



COLLEGE NATIONAL OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIP

December 13, 2025

PRESENTED BY:

VISIT
Sarasota
beaches and beyond



CSCAA Open Water National Championship

Date & Location

December 13, 2025
Nathan Benderson Park
5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, Florida 34235

Meet Staff & Personnel

Event Director

Maureen Palchak - mpalchak@cscaa.org

Head Meet Referee

Hector Acevedo Hacevedo1@yahoo.com

Head Safety Official

Sid Cassidy

CSCAA Staff

Maureen Palchak (mpalchak@cscaa.org), Michael Tubb (tubb@cscaa.org), Edie Ashman (edie@cscaa.org), Samantha Barany (sbarany@cscaa.org)

Event Facility

Nathan Benderson Park is a premier 600-acre community and sporting destination in Sarasota, Florida, centered around a 400-acre artificial lake originally created during interstate construction and later transformed into a world-class competition venue. The park has hosted high-profile events including the 2017 World Rowing Championships, NCAA regattas, and numerous USA Swimming Open Water National Championships.

Coach Responsibility

Swimmers' and Coaches' Responsibility - It shall be the swimmers' and coaches' responsibility to acquaint themselves with all information contained in this event manual, as well as information disseminated at the VIRTUAL ONLY technical meeting on December 11th Time TBD. There will be no in-person meeting and dinner for the 2025 event.

Eligible Teams

All participants in the CSCAA College National Open Water Swimming Championship must be collegiate student-athletes eligible to compete for their NCAA, NAIA or NJCAA member institutions for the current school year and meet the specific event qualifying criteria. Meter conversions are acceptable. Qualifying period: January 1st, 2025 through the entry deadline.

*Please confirm eligibility with your respective compliance departments.



QUALIFYING CRITERIA

	500y Free	1000y Free	1650y	5k
Women:	5:10.00	10:30.00	18:00.00	1:09.00
Men:	4:50.00	10:00.00	17:00.00	1:04.00

Entry Process

Event Entry Fee: \$100.00 per Individual

Registration is a two-step process:

Step 1 – Initial Registration & Payment

- Opens **September 3, 2025**
- Coaches may register and pay for designated spots via the [CSCAA Registration Form](#).
- *Specific student-athlete names are not required at this stage.*

Step 2 – Submit Names & Qualifying Times

- Coaches will receive the CSCAA Open Water submission template via email.
- Coaches must use the template to submit specific student-athlete names and qualifying times.
- **Deadline: December 1, 2025**

Important Dates & Registration Information

- **October 1, 2025** – No refunds will be issued after this date.
- **December 1, 2025** – Final deadline for submitting names and qualifying times (Registration closes).

Exhibition swimmers will be accepted but should not exceed 10 total participants per team per gender and must be designated prior to December 1, 2025.

The entry form is not an eligibility report; it is the coaches' responsibility to know the eligibility of each athlete.

This event will be governed by the current USA Swimming Rules and Regulations. For a complete list of Open Water rules, please refer to Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rulebook.



Official Rules

Swim Caps, Fingernails, Body Marking & Wetsuits

- Brightly colored swim caps are strongly encouraged for the CSCAA Open Water National Championship. A maximum of two swim caps may be worn.
- Buoys on the last 250 meters of the course are red.
- Fingernails will be checked by the referee on the morning of the event.
- Body marking is required. Official race numbers will be provided by the CSCAA in advance of the event.
- No swimmer shall use or wear any device that may aid speed, endurance, or buoyancy. This includes (but is not limited to) wetsuits, flotation aids, or items designed to retain body heat, with the exception of a reasonable application of body grease.
- Tape on the timing chip is not permitted.

Health & Safety

EMS, Safety launch boats, kayaks and Lifeguards are provided by Nathan Benderson Park and follow Sarasota County rules and regulations.

There will be six kayaks and four launch boats monitoring the race course at all times including USA Swimming certified Open Water Swimming Officials.

Technical Meeting

A VIRTUAL technical meeting will be held prior to the event. The exact date and time will be shared as soon as they are confirmed.

All swimmers and coaches are expected to attend the virtual technical meeting prior to the day of the event and pre-race briefing immediately before the event. Each participant is responsible for understanding all information communicated during these sessions. Race officials will use the meetings to share any last-minute updates regarding weather and water conditions, emergency procedures, and other important details.

Timeline

Pre-Event Water Access

Final details regarding water access and registration packet pick-up for Friday, December 12 at Nathan Benderson Park will be confirmed and shared directly with coaches. Please note: the water will be open from 12:00–4:30 p.m., and all participants must be out by 4:30 p.m. due to sunset.

Race Day Schedule – December 13, 2025.

Schedules are subject to change based on the number of entries and local conditions. The women's race will not start before the posted times but may be adjusted depending on the completion of the men's race. With sunrise expected at 7:11 a.m. in December, the water will open for warm-up at that time and not before.

Men's 5K Race Day

7:45 a.m. - Men's Check-in

8:15 a.m. - Men's Pre-Race Briefing

8:20 a.m. - Inspection and Roll Call

8:30 a.m. - Men's 5K Start



Women's 5K Race Day

9:45 a.m. - Women's Check-in

10:15 a.m. - Women's Pre-Race Briefing

10:20 a.m. - Inspection and Roll Call

10:30 a.m. - Women's 5K Start

Post-Race - Men's and Women's Awards

Reasonable time after the completion of the races, at the discretion of the Head Referee.

Course Map

Appendix A includes the Nathan Benderson Park course map. As with the USA Swimming National Championships held at this venue, the 5K race will consist of three laps around the 1.66 km course.

Water start and beach finish, with gender-specific mass starts.

Hospitality & Info

Beverages and snacks will be provided in separate hospitality areas for coaches and student-athletes on race day. Nathan Benderson Park has available changing rooms and readily available bathrooms on site at the Tower. Please note: there are no showers on site at Nathan Benderson Park.

Awards & Scoring

Team and Individual Scoring Format

Team events will be conducted concurrently with individual events, using individual results to determine team scores. Teams will be entered automatically based on individual entries.

Each institution's team score will be calculated using the times of its top three finishers. The combined time of these three athletes will determine the team's placement, with the lowest total time earning the highest team position. A maximum of five athletes per team may contribute to the scoring.

Individual Awards

Individual champions will be determined and awarded in both the women's and men's competitions. Awards will be presented to all first- through eighth-place finishers in each individual event.

As an addition last year in 2024, awards will also be given to the top male and female finishers in each division (e.g., Division I, Division II, etc.). The first-place men's and women's teams will each receive a trophy.



Additional Info

Disqualification & Sportsmanship

Disqualification can occur based on the rules established by USA Swimming as well as at the discretion of the head referee. Competitors must adhere to the specific guidelines, and any violation—such as unsportsmanlike conduct, interfering with other swimmers, or failing to follow the course—can lead to disqualification. The head referee holds the authority to enforce these rules and make judgment calls on any incidents during the race, ensuring fairness and safety for all participants.

The CSCAA has partnered with numerous Sarasota Hotels to provide group rates and available blocks of rooms. Please visit cscaa.org/open-water-championship for more information.

Media

Social Media

The official hashtag for the CSCAA College National Open Water Championship is: #CSCAAOWC2025

Results

Results of each session will be posted on the CSCAA website as soon as possible after the event.

For media requests or credentials, please contact Maureen Palchak of the CSCAA @mpalchak@cscaa.org

Spectators & Admission

Spectator Seating

The CSCAA College National Open Water Championship is a non-ticketed event with all seating designated as general admission.

Credentials

Official bag tags will serve as participant credentials.

