



10K National Championships
Thursday, April 2, 2026
Women's Race 8:00 am
Men's Race 10:30 am

5K Junior National Championships (16-U Age Group*)
Friday, April 3, 2026
Men's Race 8:00 am
Women's Race 8:10 am

3K Knockout National Championships
Friday, April 3, 2026
Women's Race 9:30 am
Men's Race 11:00 am

5K National Championships
Saturday, April 4, 2026
Men's Race 8:00 am
Women's Race 8:10 am

3K Knockout Junior National Championships (16-U Age Group*)
Saturday, April 4, 2026
Men's Race 9:30 am
Women's Race 11:00 am

***AQUA age as of December 31, 2026**
All schedules are subject to change depending on number of entries and local conditions

Nathan Benderson Park
5851 Nathan Benderson Circle
Sarasota, FL 34235

Entry Deadline is Noon Mountain Time Monday, March 23, 2026

USA Swimming

2026 Open Water National Championships

Important Facts About the Competition



- ◆ Register for the Open Water National Championships on-line at hub.usaswimming.org/landing beginning noon Mountain Time on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 through Noon Mountain Time on Monday, March 23, 2026. There will be no race-day registration. For help with the entries contact Katie Trace 719-866-3578 or ktrace@usaswimming.org. The qualifying period is January 1, 2025 through the entry deadline (March 23, 2026).
- ◆ Race Start times are subject to change due to number of entries and local conditions.
- ◆ The USA Swimming Open Water National Championships are open to all U.S. swimmers who are 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming who meet the specific event qualifying criteria, as well as invited foreign athletes. U.S. athletes must be eligible to represent the U.S. in international competition.
- ◆ The USA Swimming Open Water Junior National Championships are open to all U.S. swimmers who are 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming who meet the specific event qualifying criteria. Foreign athletes, with the exception of Team Canada, are not invited to participate in the Junior National Championship races. All athletes participating in the Junior National Championship events must be eligible to represent the U.S. in international competition.
- ◆ Coaches and team staff (**including all individuals in the feeding area for the 10K races**) must be 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming, and be current in all required certifications and trainings.
- ◆ 20 male and 20 female international swimmers, in addition to swimmers from Team Canada, will be allowed entry to the 10K, 5K, and 3K Knockout National events only. With the exception of swimmers from Team Canada, Foreign entries will not be permitted in Junior National Events. Foreign athletes who are not members of USA Swimming must send their entries to Yuri Suguiyama at ysuguiyama@usaswimming.org by Noon Mountain Time (MT) on Tuesday, March 3. All foreign swimmers, coaches, and team staff must be members in good standing of their respective World Aquatics recognized federation and must submit a letter from their federation indicating this standing.
- ◆ Additional information regarding the conduct of the 3K Knockout events can be found on Page 8. The Junior National 7.5K will not be contested in 2026.
- ◆ Swimmers' and Coaches' Responsibility - It shall be the swimmers' and coaches' responsibility to acquaint themselves with all of the information contained in this competition information book, as well as information disseminated at each race technical meeting. USA Swimming Rules will govern the conduct of these championships.
- ◆ AQUA Age: For all races at the 2026 Open Water National and Junior National Championships, athletes' age for the competition shall be defined as their age as of December 31, 2026.
- ◆ All swimmers, or parents of swimmers under 18 years old must sign a USA Swimming Open Water Waiver and Release, and submit them at Registration.
- ◆ The Race Safety Plan, USA Swimming Waiver & Release Form, and other important information will be posted at usaswimming.org.

