



Champions of the Channel Event Rules

The Rottneest Channel Swim Association (**RCSA**) has set the following rules (**Event Rules**) for the 2026 Champions of the Channel (**Event**). All participants in the Event Solo swimmer (**Swimmer**), any paddler (**Paddler**), or any skipper (**Skipper**) of a registered support boat (**Support Boat**) must comply with the Event Rules and any participant in breach of these Event Rules will face disqualification (**DQ**) for themselves and their Swimmer, and may also be banned or sanctioned from participating in future Rottneest Crossings, at the discretion of the RCSA, and in some circumstances, also result in prosecution.

Please note that the Race Director, Race Officials, and RCSA on-water safety personnel are empowered to disqualify, at their sole discretion, any participant who breaches these Event Rules.

All Participants

The following Event Rules apply to all participants in the Event and are in addition to and are not intended to limit in any way the Terms and Conditions of Entry.

1. All participants including Swimmers, Paddlers, and Support Boats must give way to commercial shipping as there is no arrangement for commercial shipping to give way to Swimmers, Support Boats, or Paddlers. On Event Day the Race Director or Channel Swim Base will advise Skippers (via VHF channel 71) of expected shipping movements. Support Boats and Swimmers must remain a safe distance (minimum 50 metres) from any commercial ship whether they be stationary or moving.
2. All participants must comply with Marine Legislation, all Event Rules, RCSA By-laws, Terms and Conditions of Entry, and the directions given by the officers of the Fremantle Ports, WA Police, Department of Transport, Rottneest Island Rangers, Race Director, Race Officials, other On-Water Safety Personnel, other Event Safety and Medical Personnel at all times.
3. Event Rules must be abided by when Participants are within the start line enclosure, Swim Course and/or finish line enclosure.
4. Drones of any type are strictly prohibited at the start line, finish line or anywhere amongst the fleet on the Swim Course during the Event. If any Participants or any supporters on a registered Support Boat use a drone will be disqualified, which will result in banning from future events and may, in some circumstances, also result in prosecution from CASA.
5. Balloons are not permitted to be used for identification or any other purpose for the duration of the Event.
6. All participants are not permitted to consume alcohol while participating in the Event.
7. If a shark is sighted, the RCSA's Shark Protocol will be followed, and directions will be communicated as per the Protocol.

All Swimmers

The following Event Rules apply to Swimmers in the Event and are in addition to and are not intended to limit in any way the Terms and Conditions of Entry.

8. The minimum age for all Swimmers at the date of the Event, is fourteen (14) years.
9. Swimsuits must comply with RCSA standards.

A complying swimsuit must:

- a) be of woven textile material;
- b) not cover the neck; and
- c) not extend beyond the shoulders or ankles.

The RCSA provides the following guidance in the application of this rule:

A Swimmer may:

- *wear two suits so long as one suit comprises only briefs or a bikini;*
- *grease and/or oil the body before a swim (not excessive);*
- *wear goggles;*
- *wear two caps (the official Event swim cap must be the outer one worn);*
- *wear a nose clip; and*
- *wear a rash vest/stinger suit;*
- *wear a smart watch.*

A Swimmer may not:

- *wear any item with neoprene or any other buoyant material; or*
- *wear earphones/headphones, or any technology/device that prevents the Swimmer from hearing their surroundings; or*
- *wear smart goggles; or*
- *wear any item that trails from the Swimmer's body; or*
- *wear anything not within the spirit of RCSA rules or exemptions or the RCSA exemptions.*

10. Swimmers must, at all times, wear their official Event swim cap while in the water.
11. All Swimmers must have race number tattoos affixed to the outside of their upper arms. It is the responsibility of the Team Captain to ensure that all members of their Duo or Team have tattoos affixed to their upper arms.
12. Subject to obtaining an exemption from the RCSA as set out below, no Swimmer is permitted to use, or receive the benefit from, any form of artificial swimming aid or assistance during the Event, including but not limited to, the following:
 - a. holding onto a Support Boat, other vessels, paddle craft or Paddler; or
 - b. drafting from an escort boat, Support Boat, paddle craft or another Swimmer; or
 - c. pacesetting from another Swimmer, whether they be registered or unregistered for the Event (excluding Tandem Solo Swimmers who are permitted to swim alongside one another).

