



Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships

Initial Information Pack



Australian Underwater
Federation Inc.



2026 Australian Underwater Hockey National Championships Initial 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, uwlnationals2026@gmail.com

Venue

[Gold
Centre
Parade,](#)



[Coast Aquatic
\(GCAC\), Marine
Southport](#)

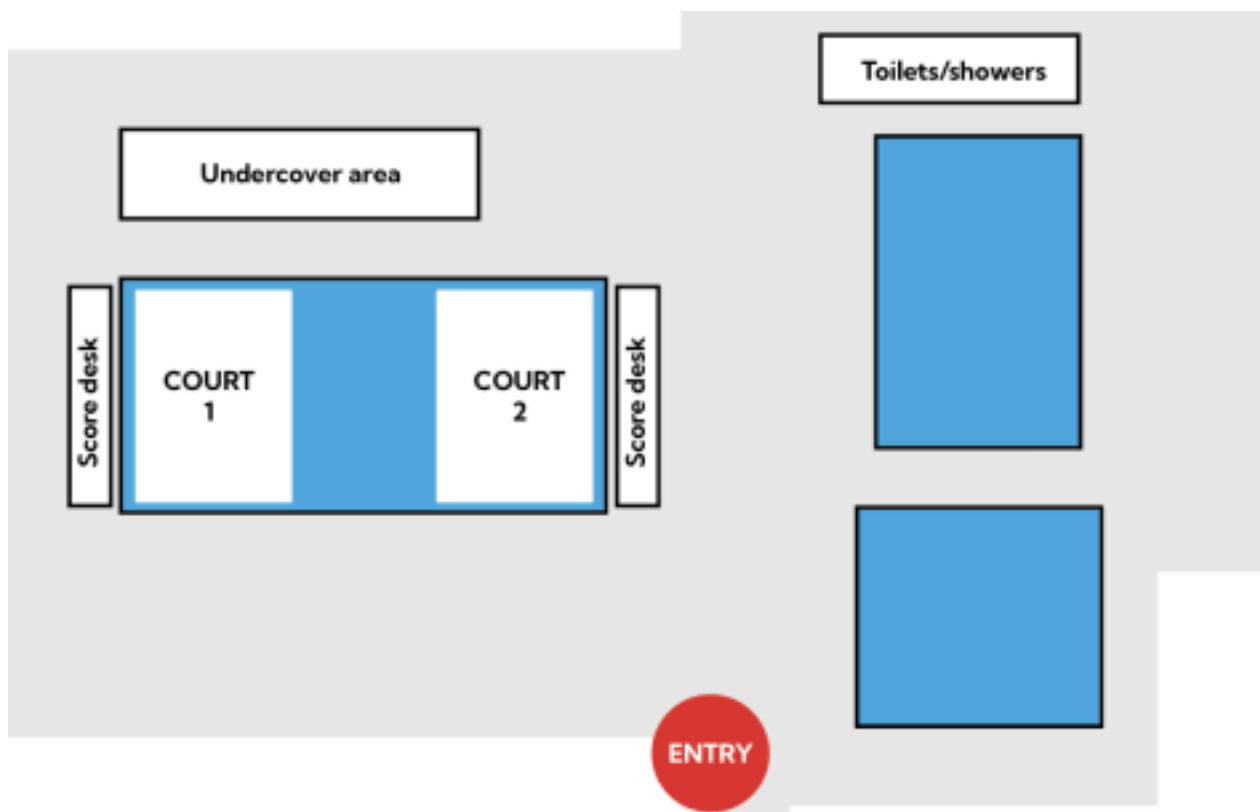
This is an outdoor venue with a grassed area, open grandstands and limited table and shaded areas next to the pool. Teams need to consider sun protection when planning. There is a café attached to the pool (Café Catalina) which provides food and drinks.



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 (25x15m) 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 area 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.

U15 Open	Elite open
U19 Open	Elite women
U19 Women	Masters open
	4th division TBC (UHA to decide by Aug 31st)

Age Eligibility

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](#).

The 2026 exemption application form will be released in the Final Info Pack (early Sept).

Non-state teams (Barbarians/amazons etc):

- Going forward, for Australian players to qualify for one of these teams, they must have followed the same process as other players hoping to attend Nationals (international players exempt from this process).
 - Players must have gone through the State selection process for their appropriate State Team and not been successful in getting a position on that State Team.
 - 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 the correct process initially.
- 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 designs. • These teams will remain ineligible for medals but can play finals if other teams in their division vote

to allow so (as per the UHA Tournament Guidelines).

Fees and Payments

*Individual Player fee amounts will be confirmed in the final info pack (early Sept).

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)
- Seniors (19 and over)

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

Payment and Action Schedule

Expression of interest/manager registration: Please submit an expression of interest for your state's teams and register state managers as the team contact using the following link: <https://forms.gle/ax3E5pcPhRocYpDD6>

*Note in order to streamline communication and admin UHA is requesting each state has no more than 2 managers (in contact with the organisers) where possible (i.e. 1 junior and 1 senior manager). Exceptions might be made if states are entering 6+ teams.