Event Administration



Championship Referee

Mike Murphy
swimoff1@gmail.com

Administrative Referee

Jeffrey Chu
jeff@hauppaugeswimming.com

Local Meet Director

Brent Arckey
barckey@sarasotasharks.org

Event Safety Director

Scott Custer
scott.custer@sarasotasharks.org

USA Swimming Sr. Director & Coach, National Team

Yuri Suguiyama
ysuguiyama@usaswimming.org

USA Swimming Director, National Events

Macie McNichols
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USA Swimming Manager, National Events

Trey Freeman
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USA Swimming

2026 Open Water National Championships

SafeSport Information



Safe Sport Information

The USA Swimming Safe Sport program is USA Swimming's comprehensive abuse prevention program dedicated to creating a healthy and positive environment free from abuse for all its members. Components of the program include, but are not limited to, providing education and training, enforcing policies (such as the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy), rules and best practice guidelines, promoting healthy boundaries and mandatory reporting of violations.

The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (www.usaswimming.org/maapp) prohibits Adult Participants (as defined) from having one-on-one interactions with minor athletes which are not within an observable and interruptible distance from another adult. Adult Participants are required to abide by this policy in full during this meet.

Pursuant to USA Swimming Rules and Regulations and federal law, it is every member's responsibility to immediately (i.e., within 24 hours) report any incident of child abuse, including physical or sexual abuse, to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. A report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport may be made via telephone at 833-5US-SAFE (833-587-7233) or online at www.uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency. For information on how to report other alleged violations, including without limitation, the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, please visit www.usaswimming.org/report.

All athletes age 18, or who turn 18 during the meet, must complete Athlete Protection Training in order to be a USA Swimming registered member in good standing by the first day of the meet. A member not in good standing will be prohibited from participating in the competition until such time as all membership requirements are completed. Times achieved by an athlete who turns age 18 on or during the meet, who competes in this USA Swimming sanctioned event without completing this membership requirement, will NOT count for qualification or recognition. This includes participation as a member of a relay. The requirement to complete Athlete Protection Training is an annual requirement. USA Swimming membership will be affected if a non-athlete member or adult athlete member does not renew Athlete Protection Training annually.

Each club is responsible for the conduct of its swimmers. Any person who, in the opinion of the Meet Referee, Meet Director or Meet Marshall, is harmful to others or to other's property may be required to leave the competition. No swimmer will be allowed access to the pool deck without a coach member present. If the home club coach is not planning to attend event, swimmer must designate a supervising coach. Arriving with fellow LSC club/coach is preferred, however if a swimmer arrives without a coach, he/she must find a willing coach at the facility to sign a supervision form before a credential can be issued.

Any swimmer entered in the meet must be certified by a USA Swimming member-coach as being proficient in performing a racing start. It is the responsibility of the swimmer or the swimmer's legal guardian to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Deck changes are prohibited.

During the entire meet, use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone, are not permitted behind the starting blocks, while athletes are in vulnerable positions, and are not permitted in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone, is not permitted in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

Operation of a drone, or any other flying apparatus, is prohibited over the venue (pools, athlete/coach areas, spectator areas and open ceiling locker rooms) any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.

All U.S. athletes, coaches, and staff expecting to receive a deck pass should be prepared to show proof of current USA Swimming membership via the USA Swimming App. Coaches must meet and have current certifications for all the requirements of coach membership including successfully passing the required background check and APT course.

It is understood and agreed that USA Swimming, the Meet Hosts, Facility Owners, Officials, and the LSCs shall be free from any liabilities or claims for damages arising by reason of injuries to anyone during the conduct of the event.

Qualifying Criteria and Entry Process



2026 USA Swimming Open Water Criteria for Qualification of National Level Events

USA Swimming reserves the right to add additional criteria for qualification based on the needs of the USA Swimming National Team Program. Any additional criteria will be communicated by USA Swimming via posted changes to these Selection Procedures. Any questions regarding these criteria can be directed toward Yuri Suguiyama (ysuguiyama@usaswimming.org).

2026 USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

3K Knockout and 5K Qualification

Finished in the top 5 at the 2025 CSCAA 5K National Championships; or
Finished in the top 3 at the 2025 Mountain Pacific Sports Federation 5K Open Water Championship.

