



Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships

Final Information Pack



Australian Underwater
Federation Inc.



2026 Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships Final Information Pack

Welcome and Introduction

NSW Underwater Hockey is proud to welcome all states and teams to the 2026 Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships.

We are excited to be hosting this national event in January 2026 at the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre. While it was our hope to hold the championships in NSW, the lack of a suitable venue meant we had to look further afield. We're confident the Gold Coast will provide an excellent location for a high-quality, enjoyable tournament for players, officials, and supporters alike.

Dates

Sunday 11th January to Monday 19th January, 2026

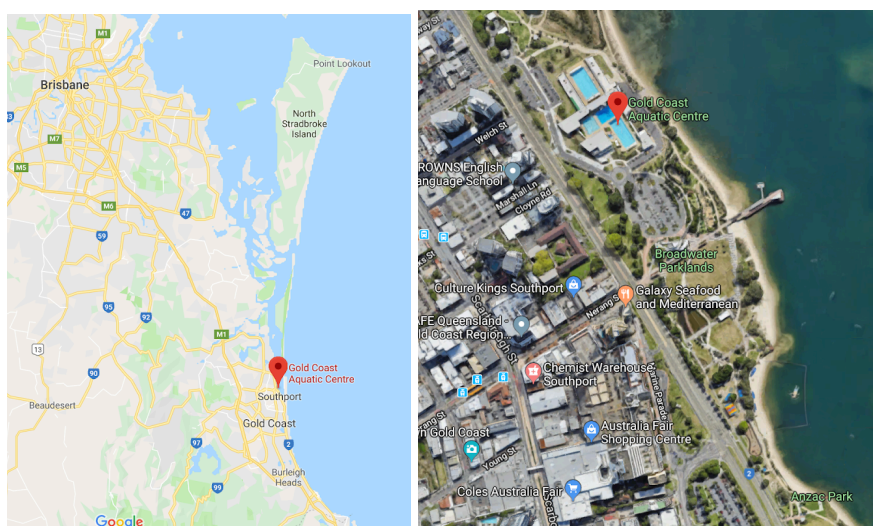
Contact

UHA Tournament Director: Ben Stepkovitch, td@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au

Nationals Tournament Contact: Andy Davis, uwhnationals2026@gmail.com

Venue

[Gold Coast Aquatic Centre](#) (GCAC), Marine Parade, Southport



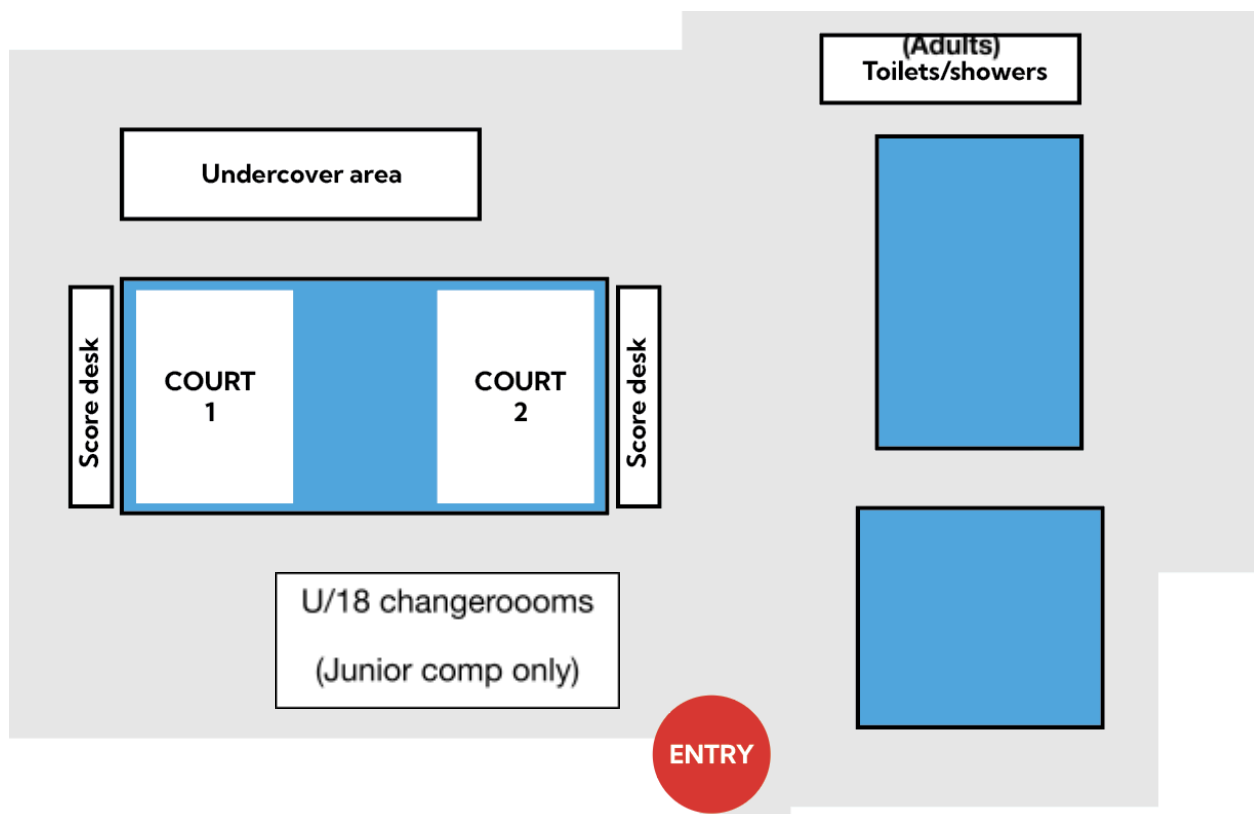
This is an outdoor venue with a grassed area, open grandstands and limited table and shaded areas next to the pool. Teams need to consider sun protection when planning. There is a café attached to the pool (Café Catalina) which provides food and drinks.



