



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA WOMEN'S WATER POLO COMMITTEE
MAY 11, 2025, ANNUAL MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Automatic qualification.** The NCAA Women's Water Polo Committee recommends the seven conferences meeting the requirements to be eligible for automatic qualification for the 2026 NCAA championship. (See Action Item 2 and Informational Item 5.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

- **None.**

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

- **Automatic qualification.**
 - a. Recommendation. That the following seven conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2026 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship: Big West Conference, Collegiate Water Polo Association, Golden Coast Conference, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, Mount Pacific Sports Federation, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and Western Water Polo Association.
 - b. Effective date. September 1, 2025.
 - c. Rationale. All conferences eligible for an automatic qualification bid are being recommended. The remaining three spots in the 10-team bracket 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 and the bracket would include a single opening-round game.
 - d. Estimated budget impact. None.
 - e. 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 the 2024 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the May 12, 2024, annual meeting report.

3. Review of the championship process and structure.

- a. **Selection process and criteria.** While the committee made no changes to the selections criteria or 2026, the committee asked staff to consider if the KPI and/or NPI could be used as a resource for water polo selections in the future. This will not affect selections for the 2026 season.
 - b. **Practice and game times.** The committee reviewed the proposed practice and game time schedules for the 2026 championship and noted that game times could fluctuate based on ESPN's broadcasting schedule and allowing adequate rest between games.
 - c. **Championship format changes.** The committee noted that the new playing and practice season change takes effect in the 2025-26 season and with that, the new championship date will be two weeks earlier. The committee also discussed the selection date, noting concerns of timing, but ultimately made no changes. The committee will continue to monitor and receive feedback on the selection date with the new format going forward.
 - d. **Facility/host.** The committee thanked the Indiana University, Bloomington and Indiana Sports Corp staffs for a great championship experience. The committee was especially impressed by the organization of the championship and the addition of the LED video arch board. The committee asked staff to note that the videoboard was set up for international play, not collegiate, and to make sure to check that at future sites.
 - e. **Host manual.** The committee noted areas to update within the host manual, specifically the need for facilities to have a backup exclusion board on site.
 - f. **Banquet.** The committee discussed the banquet and agreed to explore adjusting the format to a more casual experience. The committee enjoyed the banquet and venue this year and continues to recommend that there should be a buffet with two lines.
 - g. **Table staff.** The committee recommended to continue administering the head table test.
4. **Officials.** The committee heard a report from Amber Drury, 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.
 5. **Automatic qualification.** The committee reviewed applications from the seven conferences requesting automatic qualification to the 2026 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship. The committee discussed concerns regarding the USA Water Polo Division III championship and the intention of the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) to participate in that event. 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.)

- 6. 2026 annual meeting dates.** The committee will continue meeting in conjunction with the 2026 National Collegiate Women's Water Polo Championship.

Committee Chair: Ted Minnis, Harvard University, Collegiate Water Polo Association
Staff Liaison(s): Paige Newman, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Women's Water Polo Committee May 11, 2025, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Natalie Benson, California State University, Fresno, Golden Coast Conference	
Meghan Morphy, Gannon University, Western Water Polo Association	
Ted Minnis, Harvard University, Collegiate Water Polo Association.	
Erica Monteabaro, University of California, Irvine, Big West Conference.	
Rachel Roche, University of Redlands, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.	
David Alberstein, Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Amber Drury, National Coordinator of Officials.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Paige Newman, Championships and Alliances.	
Other NCAA staff Members in Attendance	
Markell Staton, Championships and Alliances	