2026 USA Swimming Open Water Junior National Championships

3K Knockout and 5K Qualification

Finished in the top 15 at the 2025 USA Swimming 5K Open Water Zone Championships (Open Division Only). *

* The "Open" Division of the 5K Open Water Zone Championships will be the only event used for the qualification towards USA Swimming's National Level Events. Qualification from age group events will not be allowed

2026 USA Swimming Open Water Qualifying Time Standards

		2026 Open Water Nationals			2026 Open Water Junior Nationals
		10K	10K 19&U*	3K Knockout & 5K	3K Knockout & 5K
Men	800 LCM	8:21.49	8:26.50	8:26.50	9:06.09
	1500 LCM	15:59.99	16:09.59	16:09.59	17:27.19
	1000 SCY	9:15.19	9:20.74	9:20.74	10:00.69
	1650 SCY	15:34.89	15:44.24	15:44.24	16:54.19
Women	800 LCM	8:59.89	9:08.99	9:08.99	9:36.29
	1500 LCM	17:16.99	17:30.89	17:30.89	18:23.19
	1000 SCY	10:04.79	10:09.69	10:09.69	10:45.49
	1650 SCY	16:45.89	16:56.29	16:56.29	17:56.29

*AQUA Age

*16&U Age Group - AQUA Age

*AQUA age is defined as age as of December 31, 2026. The 10K 19&U will not be swum as a separate event.

The Qualifying Period is January 1, 2025 through the entry deadline

Qualifying Criteria and Entry Process



Enter On-Line at hub.usaswimming.org/landing

Athletes must enter these events through USA Swimming's On-line Meet Entry System (OME).

Register for the Open Water National Championships on-line at hub.usaswimming.org/landing beginning noon Mountain Time on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 through Noon Mountain Time on Monday, March 23, 2026. There will be no race-day registration. For help with the entries, contact Katie Trace at USA Swimming at 719-866-3578 or ktrace@usaswimming.org.

You will be required to pay for the on-line entries with a Visa, Mastercard, American Express or Discover.

OME is not an eligibility report; It is the coaches responsibility to know what events your athlete is qualified for.

OME requires each team to add an entry contact. Please be sure to include the contact information for the coach or team support staff that will be on-site and at the venue for the duration of the competition.

Once you complete your entry, you will be sent confirmations via e-mail. Please keep all of these and bring them with you to the meet (just in case).

For late entries, email Katie Trace at ktrace@usaswimming.org with the swimmer's name, date of birth, event to be entered, and qualifying time or criteria. Additional fees may apply for late entries. Payment for late entries will need to be made to the host on site.

For those that qualified through the Open Water Domestic Event Selections use the override option in OME. You will enter a time within the qualifying standard and use the race (and date of the race) that the swimmer qualified in as the meet for the override time.



Rules

Current USA Swimming Rules and Regulations will govern this event. Please see Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations for complete list of Open Water Rules.

Selected Open Water Rules

Swimwear

- ◆ No swimmer shall be allowed to use or wear any device that may be an aid to his/her speed, endurance, or buoyancy.
- ◆ A maximum of two (2) caps may be used.
- ◆ World Aquatics rules for swimwear will be used for all events.

Awards

- ◆ Individual champions shall be determined and awarded in women's and men's competitions. Medals shall be awarded to all first through eighth place finishers in each individual event.
- ◆ The male and female swimmers 18 years of age or younger attaining the highest finish position in the National Championships shall be designated as the USA Swimming 18 and under OW Champion in each contested event and shall receive the appropriate USA Swimming Championship medals.
- ◆ Team awards for the National Championships will combine the 10k and 5k races. Team awards shall be given to the top three teams: men's, women's and combined where the following criteria are met;

Men's or Women's – in order for awards to be given within a specific gender, that gender shall have a minimum of 16 competitors from at least three clubs starting the race.

Combined – To be eligible for this award, a club must have scored in both men's and women's races, and there must have been a minimum of three clubs participating in each gender's race.