Parking: The council car park at the venue costs up to \$21 per day. For a more affordable option, Carey Park Carpark, just a 2-minute walk south of the pool, offers the cheapest all-day parking nearby.

Pool Layout

The 2026 Australian Championships will take place using 2 courts running simultaneously in the 50m competition pool at GCAC. The courts are full competition size and play is width-wise across the pool with 3 walls and a barrier on the 4th side. Substitution will be in water. Warm up lanes will be provided between the 2 courts. The depth of the pool is 2m.



Format

The games format will follow the format recommended by the UHA National Tournament Guidelines.

Divisions

The following divisions will be contested at the 2026 Australian Championships. Players can enter multiple grades if eligible for more than one.

Juniors	Seniors
U15 Open	Elite open
U19 Open	Elite women
U19 Women	Masters open
	Masters women

Age Eligibility

	Athlete DOB (year)		Age on 1st Jan 2026	
Division	Year (min)	Year (max)	Minimum*	Maximum
U15	2014	2011	11	14
U19	2011	2007	14	18
Elites	2009	N/A	16	N/A
Masters	1990	N/A	35	N/A

**Players must turn minimum age by the start of the competition.*

There are no longer any age exemptions for nationals, in line with the new [UHA Age Determination Policy](#).

Medal Eligibility

State teams:

State teams can have up to 2 non-resident players and be eligible for medals, as per the UHA National Tournament Guidelines for Player & Team Eligibility.

Non-state teams (Barbarians/amazons etc):

- Australian players are only able to play for non-state teams if they have gone through the selection process for their state team and not been successful, or if there is no team from their state.
- Once a non-state team is formed, they must comply with the same uniform policy guidelines as other states, and wear colours provided (bathers and caps)
 - i.e. caps and bathers must not be random colours and design.
- These teams will be ineligible for medals but can play finals if other teams in their division vote to allow so (as per the UHA Tournament Guidelines).
- There will be NO option for players to just 'pull together' a random team of Australian players that have not first tried out for a State Team and followed correct process initially.

Exemption Process

Please see below the form and updated guidelines for state teams to apply for a non-resident exemption.

Form: <https://forms.gle/iF1zwEbJ8hQ7Msrf8>

Guidelines: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wsMEIO3E0pKx0Zi8TFKpr2K-fOvHZt1T/view?usp=sharing>

Please fill out one form per team of exemption (i.e. if 2 players under the same exemption, they can go in the same form). Managers or coaches can fill in.