If artificial aids or assistance are required for medical reasons, an application for exemption may be made by a prospective entrant to the RCSA via emailing query@rotnestchannelswim.com.au. Should an assisted swim be approved by the RCSA for the Event, that Solo/Duo/Team will not be eligible for a prize but will, upon finishing the Event, be recorded as having finished, subject to the swim being assisted.



13. Each entry must have a registered Support Boat and Skipper who will support them for the duration of the swim. It is the responsibility of the Swimmer to ensure their Support Boat and Skipper have registered for the Event.
14. The start of the event will be signalled by a horn, or other starting device. It is the responsibility of the Competitor to ensure they are in the start line enclosure at their allocated Wave (start time).
15. At the start of the Event, Swimmers must not proceed beyond the 1,500m Icon Vessel without their registered Support Boat. Should a Swimmer proceed beyond the 1,500m Icon Vessel without their registered Support Boat this will result in automatic disqualification from the Event.
16. Swimmers must remain within the designated swim course at all times. This is defined as the area between the Northern Boundary (Rescue Corridor, marked by red buoys) and the Southern Boundary (S32° 0.0684), which runs between Pearson Street on the mainland to the centre of Bickley Bay on Rottneest Island. Crossing either boundary will result in automatic disqualification. Skippers must ensure that all swimmers stay within these boundaries throughout the event.
Swim Course Definition:
 - a. **Start Channel:** The area between the North and South extremity buoys at the start (as defined in the South32 Rottneest Channel Swim website, Skipper Protocols, and Yearbook).
 - b. **Main Course:** The area extending West to East from the end of the Start Channel to Philip Rock, and from North to South between the Northern Boundary and the Southern Boundary (Pearson Street to the centre of Bickley Bay).
 - c. **Finish Section:** The area between designated markers from Philip Rock to the finish line.
17. Swimmers must withdraw from the Event if they have not met the specified cut-off times, or as otherwise directed by the Race Director and/or a Race Official. Swimmers will be advised if cut-off times are amended at any time during the Event and all Swimmers must adhere to these new cut-off times.
18. If a Swimmer is directed by the Race Director and/or a Race Official to leave the water as a result of failure to comply with the Event Rule(s), then the Swimmer must do so immediately.

Champs of the Channel Swimmers

The Start

- C1. All Champs of the Channel Competitors shall start their crossing wearing an approved Champions of the Channel swim cap.
- C2. The Event Referee shall keep competitors and officials informed of the time before start at suitable intervals and at one-minute intervals for the last five minutes.
- C3. The start area is defined by the area enclosed by the start enclosure and a start line clearly identified by the Chief Referee. No swimmer is to commence their crossing prior to the start siren.
- C4. The Starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all competitors.
- C5. The Starter will give the starting signal when he/she considers all competitors are ready.
- C6. The start signal shall be audible.
- C7. If in the opinion of the Chief Referee an unfair advantage has been gained at the start the offending competitor will be given a yellow or red flag in accordance with rule C13.
- C8. All escort safety craft shall be stationed clear of the start channel so as not to interfere with any competitor, and if picking up their competitor from behind shall navigate in such a way as not to manoeuvre through the field of competitors.
- C9. Although they may start together, in all other respects the men's and women's competitions shall be treated as separate events.



THE RACE

C10.All competitors are required to complete the whole course, respecting all designated course boundaries as defined in rule 16.

C11.Race Judges shall instruct any competitor who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming with their support craft to move clear.

C12.Champions of the Channel Swimmers must have their own support vessels and are not permitted to compete as a tandem swimmer entry in the Champions of the Channel category.