Team awards will be shipped from USA Swimming headquarters following the event.

Scoring of individual events will be on a sixteen (16) place basis: 20, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 9, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Prize Money

Prize money will be awarded to the top 3 finishers in the 10K National Championship, 5K National Championship, and the 3K Knockout National Championship.

- 1st Place: \$1,500
- 2nd Place \$1,000
- 3rd Place: \$500

Doping Control

The athletes in these competitions are subject to drug testing conducted by the United States Anti Doping Agency (USADA) and World Aquatics under the In-Competition Testing Program. See additional information in the back of this booklet.

Entry Fees

10K National Championship: \$75.00/Individual

5K National Championships and 5K Junior National Championships: \$55.00/Individual

3K Knockout National Championships and 3K Knockout Junior National Championships: \$55.00/Individual

Foreign Participants: \$35.00 additional fee per participating athlete, coach, and staff member.

Foreign Entries

Foreign athletes who are not members of USA Swimming must send their entries to Yuri Suguiyama at ysuguiyama@usaswimming.org by Noon Mountain Time (MT) on Tuesday, March 3, and include the swimmer's first and last name, valid entry time, and date of birth (Month/Day/Year).

All foreign swimmers must be members in good standing of their respective World Aquatics recognized federation and must submit a letter from their federation indicating this standing.

Late Entries

Any team or athlete missing the entry deadline will be permitted to enter late, subject to the following requirements:

- A. Late entries must be submitted to Katie Trace at ktrace@usaswimming.org;
- B. These entries must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time on Sunday, March 29, 2026;
- C. The team or athlete must pay a processing fee of \$150.00 per athlete, and entry fees of \$150.00/10K event, \$110.00/5K event, and/or \$110.00/3K Knockout event.

Eligibility

The USA Swimming Open Water National Championships are open to all U.S. swimmers who are 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming who meet the specific event qualifying criteria, as well as invited foreign athletes. U.S. athletes must be eligible to represent the U.S. in international competition.

The USA Swimming Open Water Junior National Championships are open to all U.S. swimmers who are 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming who meet the specific event qualifying criteria. Foreign athletes, with the exception of Team Canada, are not invited to participate in the Junior National Championship races. All athletes participating in the Junior National Championship events must be eligible to represent the U.S. in international competition.

Coaches and team staff (**including all individuals in the feeding area for the 10K races**) must be 2026 Premium or Outreach members of USA Swimming, and be current in all required certifications and trainings.

Transgender Participants

Transgender athletes may compete pursuant to the eligibility rules and policies and procedures of USA Swimming, the International Olympic Committee, World Aquatics, and the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.



Technical Meetings

There will be no in-person technical meetings for these competitions, however there will be a virtual (web-based) technical meeting for all races. Details will be sent to each coach. Coaches are also encouraged to check the USA Swimming website for last minute details about the event. Participating coaches and athletes are responsible for all information in this document, distributed during the video conference meetings, and posted on the event website.

- ◆ Technical Meeting for all Open Water events, Wednesday, April 1, 2026 6:00 pm EST.

Pre-Race Briefings

In addition to each technical meeting, all swimmers must be present for the Pre-Race Briefing at the race start area prior to each race. At this meeting, race officials will distribute last minute information on weather and water conditions, emergency procedures, etc.

Practice Availability

Pool practice availability:

- ◆ Monday, March 30 - Friday, April 3; Times TBC

Selby Aquatic Center
8501 Potter Park Dr, Sarasota, FL 34238

Swimmers, or parents of swimmers under 18 years old, must complete Selby Aquatic Center's waiver prior to accessing the facility.

Open Water Training Availability

- ◆ Wednesday, April 1, Time TBC

Race Day Schedules

Schedules are subject to change depending on number of entries and local conditions.

