



Event Rules

The Rottnest Channel Swim Association (**RCSA**) has set the following rules (**Event Rules**) for the 2026 South32 Rottnest Channel Swim (**Event**). All participants in the Event including any Solo, Duo, or Team swimmer (**Swimmer**), any Team captain (**Team Captain**), 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 Team, and may also be banned or sanctioned from participating in future Rottnest 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 and Major Infrastructure, Rottnest 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, that Solo/Duo/Team 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, including those in Duos and Teams, 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 (race 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 their race number 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. This equates to a Support Boat and Skipper for each Solo, Duo, and Team entry. Tandem Solo Swimmers must also have a registered Support Boat and Skipper that supports both Swimmers. It is the responsibility of the Swimmer/Team Captain to ensure their Support Boat and Skipper have registered for the Event.
14. The start of the waves will be signalled by a horn, or other starting device. It is the responsibility of the starting Swimmer 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 Rottnest 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 Rottnest 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 (refer to the South32 Rottnest Channel Swim website or the Yearbook), 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.

Solo Swimmers

19. Solo Swimmers, including Tandem Solo Swimmers, must qualify to participate in the Event. To qualify, prospective Solo Swimmers must have either:
 - a. completed a previous solo Rottnest Channel Swim crossing no earlier than the 2 years preceding the Event year (either in a previous Event or in a ratified solo crossing outside of the Event); or
 - b. completed an alternative open water swim event that is of the same or greater distance than the Rottnest Channel Swim crossing no earlier than the 2 years preceding the Event year. During such swim, Event Rules 12 and RCSA By-law 1 must have been adhered to; or
 - c. completed a 10km open water swim event in 4 hours and 15 minutes or less between Thursday, 1 May 2025 and Monday, 26 January 2026. During the qualification swim, Event Rules, 12 and RCSA By-law 1 must have been adhered to.
 - i. This swim must be approved by the RCSA and listed on the South32 Rottnest Channel Swim website.



20. For Solo Swimmers who share a Support Boat with another Solo Swimmer (**Tandem Solo Swimmers**) the following additional Event Rules apply:
- a. each Tandem Solo Swimmer must, at all times, swim within 20 meters of their Tandem Solo partner. Therefore, Tandem Solos must swim at a similar pace to their Tandem Solo partner for the duration of the Event;
 - b. each Tandem Solo Swimmer must have their own Paddler, at all times; and
 - c. if a Tandem Solo Swimmer becomes unwell and requires medical assistance requiring the Support Boat to stop, the Tandem Solo partner must either tread water until their Support Boat can proceed or withdraw from the Event.
 - d. the partner must, in no circumstance, continue swimming without the Support Boat. A failure to comply with this Event Rule will result in both Tandem Solo Swimmers being automatically disqualified from the Event.

Duo/Team Swimmers

21. One (1) Swimmer from a Duo or Team can enter the start line enclosure and set off from Cottesloe Beach. Each Swimmer wearing a timing chip must pass through the arch at the start line to record the start time.
22. Swimmer changeovers can only occur between 1000m and the 19km buoys. For safety reasons, swimmers WILL be disqualified if this is not adhered to.
23. For Duos and Teams, Swimmer changeovers must be carried out at least 10 metres away from your or any Support Boat, except paddle craft, and tagging must be above the water in a visible manner. It is acceptable to use any part of the body when tagging, subject to the tag being above the water and visible.
24. Each Swimmer wearing a timing chip must pass through the arch at the finish line to record the finish time (ensuring the timing chip is collected by an Event volunteer). One (1) Swimmer from a Duo or Team can wear the timing chip to the finish and not all Swimmers need to cross the finish line for the Duo or Team to be recorded as "Finished".

Skippers

25. The minimum age for Skippers at the date of the Event, is eighteen (18) years.
26. 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.
27. 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 (e.g. Solo, Tandem Solo, Duo, and Team). Only registered Skippers and their nominated Support Boats and tender vessels (where applicable) displaying their boat stickers (per Event Rules 34 and 35) are permitted to be used in the Event.
28. 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).
29. 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 4.5 metres in length.

Please note, the following Support Boat 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

Any tender used as required by Rule 42.b must be no smaller than 3.75m in length.

30. Support Boats must be equipped with all the required mandatory marine safety and emergency equipment as per the WA Navigable Waters Regulations.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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.
34. Support Boats must display the two supplied boat race numbers matching their Swimmer/s race number. The race numbers must be displayed on either side of the Support Boat in a visible location above the waterline. Only participant vessels displaying these race numbers will be permitted within the Swim Course (excluding Event on-water safety personnel).
35. Tender vessels must display two of the supplied A6 race number matching 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).



36. 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.
37. At the start of the Event, Support Boats must not enter the Swim Course until their Solo, Duo or Team 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.
38. 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).
39. 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 31).
40. 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 41, the Support Boats **MUST NOT** make way astern to pick up a Swimmer.
41. 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.
42. All Yachts (regardless of length) and Powered Support Boats that are greater than **10 metres in length** are required to:
 - a. stay on the extremities of the fleet at all times (North or South) while ensuring that you remain within the boundaries;
 - b. have a registered tender that is accessible for the duration of the Event which meets the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure'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 43.
43. 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.



44. 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

45. The minimum age for Paddlers, at the date of the Event, is fifteen (15) years.
46. Paddle craft must display two of the supplied A6 race number matching their Swimmer(s) race number.
47. All paddlers must wear a lifejacket that is level 50S or higher, for the duration of the Event.
48. 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).
49. 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.
50. Paddlers must stay clear of the Support Boat Holding Area at all times.
51. 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.
52. Paddlers must not proceed beyond the 1,500m Icon Vessel without their Support Boat.
53. 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.
54. 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.
55. Paddlers must depart the Swim Course at the 19.25km buoys and must exit to the South only.
56. 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

57. 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.
58. 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.
59. If a Swimmer(s) withdraws for any reason, or if the Event is cancelled at any stage, 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.



60. 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.

61. 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.