



WATER POLO

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Date: 19 January 2026

Subject: National Championships 2026, High-Performance Pathways, and Athlete Support

Dear Athletes, Coaches, and Managers,

We look forward to welcoming the water polo community to the **SSA 2026 National Championships**, which remain a cornerstone of the South African water polo calendar and a critical platform for athlete development, visibility, and progression across all age groups.

National Championships 2026

- **Senior Nationals:** 13–15 March 2026
- **U16 and U18 Nationals:** 19–22 March 2026

The confirmed venues are as follows:

- **Men:** Clifton School, Durban
- **Women:** Durban Girls' College

Further logistical details will be communicated in due course.

These championships form an essential component of our **athlete-first, high-performance pathway** and provide a key performance environment for assessment, benchmarking, and progression.

High-Performance Athlete Pathway

To ensure clarity and transparency, the high-performance pathway currently operates across two tiers:

Tier 1 – National Elite Squad

Athletes announced as part of the Elite Squads represent Tier 1 of the pathway and are preparing for immediate international representation, advanced exposure, and continued performance tracking.

Tier 2 – National Emerging Squad

Tier 2 includes athletes who attended the National Camps, as well as those who have indicated continued interest in remaining within the high-performance pathway. Tier 2 athletes remain actively in contention for progression.

The pathway is **dynamic rather than fixed**. Athlete placement across tiers is reviewed on an ongoing basis and is informed by performance, training consistency, physical readiness, and competition exposure. Continued participation in the National Championships plays an important role in this process, and Tier 2 athletes are strongly encouraged to continue training and competing.

Convenor: Dion Willis

Members: Galidjah Hendricks, Lucky Letshabo, and Vaughn Meecham



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Regional Camps and Coach Engagement

Regional camps will be held as part of the broader high-performance programme to support ongoing development, monitoring, and preparation. Coaches will communicate directly with athletes and teams regarding camp details, training expectations, and participation requirements.

Coaches and managers play a vital role across all tiers in ensuring continuity, preparation, and alignment with the national high-performance framework.

Athlete First

Our focus remains firmly on creating meaningful opportunities for athletes to compete, develop, and progress within a structured and credible system. In parallel with domestic competition, work is underway to expand appropriate exposure opportunities beyond South Africa as part of the broader high-performance programme. Further information will be communicated through official channels at the proper time.

Travel and Accommodation Support

We are pleased to confirm the continued support of our partners in assisting teams travelling to the National Championships:

Southern Sun will offer preferential accommodation rates to travelling teams.
BLUU Car Rental will provide discounted vehicle rental rates for teams requiring transport.

As always, we extend our sincere appreciation to our federation Anchor Sponsor, **Bombela Concession Company**, for their continued and valued support of South African water polo. Further partnerships and support arrangements will be announced in due course.

We encourage all athletes, coaches, and managers to remain engaged, committed, and focused on preparation for the National Championships. Your collective contribution continues to shape the future and sustainability of the sport.

We look forward to seeing the water polo community come together in March.

Kind regards,

Dion Willis
Convenor: Water Polo Technical Committee
Swimming South Africa

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