Women's 10K National Championships

Thursday, April 2

6:30 am-7:45am – Check-in
7:45 am – Pre-race Briefing
7:55 am – Inspection and Roll Call
8:00 am – Start

Men's 10K National Championships

Thursday, April 2

8:00 am – 10:15 am – Check-in
10:15 am – Pre-race Briefing
10:25 am – Inspection and Roll Call
10:30 am – Start

Men's & Women's 5K Junior National Championships

Friday, April 3

7:00 am – 7:45 am - Check-in
7:45 am - Pre-race Briefing
7:55 am – Men's Inspection and Roll Call
8:00 am – Men's Start
8:01 am - Women's Inspection and Roll Call
8:10 am - Women's Start

Men's & Women's 3K Knockout National Championships

Friday, April 3

8:30 am – 9:15 am - Women's Check-in
9:15 am - Women's Pre-race Briefing
9:25 am – Women's Inspection and Roll Call
9:30 am – Women's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 1
9:33 am – Women's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 2
- Women's Round 2 - 1000m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1500m Heat 2
- Women's Round 3 - 500m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1000m
10:00 am - 10:45 am - Men's Check-in
10:45 am - Men's Pre-race Briefing
10:55 am - Men's Inspection and Roll Call
11:00 am - Men's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 1
11:03 am - Men's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 2
- Men's Round 2 - 1000m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1500m Heat 2
- Men's Round 3 - 500m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1000m

Men's & Women's 5K National Championships

Saturday, April 4

7:00 am – 7:45 am - Check-in
7:45 am - Pre-race Briefing
7:55 am – Men's Inspection and Roll Call
8:00 am – Men's Start
8:01 am - Women's Inspection and Roll Call
8:10 am - Women's Start

Men's & Women's 3K Knockout Junior National Championships

Saturday, April 4

8:30 am – 9:15 am - Women's Check-in
9:15 am - Women's Pre-race Briefing
9:25 am – Women's Inspection and Roll Call
9:30 am – Women's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 1
9:33 am – Women's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 2
- Women's Round 2 - 1000m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1500m Heat 2
- Women's Round 3 - 500m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1000m
10:00 am - 10:45 am - Men's Check-in
10:45 am - Men's Pre-race Briefing
10:55 am - Men's Inspection and Roll Call
11:00 am - Men's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 1
11:03 am - Men's Start Round 1 - 1500m Heat 2
- Men's Round 2 - 1000m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1500m Heat 2
- Men's Round 3 - 500m begins approx. 10 minutes after the finish of 1000m



Race Course and Operations

The race course will consist of counter-clockwise loops around the course with large buoys at each turn, and intermediate buoys lining the course. The 10K course will be approximately 1.66km loops with 6 loops for the 10K. The 5K course will be approximately 1.66km loops with 3 loops for the 5K.

A "feeding" station will be located near the start end of the 10K course, and will consist of a dock running parallel to the course and accessible by land so coaches should plan accordingly. The use of feed sticks by coaches or team support staff will be permitted. It is the swimmer's responsibility to coordinate with their coach or another individual for feeding purposes. No volunteers will be specifically available for this purpose. Feed poles are not to exceed 5 meters in length when extended. No objects, rope or wire may hang off of feed poles except banners or flags, but may not exceed the size of 30 cm x 20 cm.

Aside from Safety and Officials' boats, no additional craft will be allowed near the race course. This is a non-escorted swim.

These races will utilize electronic "chip" timing, and swimmers will wear one timing chip on each arm.