C13.If in the opinion of the Chief Referee or Officials, any competitor, or competitor's approved representative, or escort safety craft, takes advantage by committing any violation of the rules or by making intentional contact with any competitor, the following procedure shall apply:

a. 1st Infringement:

i. A yellow flag and a card bearing the competitor's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the competitor that they are in violation of the Rules.

b. 2nd Infringement:

i. A red flag and a card bearing the competitor's number shall be raised by the Official to indicate and to inform the competitor that they are for the second time in violation of the Rules. The competitor shall be disqualified.

ii. If in the opinion of an Official, an action of a competitor or an escort safety craft, or a competitor's approved representative is deemed to be 'unsporting' the Official shall disqualify the competitor concerned immediately. The competitor must leave the water immediately and be placed in an escort craft and take no further part in the race.

C14.Support craft shall manoeuvre so as not to obstruct or place them directly ahead of any competitor and not take unfair advantage by slip streaming.

C15.Support craft and paddlers shall attempt to maintain a constant position so as to station the competitor at, or forward of, the mid-point of the support craft and/or paddler.

C16.Rendering assistance by an official medical officer to a competitor in apparent distress should always supersede official rules of disqualification through "intentional contact" with a competitor.

C17.No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device which may be an aid to their speed, endurance, or buoyancy. Only current (at the date of the event) World Aquatic Open Water Swimming approved wearables such as swimsuit, goggles and a maximum of two (2) caps may be used.

C18.Competitors shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the Chief Referee, excessive.

C19.The pacing of a competitor by another person is not permitted.

C20.Coaching and the giving of instructions by the approved competitor's representative on the or in the escort safety craft is permitted. No whistle shall be allowed.

C21.No objects can be thrown to the competitors, including sustenance. The competitors shall receive their feeding in containers directly from their representative by a feeding pole or by hand.

Emergency Abandonment

C22.In the event of a full or partial cancellation of the competition (due to the complexity and challenges of the course), positions, rankings and awards will only be awarded to competitors who successfully complete the course in the competition.

C23.In the event of a full abandonment of the competition (due to the complexity and challenges of the course), positions, rankings and awards will not be awarded to competitors.



THE FINISH OF THE RACE

C24. The final places will be determined by the electronic timing and finish video. A panel can be used to adjudicate a close finish.

- a. The competitor will be deemed finished as the first point of their chest crosses the finish line.

C25. All competitors must start the race with a microchip transponder on their ankle.

C26. Each competitor's support team must have a device actively transmitting their competitor's position to the Rotto Swim App. If Race Safety Officials notice a competitor's position is not being accurately transmitted the competitor's support team will be notified and must render a solution within 15 mins of being notified. Failure to rectify or repeated infringements see rule C13.

SWIMWEAR & TECHNOLOGY

C27. Swimsuits (men and women) shall not cover the neck, nor extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the ankle. Subject to these specific shape specifications, swimsuits for open water swimming competitions shall further comply with all other requirements applicable to swimsuits for swimming-pool competition.

C28. Technology, GPS tracking, bio-medical sensors or devices that record blood pressure, body temperature, stroke rate, breathing rate etc. via the transponder are permitted in accordance with current (at the date of the event) World Aquatics list of wearables.

C29. The technology may transmit such information but not act as a receiver giving information and advantage to the competitor such as "smart goggles", hearing devices, and the like.

Skippers

19. The minimum age for Skippers at the date of the Event, is eighteen (18) years.
20. Skippers of a Support Boat and tender (if applicable) must have completed their Recreational Skipper qualification and have been in possession of a Recreational Skippers Ticket, or approved equivalent certification, for the entire duration of the twelve (12) months preceding the Event.
21. Skippers must register through the Event registration and nominate their Support Boat which will be used for the Event. Each registration must be connected to an Entry in the Event. Only registered Skippers and their nominated Support Boats and tender vessels (where applicable) displaying their boat stickers (per Event Rules 28 and 29) are permitted to be used in the Event.
22. Personal water craft (PWC's) are not permitted to be used by any participant for any purpose for the duration of the Event (this does not apply to Event on-water safety personnel).
23. Support Boats must be licensed to carry all passengers for whom the Skipper is responsible. This includes all people on the Support Boat and in the water, including the Paddler. The number permitted is determined by the information displayed on the Australian Builders Plate (if the vessel does not have an Australian Builders Plate, it is recommended to follow the guidelines below). Support Boats must not be smaller than 3.75 metres in length. Please note, the following guidelines are not to be relied on and it is the Skipper's responsibility to determine the exact number of people permitted to be on board for a safe voyage.

