



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA WOMEN'S WATER POLO COMMITTEE
APRIL 26, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Automatic qualification.**
 - a. Recommendation. That the following six conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2027 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship: Big West Conference, Collegiate Water Polo Association, Golden Coast Conference, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, and Western Water Polo Association.
 - b. Effective date. September 1, 2026.
 - c. Rationale. All conferences eligible for an automatic qualification bid are being recommended. The Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) is not currently recommended for an automatic qualification bid as the conference tournament is scheduled for after the championship selection date. Should the conference tournament date be updated, the committee will review the updated automatic qualification form.
 - d. Estimated budget impact. None.
 - e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Review and approve 2025 annual meeting and Feb. 4 and 25, March 18, and April 8 reports.** The committee reviewed and approved the previous meeting reports.
- 2. Review of the 2026 championship.** The committee reviewed the 2026 championship and provided feedback for future championship planning, including for the 2026 men's water polo championship at the same site. The committee thanked the University of California, San Diego, staff for their efforts in hosting a successful championship.
- 3. 2027 championship planning.**

- a. **Game schedule.** The committee agreed that the game time schedules for the 2026 championship worked well and noted that the 2027 game times could fluctuate based on ESPN's broadcasting schedule and allowing adequate rest between games.
 - b. **Selection process and criteria.** While the committee made no changes to the selection criteria for 2027, the committee will continue to review potential adjustments to RPI and other selections metric options (e.g., NPI). This will not affect selections for the 2027 season.
 - c. **Pregame timing sheet.** The committee agreed that there should only be 37 minutes between semifinal contests if there is not a warm-up pool available. If the host has a warm-up pool, the standard 25-minute warm-up in the competition pool is sufficient. The committee also agreed to continue to evaluate the length of the halftime break for contests not broadcast on ESPN.
 - d. **Practices.** The committee agreed that the practice times worked well and a similar format should be used for the 2027 championship, with possible adjustments based on game times.
 - e. **Banquet.** The committee was pleased with the run of show for the banquet and noted that a similar format should be used in future years. Specifically, having the food available via multiple buffet lines as teams arrive was a positive change from previous banquets.
 - f. **Facility setup and layout.** The committee directed staff to create resources for hosts outlining game day logistics and setup expectations for ease of reference.
 - g. **Facility/host.** The committee requested that high speed wifi be available to coaches to upload game film at the competition site, noting that hotel wifi is typically too slow to be effective.
 - h. **Opening-round location.** The committee discussed the opening-round location and confirmed that the opening-round games should be held at the finals site to enhance the student-athlete experience. The committee directed staff to update the bid specs for the upcoming bid cycle to clarify for future hosts.
 - i. **Other items.** The committee suggested creating a resource for participating teams that outlines game day operational items such as halftime length, scouting seat locations and filming logistics. While these items are referenced in the participant manual and participant videoconference, a concise resource with important gameday details would be beneficial.
4. **Automatic qualification review.** The committee reviewed applications from the seven conferences requesting automatic qualification to the 2027 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship. The committee noted that the SCIAC application could not be approved at this time as the conference tournament is scheduled for after the championship selection date.

The committee will review the SCIAC application at a later date if the conference tournament date is updated. The committee understands that if a conference declines to accept its automatic qualification bid to the NCAA championship, that spot in the tournament field would not be filled by an additional at-large team and the bracket would include a single opening-round game. (See Action Item 2.)

5. **Officials.** The committee received 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 RefQuest to continue providing educational content for officials.

The committee approved the following changes to the officials' selection criteria and process:

1. Removed the rule requiring an official who has officiated in the women's championship for three straight years to take one year off, citing a desire to ensure the best officials are available for the championship.
2. Reduced the minimum game requirement for officials from 15 to 12 due to the change in the women's water polo playing season.
3. Removed the specific time requirement to notify coaches of the officiating assignments. Coaches will be notified as soon as the assignments are available. This change provides necessary flexibility to the national coordinator and the committee based on game times.
4. Amended the policy for alternates to only replace an official who declines the original appointment. If an official needs to withdraw after 5 p.m. on Wednesday after selections, the crew will be five members. The committee may approve an exception to allow an alternate after that time if mitigating circumstances are presented.
5. Approved a policy that alternates must not commit to other events (e.g., USA Water Polo Division III Championship) prior to being released from the NCAA championship.
6. Approved a policy requiring all six officials to be available for the opening round games. The committee may approve an exception if mitigating circumstances are presented.
7. Approved a policy requiring the six officials to serve as goal judges if goal judges cannot be secured. An official that declines a goal judge assignment will not be selected as an official for future championships.
8. Approved a policy to add a coach from the committee to the National Evaluator Group as a nonvoting member to provide feedback on the evaluation and selection process for the championship officials.

These updates will be shared with the NCAA Men's Water Polo Committee for consideration of possible implementation for the National Collegiate Men's Water Polo Championship.

6. **Manuals.** The committee agreed to review manuals and send any necessary edits to the NCAA staff. It was noted that the host operations and prechampionships manuals may be combined with the men's championship for the 2026-27 academic year for efficiency and consistency.
7. **2028-31 site selection process.** The committee received an update on the 2028-31 site selection process. The committee affirmed a desire to have one championship site outside of California, similar to previous bid cycles, as well as having a local organizing committee involved in the bid if possible. The committee directed staff to update the bid specs to clarify that the opening round game(s) will be held at the final site to provide the best possible student-athlete experience.
8. **Chair election.** The committee elected Ted Minnis to continue to serve as chair for the 2026-27 academic year.
9. **Future championships sites and dates.** The committee reviewed the 2027 and 2028 championship sites and dates. The committee will continue to hold the annual meeting at the championship.
10. **Future meetings.**
 - 2026-27 videoconference schedule will be determined at a later date.

Committee Chair: Ted Minnis, Harvard University
Staff Liaison: Karen Kirsch, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Women's Water Polo Committee April 26, 2026, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
David Alberstein, Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Matt Anderson, Connecticut College.	
Natalie Benson, California State University, Fresno.	
Ted Minnis, Harvard University.	
Erica Montebaro, University of California, Irvine.	
Meghan Morphy, Gannon University.	
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:
None.