3K Knockout Events

- ◆ The 3K Knockout events will consist of three rounds.
 - ◆ Round 1: 1500m lap (2 heats*)
 - ◆ Round 2: 1000m lap
 - ◆ Round 3: 500m lap
- ◆ Round 1 - all entrants will be divided amongst two heats, circle seeded by entry time based on the following order, will race one 1500m lap. (1500 LCM, 800 LCM, 1650 SCY, 1000 SCY, applicable OW Race Result Qualifiers)
 - ◆ The top 10 finishers from each heat will advance to Round 2.
 - ◆ * At the discretion of the Championship Referee and/or the National Team Sr. Director & Coach, Round 1 may be consolidated to one heat based on number of participants.
- ◆ Round 2 - 20 athletes (top 10 finishers from each Round 1 heat) will race one 1000m lap. Round 2 will begin approximately 10 minutes following the completion of Round 1
 - ◆ The top 10 finishers will advance to Round 3.
 - ◆ Finishers 11-16 will score points (6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1)
- ◆ Round 3 - 10 athletes (top 10 finishers from Round 2) will race one 500m lap. The finish order of Round 3 will determine the final top 10 placing and points (20, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 9, 7)

Parking

Parking will be available at the venue.

Weather Contingency

In the event of adverse conditions, the following re-scheduling priorities will be used based on weather predictions, and at the discretion of the Meet Referee:

- Priority 1 - Later during the race day
- Priority 2 - On the following day(s)
- Priority 3 - Cancellation

Hotels

Discounted rates are only available by reserving directly through the event's housing website link:

[Hotel link coming soon!](#)

Please click the link to view accommodation choices/rates and reserve your lodging. Everyone is encouraged to reserve through the housing link.

Broadcast Statement

Any photographs, videotape or other audio and/or visual recordings of the event created by a spectator may be used solely for such spectator's personal non-commercial use, and may not be broadcast, published or disseminated, or used for any commercial purposes, without the prior written consent of USA Swimming.

Image Authorization

All participants agree to be filmed and photographed by the official photographer(s) and network(s) of USA Swimming under the conditions authored by USA Swimming, and allow event organizers the right to use names, pictures, likenesses, and biographical information before, during or after the period of participation in USA Swimming competitions to promote such competitions.

Swimmers with Disabilities

Coaches entering swimmers with disabilities that require any accommodations are required to provide advance notice in writing to the meet director by the entry deadline accompanying their meet entry file, including the need for any personal assistants required and/or registered service animals.

Spectators

The races will take place at a public park and ample spectator viewing will be available at no cost.

Liability

USA Swimming, the LSC, the venue, and the host organization shall accept no responsibility for liability or injuries sustained by any individual, athlete, coach, official, meet volunteer, or spectator while traveling to and from or while participating in these events. Damage to the venue, when proved, will cause the offending participant, if unattached, or the offending swimmer's club, if attached, to be held accountable for repairs. All participants and guests must adhere to all rules and coaches must supervise their swimmers at all times. Children must be supervised at all times.

Course Layout: 1.66km Course (10K and 5K Races)



10K: 6 Laps
5K: 3 Laps

*Feed Station for 10K races only

**Course Layout: 1500m, 1000m, and 500m
Course (3K Knockout Race)**



Round 1: 1500m

- Start to T-1: 95m
- T-1 to T-4: 635m
- T-4 to T-5: 115m
- T-5 to Finish: 655m

Round 2: 1000m

- Start to T-1: 95m
- T-1 to T-3: 385m
- T-3 to T-6: 115m
- T-6 to Finish: 405m

Round 3: 500m

- Start to T-1: 95m
- T-1 to T-2: 135m
- T-2 to T-7: 115m
- T-7 to Finish: 155m



Safety Information

1. Safety Authority

Emergency Services will be provided by Medics, Lifeguards, Search and Urban Rescue Fire Fighters.

Open Water Lifeguards will be located throughout the course and venue areas. AED's, First Aid kits, and Basic Life Support gear will be available on-site. An EMS/Paramedic unit will be located at the park.

Race Operations will be manned by the Race Director, Administrative Referee, and LG Representative

The race is held within Nathan Benderson Park.

2. Communications Plan

Primary - There will be two separate radio networks using two different frequency plans. The radios are not interchangeable.

Communication across radio networks will be coordinated through Race Operations. Personnel using USA Swimming VHF radios include the Race Director, Race Operations, Race Referees, Safety Officer, Course Officer, Spare vessels, Feed Station Referee, Administrative Referee, Turn Judges, and event announcers.