Length of vessel	Maximum number of people aboard (including the Swimmer/s and Paddler/s)
4.5m to less than 5.0m	5
5.0m to less than 5.5m	6
5.5m to less than 6.0m	7

24. Support Boats must be equipped with all the required mandatory marine safety and emergency equipment as per the WA Navigable Waters Regulations.
25. No Support Boat or power craft shall exceed a speed of 6 knots anywhere or at any time on the Swim Course or near any Swimmer, Support Boat, or Paddler. RCSA and authorised vessels (e.g. rescue vessels) will endeavour to stay off the Swim Course should they need to exceed this speed, except in the case of an emergency. If, for mechanical reasons, a Skipper is required to run the engine of a Support Boat or tender vessel at higher revs to clear the engine, this must be done at least 50 metres clear of the Swim Course and any Swimmer, Support Boat, or Paddler. Skippers must maintain an unobstructed view of their Swimmer(s) and Paddler (if applicable) at all times.
26. Support Boats must have an operating VHF Radio. On Event Day, the radio must be turned on, tuned to VHF channel 71, and the volume audible to ensure the Race Director, Race Officials, and Channel Swim Base can always contact the fleet throughout the Event. Skippers must follow any instructions given by the Race Director, Race Officials, and Channel Swim Base at all times. If Support Boats have the facility to do so, a dual watch of VHF channels 16 and 71 is encouraged.
27. Skippers must keep their smart devices/mobile phones on and easily accessible at all times during the Event as a delivery method for Swim Course and emergency information. It is encouraged Skippers install the Rotto Swim app to receive push notifications during the Event.
28. Support Boats must display the supplied boat stickers showing their Swimmer/s race number. The stickers must be displayed on either side of the Support Boat in a visible location above the waterline. Only participant vessels displaying these stickers will be permitted within the Swim Course (excluding Event on-water safety personnel).
29. Tender vessels must display one set of the supplied A6 stickers with their Swimmer/s race number. Numbers are to be displayed on either side of the Support Boat in a visible location above the waterline. Only participant vessels displaying these stickers will be permitted in the Swim Course (excluding Event on-water safety personnel).
30. Support Boats must remain at least 1,000m away from Cottesloe Beach at the start of the Event. Swimmers cannot disembark and swim, nor can they be dropped to shore, at the start line at Cottesloe Beach from their Support Boat.
31. At the start of the Event, Support Boats must not enter the Swim Course until their Swimmer Wave has been called. The South32 Rottnest Channel Swim website, Skipper Protocols, and Yearbook contain a map (**Course Map**) indicating the Support Boat Holding Areas in which the Support Boats must remain until their Swimmer(s) Wave is called.



