NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026

Water Polo · U18 & U16 Men

2026 Nordic Water Polo Championships

U18 & U16 Men – Regulations

1. ORGANISER, DATES AND VENUE

1.1. The Championships are organised by the Lithuanian Water Polo Federation (Lietuvos vandensvydžio sporto federacija), e-mail: office@lvfed.lt.

1.2. The Championships will be held from **26 to 29 November 2026**. The first matches will be played on Thursday, 26 November, at 17:00; the Championships end on Sunday, 29 November, by 16:00.

1.3. Venue: Alytus Sports and Recreation Centre swimming pool, Naujoji g. 52, LT-62381 Alytus, Lithuania.

2. PARTICIPATING TEAMS AND ELIGIBILITY

2.1. U18 teams (players born in 2008 and later):

– LITHUANIA (LTU)
– FINLAND (FIN)
– DENMARK (DEN)
– SWEDEN (SWE)
– NORWAY (NOR)
– ESTONIA (EST)

2.2. U16 teams (players born in 2010 and later):

– LITHUANIA (LTU)
– FINLAND (FIN)
– DENMARK (DEN)
– SWEDEN (SWE)
– NORWAY (NOR)
– LATVIA (LAT)

2.3. **Age check.** The age of all players is checked by the Delegate before each team's first match against their passports or ID cards. Players who do not meet the age requirement may not play.

2.4. **Health and insurance.** Each participating national federation is responsible for the health and insurance of its players and team officials. The Organising Committee is not responsible for any injuries or accidents during the Championships.

2.5. **Anti-doping.** All participants must comply with the World Anti-Doping Code (WADA).

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3. COMPETITION SYSTEM

3.1. **General.** All matches are played under the official World Aquatics Water Polo Rules. The U18 and U16 tournaments are played under the same system. The group stage is played on Thursday and Friday; the quarter-finals, the semi-finals and the first matches for places 5–6 are played on Saturday. On Sunday, 29 November, only placement matches are played.

3.2. **Group stage (Thursday – Friday).**

3.2.1. In each age group the six teams are divided into two groups of three teams.

3.2.2. U18 groups:

– Group A: FINLAND (FIN), LITHUANIA (LTU), NORWAY (NOR);

– Group B: DENMARK (DEN), SWEDEN (SWE), ESTONIA (EST).

3.2.3. U16 groups:

– Group A: FINLAND (FIN), LITHUANIA (LTU), NORWAY (NOR);

– Group B: DENMARK (DEN), SWEDEN (SWE), LATVIA (LAT).

3.2.4. Each group is played as a single round robin (2 matches per team). The final group standings determine the pairings of the play-off.

3.3. **Play-off (Saturday – Sunday).**

3.3.1. The winners of the groups (1st Group A and 1st Group B) qualify directly for the semi-finals.

3.3.2. Quarter-finals (Saturday): QF1 – 2nd Group A vs 3rd Group B; QF2 – 2nd Group B vs 3rd Group A.

3.3.3. Semi-finals (Saturday): SF1 – 1st Group B vs Winner QF1; SF2 – 1st Group A vs Winner QF2.

3.3.4. Placement matches (Sunday): **Final** – winners of the semi-finals; **3rd place match** – losers of the semi-finals.

3.3.5. Places 5–6: the losers of the quarter-finals play a two-match play-off (Saturday and Sunday). The team with the better aggregate goal difference from both matches takes 5th place. The first match may end in a draw (no penalty shoot-out is held). If the aggregate goal difference is equal after the second match, a penalty shoot-out is held immediately after it.

3.3.6. In total, the group winners play 4 matches and all other teams play 5 matches.

3.3.7. The order of the matches on Sunday, 29 November, may be changed by the Organising Committee to take into account the teams' departure times. Any change will be announced on Saturday, 28 November, after the semi-finals.

3.4. **Match duration.** U16 matches are played in 4 periods of 7 minutes; U18 matches are played in 4 periods of 8 minutes.

3.5. If a match is tied at the end of the fourth period, a penalty shoot-out (PSO) will be held (for the matches for places 5–6, see 3.3.5).