Staff will utilize their own radios, and will be in contact with Police/Fire Rescue, Race Operations, Life Guard Supervisors, and On-Water Life Guard.

Secondary communications between all parties will be via cellular telephones. The following positions will be issued a phone number listing:

Race Director
Meet Referee
Safety Officer
Race Referees
Course Officer
LG Supervisors

3. Swimmer in Distress

- A. Lifeguards will activate their water rescue protocols.
- B. Any swimmer withdrawing from the race must report to the Officials Tent for identification. Lifeguard will radio race-control with the competitor number and direct the swimmer to return to the start area.
- C. A First Aid tent will be maintained on site in the Start/Finish area.
- D. Swimmers needing emergency medical care will be administered to by EMS on site at Athlete Recovery Tent.
- E. Swimmers requiring evacuation via ambulance will be transported to Lakewood Ranch Medical Center: Emergency Medicine approximately 2.7 miles away from Nathan Benderson Park.

4. Missing Swimmer

- A. All swimmers will be issued a "Race Ticket" with their competitor number during the registration process. This "Ticket" will be collected as the swimmers enter the water.
- B. All swimmers will be required to provide a personal cell phone contact and a coach/handler cell phone contact at registration.
- C. All swimmers will be videotaped during the final inspection/accounting prior to the start.
- D. If a swimmer is reported missing and last seen in the water: Nathan Benderson Lifeguards will activate their under-water search and recovery protocol. Concurrently, meet operations will attempt contact with the coach/handler and swimmer via cell phone. Meet Operations will also review the start list, withdrawal list, site race tickets, and view the pre-race video tape to confirm the swimmer actually started the race. All swimmers are reminded before the race start that they must report to the Admin Race Official if they withdraw from the race. All swimmers who depart from the water will be identified by their race number.

5. Support Vessels

- A. The following vessels will be used:
 - Referee Boats –4
 - Turn Judge Boats –2
 - Spare Boats
 - Jet-skis
 - Kayaks/Paddlecraft - 6-10
- B. All vessels Captains will attend a briefing by the Safety Officer.
- C. Spare vessels will remain clear of the vessel exclusion zone unless summoned on to the course by race control.
- D. Once the course has been set, the Course Officer vessel will remain clear of the vessel exclusion zone unless summoned to the course by the Referee or race control.
- E. All official's boats will be equipped with VHF radios on the race control network.

6. Parameters for Abandoning the Race

Any one of the following individuals are empowered to independently order the race abandoned due to unsafe course or other conditions.

- Meet Referee
- Safety Officer
- USA Swimming Events Director

If the race is to be abandoned, Race Control will relay via radio to all vessels to signal abandonment. Simultaneously, the Nathan Benderson Lifeguard Supervisor will signal via their radio net to signal abandonment. The abandonment signals will be:

- From Officials Boats – 5 short blasts followed by one long blast.
- From the Lifeguards – 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast.
- Swimmer actions are to:
 - * Discontinue swimming
 - * Look for directions from the Officials or water safety personnel
 - * Once safe on land, proceed to the start/finish area and check-in.

Event Safety Information



Contingency Plan

- A. Due to venue restrictions, it is unlikely any change to the shape of the course will be possible.
- B. If weather conditions require, the directions of swim (CW/CCW) and the location of the start/finish structure may be changed.
- C. If the race is abandoned, it will be postponed until later the same day. If the race must be abandoned for the entire day, the race will be held the following day.

Doping Control



The 2026 Open Water National and Junior National Championships are subject to Doping Control. All athletes at this competition are subject to drug testing conducted by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), WADA, and/or World Aquatics under the In-Competition Testing program. This section is intended to give an overview of the key points relevant to this program and the testing which will be conducted at the competitions governed by this booklet. Athletes should visit usada.org/athletes/antidoping101/ for important information that all athletes, coaches, and their parents must be aware of. Key details from that document are listed below. Athletes should check their medications prior to use and note that some medications may require approval that will take at least 30 days.