Please note these important dates:

1st September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ EOI for teams to attend due○ State manager registration
12th October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Team Deposit due (\$500 per team)○ Bather and cap design due to Referee Director
16th November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Individual player fees due (balance from deposit)○ Team lists due

21st December 2025 (TBC)

- Payment for junior and senior functions due
- Function numbers due

Uniforms

From 2026 Nationals onwards, all state teams must wear the same caps and bathers*. No Australian, international, club or underwater rugby caps may be worn at

Nationals. Caps can only be numbered 1 to 15.

All states must send their cap and bather designs to Helen Canavan (referee@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au) for approval and to ensure no colour/design clashes occur by 12th October 2025.

From 2027 Nationals onwards, all states the new [AUF Uniform Policy](#) (i.e. add AUF logo to bathers) will be enforced and all state team bathers must comply with the updated changes to official state colours. UHA will confirm and release official state colours to state reps/managers in August.

**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

Junior Championships	
Sunday 11th January	Pool set up Optional team training (11am-3.30pm) Gear checks 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

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 is 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 to assist the senior competition as out of water referees, 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.

Accommodation

There are plenty of accommodation options available on the southern end of the Gold Coast, ranging from cabins in holiday parks and campgrounds, to family apartments and high-end hotels. Affordable group accommodation is also available through sporting centres and group accommodation resorts.

- [Gold Coast Performance Centre](#) (Runaway Bay – 12 mins drive from pool) ○
Lodges are for 36 people so ideal for clubs with multiple teams [Limited availability]
- [Gold Coast Recreation Precinct](#) (Tallebudgera – 40 mins drive from pool) ○
Lodges can accommodate multiple teams, catering can also be organised via the accommodation
- [Ashmore Palms Holiday Village](#) (Ashmore – 11 mins drive from pool)
- [Mercure Resort Gold Coast](#) (Carrara – 23 mins drive from pool)

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.

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.

Functions

The local organising committee is currently exploring options for both the junior and senior functions. Further information will be shared once details are confirmed.

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.

Local Amenities and Shops

- [Café Catalina](#) (café attached to the pool) provides food and drinks.
- [Australia Fair Shopping Centre](#) (adjacent to the aquatic centre, 7 minute walk away) – a large mall with fashion stores, a major supermarket, cafés, and food outlets.
- [Paradise Centre](#) (Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise) – around 10 minutes away by light rail; features over 90 stores including a Woolworths, cafés and casual dining.

Medical Facilities

- [Gold Coast University Hospital](#) is a ~10 mins drive from GCAC. It has an emergency department.
- [Southport Medical Centre](#) is located within the Australia Fair Metro Shopping Centre, Shop M032, 58 Scarborough Street Southport.

AUF Code of Conduct

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](#). Please ensure your athletes and state officials are aware of the *expected behaviours* listed in the code. The [AUF Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#) applies to any alleged Prohibited Conduct under the Code of Conduct.

Sports Integrity Guidelines

From 2026, it is a requirement of Sports Integrity Australia (SIA) that UHA's Sports Integrity Officer (SIO) attend all Australian National Championships. Currently, Renae Scothern holds this position on UHA's committee and will be in attendance on the Gold Coast. You will see her around, please feel free to introduce yourself to her.

The SIO attending national competitions is a great way for us all to continue our journey toward compliance with the [National Integrity Framework](#).

Renae would like to have an informal meeting at nationals with any club or state MPIOs that are present (or a representative from each state as a minimum), to allow for conversation, questions and learning across the UWH community around Sports Integrity and Child Safeguarding requirements. 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 at integrityofficer@underwaterhockeyaustralia.org.au

Streaming and Photography

All players competing at the National Championships will be asked for consent to be filmed for the purposes of games being streamed on Youtube.

Photography of players inside the gates of the venue can only be conducted by authorised photographers, who have been inducted by the SIO. Each state can nominate one representative (per comp) to be an authorised photographer, who will be required to:

- Wear a high-vis vest provided to them
- Record images/media inside the venue
- Upload images to a shared drive with the LOC, who will then approve images for compliance and then upload to the Nationals social media page
- Delete all photos taken inside the venue on personal devices after uploading

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 MANDATORY 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 badge certificates, however the AUF will digitally check off the provided list of players and officials, so no need to submit certificates to the organisers.

Note - please complete the e-learning on the SIA E-learning not Play by the Rules portal.

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 it's a good idea to encourage officials to obtain one now.

State managers and state committees are required to check all WWCC/Blue Card/Equivalent of all their officials every 6 months via that state's relevant authority for continuing compliance.

This information is to be securely stored at club or state level and is to be produced at any given time if requested by UHA or the Nationals LOC.