The due date for all exemptions is 31st Oct. UHA committee will vote on them in batches as they come through.

Fees

There are no separate team fees this year. Instead, all costs will be bundled into a single player fee, which includes the referee levy.

Each state must pay a \$500 deposit per team to register. This deposit will be deducted from the total amount that the state needs to pay.

Total Cost = Number of players x Individual Player Fee (deposit is included in this total)

The player fee will cover pool hire, referee costs and equipment, physiotherapy, medals and trophies, streaming and other tournament-related expenses.

Individual fees are based on age as of 1 January 2026:

- Juniors (under 19) = \$250
- Seniors (19 and over) = \$300

Players only pay one fee, even if they play in both junior and senior divisions (juniors pay the lower fee).

Payment and Action Schedule

Team managers that have registered via the EOI link in the Initial Info Pack will be sent a link to register their teams on the UWHPortal which we will be trialling for team and player registration this year.

Please note these important dates:

Date	Payment/Action Required
1st September 2025	EOI for teams to attend due plus manager registration
12th October 2025	Team Deposit due (\$500 per team) Bather submission due to Referee Director
16th November 2025	Individual player fees due (balance from deposit and team lists due) SIA modules due for all athletes and officials
21st December 2025 (TBC)	Payment for junior and senior functions due and function numbers due

Payments made to:

Name: Sydney Nationals

BSB: 082401

No: 784289905

Uniforms

From 2026 nationals onwards, all states must wear the same caps and same bathers* across all teams. I.e. no Australian, international, club or underwater rugby caps may be worn at nationals. Caps can only be numbered 1-15.

From 2027 onwards, all states will have to abide by the new [AUF Uniform Policy](#) (i.e. add AUF logo to bathers) and all states bathers must comply with the updated changes to official state colours.

In 2026, there is no requirement to adhere to the above two policies, but when states choose to do their AUF Uniform Policy compliant orders is up to them.

Regardless, for 2026, all states must send their bather designs to Helen Canavan (referee@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au) by 12th October 2025, for approval and to ensure no clashes occur.

*Minor variations will be allowed if one supplier can not accommodate for all body types across a whole state squad, but this still needs to be approved by the UHA Referee Director.

Championships Schedule

Australian National Championships	
Juniors Championships	
Sunday 11th January	Pool set up Optional team training (11am-3.30pm) Gear checks Referee course TBC Opening ceremony (~4pm)
Monday 12th January	Juniors round robin (9am-3.30pm)
Tuesday 13th January	Juniors round robin (9am-3.30pm)
Wednesday 14th January	Juniors round robin and semi finals (9am-8pm)
Thursday 15th January	Finals (9am-3.30pm) Aus U19 selections Closing ceremony Junior function
Senior Championships	
Thurs 15th January	Gear checks for seniors Optional team training TBC Opening ceremony (during Juniors closing ceremony) Optional sundowner TBC
Friday 16th January	Seniors round robin (9am-8pm)
Saturday 17th January	Seniors round robin (9am-5pm)
Sunday 18th January	Seniors round robin (8am-4pm)
Monday 19th January	Semi-finals & Finals (9am-3.30pm) AUS U24 selections (TBC) Closing ceremony Senior function

Puck

The competition puck will be the Simms Puck. Please bring your own warm-up pucks.

Referees

We aim to use as many Non-Playing Referees (NPRs) as possible to minimise the requirement for players to have to cover in-water duties. Costs to supply NPRs are built into the player fee. NPRs will have their accommodation, transport and food supplied by the UHA Referee for the tournament.

Ideally NPRs are available for the full 8 days, however if any senior players are available to referee the full junior competition, or confident U19s referee the senior competition as NPRs, UHA will waive your player fee (for selected candidates).

To nominate as a playing referee please contact Helen Canavan by October 15th. Playing refs that get their playing fee waived will be selected in November.

Contact: Helen Canavan referee@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au if you are interested as a non-playing or playing referee.

Referee Course

Subject to interest a Level 1 and/or Level 2 Referee Theory session will be held at the pool Sunday 11th January (if not held online earlier). States will be asked to express interest at a later date.