What substances are banned?

Per USADA: "As a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code, USADA tests for substances and methods found on the World Anti-Doping Agency Prohibited List. It's important that athletes are aware of the substances and methods on the [Prohibited List](#) as an athlete is responsible for any prohibited substance found in their body, regardless of intent. It's also important to understand that certain substances are prohibited at all times, while others are prohibited only during competition. In some cases, a substance is only prohibited in a certain sport. Use the resources on this tab in conjunction with the next step about medication and the resources available pertaining to medication to determine whether or not a substance is prohibited." Read the summary of [Modifications for 2026](#).

What about medication?

Per USADA: "Athletes need to be aware of the prohibited status of any medication they are taking, whether it be an over-the-counter or prescription medication. The easiest way to understand your medication is to use USADA's [Global DRO](#) service, where generic and name brand products, or specific medications, can be searched. Results will yield information including the in- and out-of-competition status, any threshold information, as well as sport specific information for those substances prohibited only in certain sports. Athletes or their support team can also speak to an expert by phone during business hours [8am – 5pm Mountain Time Monday-Friday] by calling Athlete Connect at 719.785.2000.

It's important to understand that Dietary Supplements are not medication. They are regulated and manufactured differently. For these reasons, USADA is unable to provide guidance on specific dietary supplement products. For more information visit [USADA's Supplement Connect](#).

Therapeutic Use Exemptions?

Per USADA: "In some situations, an athlete may have an illness or condition that requires the use of medication listed on the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List. A Therapeutic Use Exemption or TUE provides permission for an athlete to have a prohibited substance in their body at the time of a drug test. The process for obtaining a TUE is thorough and balances the need to allow athletes access to critical medication while upholding clean athletes' rights to compete on a clean and level playing field. In some cases, the TUE requirements are different for national-level athletes vs. non-national level athletes. Athletes interested in obtaining a TUE should visit the Therapeutic Use Exemption page, where they can determine if they need a therapeutic use exemption, begin the application process, and find answers to the most frequently asked TUE questions."

Understand the Sample Collection Process:

Per USADA: "Athletes selected for testing are subject to both blood and urine testing. The processes are designed to be both effective in preserving the integrity of the sample, yet safe and comfortable for the athlete. Understanding the processes as well as an athlete's rights and responsibilities can help to make them less intimidating. There are additional considerations for minor athletes and disabled athletes. Learn more about the sample collection processes here." NOTE: Minor athletes should always have a representative with them in doping control.

Per established doping control testing protocol, a Witnessing Chaperone must directly observe an athlete providing a sample. The witnessing chaperone is always someone of the same gender as the athlete. To protect the rights of a minor athlete, someone must observe the witnessing chaperone observing the athlete as they provide a urine sample. That person cannot see the athlete – they can only see the witnessing chaperone watching the athlete. Per USADA's established protocol the athlete has the right to choose who will be in that role. In the event that a coach acts as an Athlete Representative for an athlete of the opposite gender, they may request that someone on USA-DA's crew observe the witnessing chaperone observing the athlete. Then the coach can be the athlete representative for the rest of the processing of the paperwork.

NCAA doping control rules are different than the rules for this meet. Be sure all athletes have checked their meds with USADA and understand this information.

Doping Control rule for athletes previously eligible for out of competition drug testing: Athletes who were previously eligible for out of competition (no-advance-notice) doping control and officially retired have a 6-month waiting period before they can compete (should they choose to return to competition) and must again be subject to out-of-competition testing during this reinstatement period. The athlete is not permitted to compete in any USA Swimming sanctioned events (local competitions all the way up through National competitions including meets with a dual sanction from Masters and USA Swimming) or World Aquatics sanctioned events. If you have an athlete in this situation, please email smichael@usaswimming.org immediately.