32. Support Boats must remain North of the red 1,000m buoys when entering the Swim Course and must not proceed beyond the 1,500m Icon Vessel without their Swimmer(s).
33. Skippers must ensure the Support Boat maintains a close proximity of at least 50 metres to their Swimmer(s) in the water at all times from 1,500 metres until 18km or 19km buoys as applicable (subject to Event Rule 24).
34. When taking a Swimmer on-board, whether during a Swimmer changeover or otherwise:
 - a. the Support Boat motor/s **MUST** be disengaged and in neutral;
 - b. in accordance with Event Rule 35, the Support Boats **MUST NOT** make way astern to pick up a Swimmer.
35. Support Boats **MUST NOT** make way astern. This means they must not move backwards. To avoid danger (to another vessel, a Swimmer, a Paddler, etc.), a Skipper is permitted to use astern (reverse) thrust – **ONLY to stop or slow the vessel's forward way**. The vessel **MUST NOT** make way astern (i.e. move backwards) under any circumstances. If a Skipper needs to stop or slow the vessel's forward way, they must ensure it is safe to do so (i.e. there are no Swimmers and/or Paddlers immediately behind the vessel). This Event Rule applies at **ALL** times on the Swim Course regardless of the proximity of other vessels.
36. All Support Boats (yachts or power boats) that are **10 metres or longer** are required to:
 - a. stay on the extremities of the fleet at all times (North or South) but remain South of the Northern Boundary;
 - b. have a registered tender that is accessible for the duration of the Event which meets the Department of Transport's requirements;
 - c. exit the Swim Course at the 18km gate. This means the Swimmer(s) will finish their race with the tender and/or Paddler as per Event Rule 37.
37. Powered Support Boats that are less than 10 metres in length must leave the Swim Course no later than the 19km buoys. After the 18km buoys, the Swim Course becomes heavily congested. It is encouraged that Support Boats stay out of the Swim Course during this period. Powered Support Boats that are less than 10 metres in length may leave the Swim Course from the 18km gate but are not required to until the 19km buoy. Should the Team (Swimmer, Paddler, and Skipper) decide to do this, a Paddler must accompany their Swimmer(s) to the 19.25km gate. Powered boats that go beyond the 18km gate will need to navigate to the boundaries of the Swim Course and must leave the Swim Course prior to the 19km gate.
38. Support Boats mooring or dropping-off Swimmers and/or support to Rottnest Island, should refer to the Mooring and Anchoring Maps on the South32 Rottnest Channel Swim website and take directions from Rottnest Island Rangers.

Paddlers

39. The minimum age for Paddlers, at the date of the Event, is fifteen (15) years.
40. Paddle craft must display the supplied A6 stickers with the Swimmer(s) race number.
41. All paddlers must wear a lifejacket that is level 50S or higher, for the duration of the Event.
42. No item (outside of the paddle craft manufacturing specifications) can be attached to the paddle craft that falls below the waterline (any item attached to the paddle craft must not enter the water).



43. At the start line, Paddlers may not disembark a Support Boat in the area defined by Boundary North, Boundary South and 1500m from the shoreline.
44. Paddlers must stay clear of the Support Boat Holding Area at all times.
45. Paddlers who are dropped off either North of Boundary North or South of Boundary South, must remain within 1000m of the shore unless they are within the start channel.
46. Paddlers must not proceed beyond the 1,500m Icon Vessel without their Support Boat.
47. Paddlers who are accompanying swimmers in the first 1,500m Start Channel must depart from either the North or South Paddle Craft Departure Points at Cottesloe Beach.
48. Paddle craft must be equipped with all the required mandatory marine safety and emergency equipment as per the WA Navigable Waters Regulations. During the Event paddle craft are exempt from the requirement to carry a distress flare kit, marine radio, distress beacon, and bilge pump/bailer although it is encouraged paddler craft carry this equipment, where possible.
49. Paddlers must depart the Swim Course at the 19.25km buoys and must exit to the South only.
50. Paddle craft may be left in the designated area, on Rottnest Island, as shown on the Finish Channel Map for a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes.

Event Underway Cancellation and Withdrawals

51. If the Event is cancelled, the Swimmer(s), and Paddler(s) must immediately exit the water. All Participants must not, in any circumstance, continue in the Event and must exit the Swim Course.
52. If a Solo/Duo/Team is withdrawing from the Event, they must log this via the Rotto Swim app. If they are unable to log on to the App, they can withdraw via the radio log.
53. If a Swimmer(s) withdraws for any reason, Skippers must exit the Swim Course via the Southern or Northern boundaries, on the outer of the Swim Course. Refer to the Course Map for the boundaries. For the safety of other participants, Support Boats withdrawing from the Event must be at least 200 meters from the Swim Course and main fleet before exceeding a speed of 6 knots.
54. If a swimmer withdraws for any reason, timing chips can be returned to the Prize Collection and Help Desk at Rottnest Island (located opposite Dome Café) on Saturday 21 February 2026, or to Marine Rescue Fremantle by the Monday following Event Day.
55. If the Event is cancelled, the closed waters and gazettal in place for the Event at Rottnest Island will remain active for the duration between 6:00am – 5:00pm on Saturday, 21 February 2026.