Equipment:

- BYO Warm up pucks
- There should be 2 in-water bottle baskets per court but teams are welcome to use their own. If using comp provided buckets, please empty buckets promptly after your game, ready for the next team.

Gear Checks

All teams/players need to have gear checked off before the competition starts. There will be tables set up for players to meet referees and conduct the gear checks.

Players will not be allowed to play unless their gear has been checked off by the referees. Please ensure your players attend the below gear check times. Coaches and managers should ensure/remind players that their gear complies with the CMAS rules: <https://www.cmas.org/document/cmas-underwater-hockey-rules-of-play-feb-2025-02.html>

Gear Checks days/times	
Juniors	Sunday 11 th Jan (PM -times TBC)
Seniors	Thurs 15 th Jan (PM - times TBC)

Physiotherapy

Nick Stepkovitch and his team of qualified and/or trainee physiotherapists will be onsite during the competition. Physio services will be available to all players, referees, officials and support people. The organisers of the 2026 Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships wish to thank Nick and his team for the amazing effort and time they have so generously given and continue to give to the sport.

Streaming

All games will be streamed live and later uploaded on the UHA Youtube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@underwaterhockeyaustralia2524>

For more information about guidelines for streaming (and photography), please see the Sports Integrity section at the bottom of this document.

Team Training

Limited Team Training slots will be available at the below times upon request – first in best dressed. Can State Reps/managers please contact Ben (td@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au) to give an indication of interest.

Juniors: 12-4pm Sun 11th January

Seniors: Thurs 15th January (time and space TBC depending on draw)

Captains/Coaches Meetings

Junior captains/coaches meeting: 9.15am Thursday, grandstand

Senior captains/coaches meeting: 9.30am Saturday, grandstand

Ceremonies*

Junior opening ceremony: ~4.00pm Sun 11th Jan (duration ~30mins)

Junior closing + seniors opening ceremony: ~1.15pm Thurs 15th Jan (duration ~45mins)

Seniors closing ceremony: 4pm Monday 19th Jan (duration ~30mins)

All closing ceremonies will be held in the grandstands. Medals will be awarded during closing ceremonies.

All senior teams are expected to attend the Junior closing/senior opening ceremony Saturday and congratulate the junior athletes 😊

*Times subject to slight changes

Functions

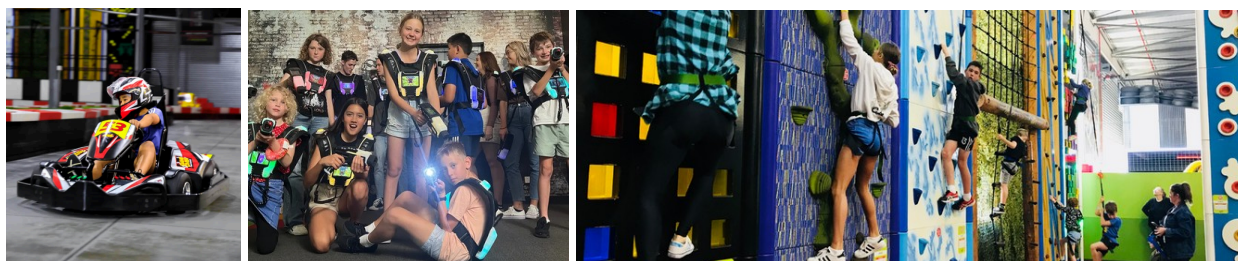
Junior function (Thurs 15th January):

Gameover Helensvale - 88 Siganto Drive, Helensvale QLD (19 min drive from pool).

Time: 6-9pm

Cost: Juniors \$75, Adults \$15

Inclusions: full venue hire (no public/lines) - unlimited go-karting, laser tag, climbing and mini-golf. Food - party pies, sausage rolls, chicken nuggets, assorted wraps, fruit platters and sushi platters. Gluten free and vegetarian options available.



Senior Function (Mon 19th January):

The Island Rooftop - 3128 Surfers Paradise Blvd, Surfers Paradise (11min drive from pool)

Time: 6-11pm

Cost: \$85pp

Inclusions: DJ and food (substantial canapes & paella stations - dietary options available).