3.6. Points in the group stage shall be awarded as follows:

– win – 3 points;

– win after PSO – 2 points;
– loss after PSO – 1 point;
– loss – 0 points.

3.7. Where two or more teams are tied on points, their final ranking is determined according to the European Aquatics tie-breaking rules.

3.8. The visual representation of the tournament system will be sent in a separate file.

4. TOURNAMENT RULES

4.1. **Caps.** Players must keep the same cap numbers for the duration of the tournament. The first goalkeeper shall wear red cap No. 1. A team may decide to have a second goalkeeper with red cap No. 13, or player No. 13 may be a field player wearing a cap of the team colour. The coach must inform the referees / jury table of the player's original number and colour.

4.2. **Team sheets.**

4.2.1. No later than one week before the Championships (by 19 November 2026), each nation must send to office@lvfed.lt the full list of its travelling U18 and U16 teams (players and team officials) on the Team Sheet for the Tournament (chapter 8).

4.2.2. At least one hour before each match, each team must submit to the jury table the Team Sheet for the Game (chapter 9) listing the players who will play in that match, with their cap numbers, the team captain and the coaches. The Team Sheet for the Game may also be submitted by e-mail to office@lvfed.lt within the same deadline; teams arriving on the day of their first match are asked to send it by e-mail in advance.

4.2.3. A team may have a maximum of 15 players in each match.

4.2.4. All team sheets must be completed in typed (printed) form. Handwritten team sheets will not be accepted.

4.3. The first-named team will play in white caps and start the match on the left side of the jury table.

4.4. **Violent action.** Any player excluded for the remainder of the match for violent action (substitution after 4 minutes) shall be suspended for at least 2 matches. The Delegate may impose a greater penalty due to the nature of the brutality.

4.5. **Misconduct.** Any player excluded for the remainder of the match for misconduct / aggressive foul behaviour (exclusion with substitution) shall be suspended for at least 1 match. The Delegate may impose a greater penalty due to the nature of the offence.

4.6. **Yellow and red cards.** Any head coach who addresses comments to, at or about the referees will receive a yellow card. Further transgressions will result in a red card. Any other coach, official or player who addresses comments to, at or about the referees will receive a red card.

4.6.1. A coach, player or other official who receives a red card will be suspended for at least the next match. The Delegate may impose a greater penalty due to the nature of the offence.

4.7. **Team benches.** All players not in the water must remain seated on the team bench at all times.

4.8. **Time-outs.** Each team is allowed 2 time-outs per match.

4.9. Teams **must** be ready to start their matches at the scheduled times.

4.10. Each participating nation **must** bring 1 internationally qualified referee (EA). Otherwise, the nation will have to pay a fee of €1,000. Referees cannot be coaches.

4.11. Referees, the Delegate and the table officials (secretary, timekeeper) are appointed by the Organising Committee. The appointments are published before each competition day.

4.12. Any protest must be submitted in writing to the Delegate within 30 minutes of the end of the match, together with a protest fee of €500.

4.13. Coaches and team managers must be dressed in outfits of the same colour. Shorts, flip-flops, being barefoot, etc. are **not allowed**.

4.14. **Betting.** Teams, players and team officials are prohibited from taking part in any betting or gambling related to the Championships. A violation may lead to disqualification from the Championships by decision of the Organising Committee.

4.15. **Photo and video.** By taking part in the Championships, all participants (players, coaches, team officials and referees) agree to be photographed and filmed, and agree that the Organising Committee may use these materials to promote the Championships and water polo without any remuneration.

5. PARTICIPATION FEE AND EXPENSES

5.1. The Organising Committee offers participating teams a full package that includes accommodation, meals and the participation fee.

5.1.1. The participation fee of **€500 per team** applies only to teams that do not take the full package from the Organising Committee.

5.2. Travel expenses of the teams are covered by the participating national federations.

5.3. Travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the referees are covered by the national federations that send them.

6. AWARDS

6.1. Awards are presented separately in the U18 and U16 tournaments:

– trophies for the teams placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd, commemorative awards for all teams;
– medals for 15 players and 2 coaches of each team placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd;
– trophy for the Top Scorer (in case of equality, the youngest player);
– trophy for the Best Goalkeeper (coaches' decision);
– trophy for the Most Valuable Player (coaches' decision).