Sundowner (Thurs 15th January): TBC

REMINDER - All participants (including athletes, coaches, managers, volunteers, officials, referees, parents and spectators) of the National Championships (including at any functions) must abide by the [AUF Code of Conduct](#).

Volunteers

As with any competition, many hands make light work. The organising committee is seeking help from anyone attending the event as a non-player who might be willing to volunteer at the scoring or streaming desks. We're happy to work around individual schedules and commitments – just an hour a day makes a big difference over the course of the competition.

Any interested parties are asked to contact Ben Stepkovitch at td@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au

AUF Membership

Each state is responsible for ensuring that all players are [current AUF members](#). Players must hold a valid AUF membership at the time of team list submission on 16th November. Please note that only registered AUF members will be eligible to participate in the competition.

International competitors attending Nationals (and staying in Australia for less than 60 days) must register for an International AUF Membership ([click here to register](#)). This membership costs \$20.00 AUD and is available only to non-Australian citizens. If an international player is staying longer than 60 days and participating in local competitions, they must obtain full AUF membership and join a local club. Please note: All international players are required to hold their own insurance. The AUF accepts no responsibility or liability for any injuries or claims incurred during the event.

Pool entry

All players and officials will be required to present an e-comp pass on their phones for entry to the pool each day. This will be sent out to managers to distribute prior to the competition.

Tournament Shirts

We're excited to offer all participants the opportunity to purchase a special 2026 tournament t-shirt! More details, including design and pricing, will be shared to managers soon. Volunteers will receive a complimentary tournament t-shirt as a thank you for their support.

Sunscreen

We would like to keep the water clear, we kindly request you use zinc based sunscreen and/or apply sunscreen at least an hour before games and rinse off in the showers before jumping in the pool.

Sports Integrity Guidelines

From 2026 onwards, UHA's Sports Integrity Officer (SIO) is required to attend the national championships. Renae Scothern has been recently appointed to this role.

The SIOs role is to help oversee and educate tournament officials, state managers, coaches and chaperones how we can help to work towards planning safe sports events for all ages and backgrounds.

Renae would like to have a face to face meeting at nationals with any club or state MPIOs that are present (or a representative from each state as a minimum). States will be contacted closer to the time to coordinate a meeting. Note - it is not a requirement for state MPIOs to attend nationals.

For more information, please contact Renae
integrityofficer@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au

Streaming & Photography

All players competing at the National Championships will need to consent to being filmed for the purposes of games being streamed on youtube.

Photography of players in the venue can only be conducted by authorised media officers, who have been inducted by the SIO. Each state can nominate one representative (per comp) to be an authorised media officer and record images that can be uploaded to the Nationals social media pages.

Further information regarding photography and streaming permission/consent will be shared closer to the event.

Sports Integrity e-learning modules:

All players, coaches, managers, chaperones and referees are now required to complete the following REQUIRED modules as per the [AUF NIF Education Plan](#) via the Sports Integrity Australia E-learning portal https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/user_login

All personnel must complete the required modules by Nov 16th, when team lists are submitted and all registered players must be valid AUF members as well. Managers are welcome to ask personnel to provide their digital e-learning certificates, however the AUF will digitally check off the provided list of players and officials, so no need to submit certificates to the organisers.

Required modules (by category)

Module	Athletes (all ages)	Coaches	Managers/Chaperones	Referees
Clean Sport 101	U16 only			
Anti-Doping Fundamentals	Recommended	Y	Y	Y
Annual Update*	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Y
Child Safeguarding in Sport Induction	Y	Y	Y	Y
Decision Making in Sport	Y	Recommended	Y	Y
Competition Manipulation & Sports Betting	Y	Y		Y
Coaches Course		Y		
National Integrity Framework				Y

*Annual Update is the only module that needs to be completed annually (if required)

Working with Children Checks:

From 2026 onwards, it will be a requirement that state managers have checked all their officials (coaches, managers, chaperones) hold a valid Working With Children Check or state equivalent. In future, all officials will also be required to provide a Police Check (at their own expense), so its a good idea to encourage officials to obtain one now.

State managers and state committees are required to check off all their officials and safely store that information to be produced if asked by UHA or the Nationals LOC.