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7. SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, 26 November 2026

No.	Age group	Stage	Start	Match (white caps – blue caps)
1	U16	Group A	17:00	LITHUANIA (LTU) – FINLAND (FIN)
2	U18	Group A	18:10	LITHUANIA (LTU) – FINLAND (FIN)
3	U16	Group B	19:30	SWEDEN (SWE) – LATVIA (LAT)
4	U18	Group B	20:40	SWEDEN (SWE) – ESTONIA (EST)

FRIDAY, 27 November 2026

No.	Age group	Stage	Start	Match (white caps – blue caps)
5	U16	Group A	10:00	FINLAND (FIN) – NORWAY (NOR)
6	U16	Group B	11:10	DENMARK (DEN) – LATVIA (LAT)
7	U18	Group A	12:20	FINLAND (FIN) – NORWAY (NOR)
8	U18	Group B	13:30	DENMARK (DEN) – ESTONIA (EST)
BREAK 14:40 – 16:00				
9	U16	Group A	16:00	LITHUANIA (LTU) – NORWAY (NOR)
10	U16	Group B	17:10	DENMARK (DEN) – SWEDEN (SWE)
11	U18	Group A	18:20	LITHUANIA (LTU) – NORWAY (NOR)
12	U18	Group B	19:30	DENMARK (DEN) – SWEDEN (SWE)

SATURDAY, 28 November 2026

No.	Age group	Stage	Start	Match (white caps – blue caps)
13	U16	QF1	09:00	2nd Group A – 3rd Group B
14	U16	QF2	10:10	2nd Group B – 3rd Group A
15	U18	QF1	11:20	2nd Group A – 3rd Group B
16	U18	QF2	12:30	2nd Group B – 3rd Group A
BREAK 13:40 – 14:10				
17	U16	Places 5–6 (1st leg)	14:10	Loser QF1 – Loser QF2
18	U16	SF1	15:20	1st Group B – Winner QF1
19	U16	SF2	16:30	1st Group A – Winner QF2
20	U18	Places 5–6 (1st leg)	17:40	Loser QF1 – Loser QF2
21	U18	SF1	18:50	1st Group B – Winner QF1
22	U18	SF2	20:00	1st Group A – Winner QF2

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SUNDAY, 29 November 2026

No.	Age group	Stage	Start	Match (white caps – blue caps)
23	U16	Places 5–6 (2nd leg)	09:00	Loser QF2 – Loser QF1
24	U18	Places 5–6 (2nd leg)	10:10	Loser QF2 – Loser QF1
25	U16	3rd place	11:20	Loser SF1 – Loser SF2
26	U18	3rd place	12:30	Loser SF1 – Loser SF2
27	U16	Final	13:40	Winner SF1 – Winner SF2
28	U18	Final	14:50	Winner SF1 – Winner SF2

70 minutes are allocated to each match.
The order of the matches on Sunday, 29 November, may be changed to take into account the teams' departure times (see 3.3.7 of the Regulations).
The Organising Committee reserves the right to make changes to the schedule.

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8. TEAM SHEET FOR THE TOURNAMENT (FINAL TEAM DECLARATION FORM)

Nation:		Age group (U18 / U16):	

Arrival (date, time, place):	
Departure (date, time, place):	
Contact on site (name, phone, e-mail):	

Players:

	First name	Surname	Date of birth	Passport number	Cap No.
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

Team officials:

	Position	First name	Surname	Date of birth	Passport number
21	Head Coach				
22	Assistant Coach				
23	Team Manager				
24	Doctor				
25	Physio				
26	Referee				

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9. TEAM SHEET FOR THE GAME

Nation:	
Age group (U18 / U16):	
Match No. / date / time:	
Opponent:	

Players:

	Cap No.	First name	Surname	Date of birth
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

Captain (cap No.): _____

Team officials:

Position	First name	Surname
Head Coach		
Assistant Coach 1		
Assistant Coach 2		
Team Manager		

Head Coach signature: _____

To be submitted to the jury table at least one hour before the start of the match.