

Beijing 2026 Wild Card Programme

1. Purpose

The World Aquatics Swimming World Cup 2026 Wild Card Programme provides eligible athletes with an automatic invitation to participate in the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m) – Beijing 2026.

A Wild Card invitation is earned by an individual athlete through performances achieved during the Swimming World Cup 2026 and is not considered a National Federation qualification slot.

National Federations remain responsible for submitting entries and managing athlete participation in accordance with World Aquatics rules. A National Federation may not reallocate, transfer, or substitute a Wild Card invitation earned by an athlete to another athlete.

A Wild Card invitation remains attached to the athlete who earned it and is valid only for the event(s) in which the athlete satisfied the Wild Card qualification criteria.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Programme:

- a) “Eligible Athlete” means an athlete who satisfies all eligibility criteria set out in Section 3.
- b) “Wild Card Athlete” means an Eligible Athlete who has been allocated a Wild Card invitation under this Programme.
- c) “Wild Card Entry” means the right of a Wild Card Athlete to participate in a specific individual event at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m) – Beijing 2026.
- d) “Beijing 2026” means the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m) – Beijing 2026 scheduled to be held from 1 to 6 December 2026 in Beijing, People’s Republic of China.

3. Eligibility Criteria

An athlete will be eligible for a Wild Card invitation if he or she satisfies all of the following requirements:

- a) Competes in at least two (2) of the three (3) Swimming World Cup 2026 stops:
 - Baku, Azerbaijan;
 - Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and
 - Astana, Kazakhstan
- b) Finishes within the top three (3) places in an individual event in the finals with a time equal to or faster than the applicable “A” Qualification Time Standard for the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m) – Beijing 2026 at least once during the Swimming World Cup 2026 Series.

4. Wild Card Event Allocation

A National Federation may receive no more than one (1) Wild Card Entry per individual event.

Where multiple athletes representing the same National Federation satisfy the Wild Card criteria in the same event, the Wild Card Entry for that event will be allocated to the athlete who records the highest World Aquatics Points score in that event across the Swimming World Cup 2026 Series.

In the event of a tie, the athlete with the higher Swimming World Cup 2026 Overall Points will receive the Wild Card Entry.

If an athlete satisfies the Wild Card criteria in more than one individual event, that athlete will receive a Wild Card Entry for each such event, subject to the provisions of this Programme.

5. National Federation Allocation Limit

A maximum of three (3) Wild Card Athletes may be allocated to the same National Federation, irrespective of gender.

Where more than three (3) athletes from the same National Federation remain eligible following the event allocation process under Section 4, Wild Card invitations will be allocated to the three (3) athletes with the highest single World Aquatics Points score achieved in an event in which they finished on the podium (top three in the finals) during the Swimming World Cup 2026 Series.

In the event of a tie, the athlete with the higher Swimming World Cup 2026 Overall Points will be ranked higher.

If an allocated athlete declines a Wild Card invitation or becomes ineligible prior to the Beijing 2026 registration deadline, the Wild Card invitation will be forfeited and will not be reallocated.

6. Beijing 2026 Participation Rights & Team Size

Wild Card Athletes will be entitled to participate in the individual event at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25m) – Beijing 2026 for which they obtained a Wild Card invitation.

Wild Card entries will be accepted in addition to:

- a) the maximum quota of two (2) athletes per event per National Federation; and
- b) the maximum team size of twenty-six (26) athletes per gender per National Federation. This means that if a National Federation exceeds 26 athletes per gender due to the Wild Card athletes from that NF, it will be permissible to have those athletes on their team.

Wild Card Athletes do not count toward the quotas established for accreditation purposes. World Aquatics may grant one (1) additional team official accreditation to each National Federation represented by one or more Wild Card Athletes.

7. Additional Individual Events for Wild Card Athletes at Beijing 2026

A Wild Card Athlete may be entered in additional individual events provided that:

- a) the Athlete has achieved at least the applicable “B” Qualification Time Standard in the additional event(s) and the National Federation has no other entered athlete in the event(s); or
- b) the Athlete has achieved the applicable “A” Qualification Time Standard in the additional event(s) and the National Federation has one (1) entered athlete who has achieved the applicable “A” Qualification Time Standard in the event(s).

Any additional entries under this Section will be subject to the approval and entry procedures established by World Aquatics.

8. Relay Eligibility

Wild Card Athletes may be selected to participate in relay events at the discretion of their National Federation, subject to all applicable World Aquatics Competition Regulations.

9. Entries and Acceptance for Wild Card Athletes

- a) Following the conclusion of the Swimming World Cup 2026 Series, World Aquatics will notify National Federations and Eligible Athletes of Wild Card invitations.
- b) Acceptance of a Wild Card invitation must be confirmed jointly by the Athlete and the Athlete's National Federation within seven (7) days of notification, or by such deadline as may be established by World Aquatics.
- c) Where a Wild Card invitation is declined, not accepted within the prescribed period, or otherwise lapses prior to the Beijing 2026 registration deadline, the invitation will be forfeited and will not be reallocated.
- d) World Aquatics will submit the Beijing 2026 entries through the General Management System (GMS) for all Wild Card Athletes in the event(s) for which Wild Card Entries have been awarded.
- e) National Federations will remain responsible for the submission and management of any additional entries permitted under Section 7.

10. Injury, Anti-Doping, and Eligibility Status

If a Wild Card Athlete:

- a) sustains an injury preventing participation in the Beijing 2026;
- b) commits an anti-doping rule violation;
- c) is provisionally suspended; or
- d) otherwise fails to satisfy the eligibility requirements established under the World Aquatics Rules and Competition Regulations,

the Wild Card invitation will be forfeited and will not be reallocated, regardless of whether such circumstances arise before or after the Beijing 2026 registration deadline.

11. Travel and Logistics

World Aquatics will provide travel and accommodation support to Wild Card Athletes, including travel and accommodation arrangements.

Support provided to each Wild Card Athlete will be determined in accordance with the policy of their National Federation and may include:

- a) Air travel between the nearest international airport to the athlete's officially registered place of residence, as recognised by the athlete's National Federation, and the Beijing 2026 host city; and
- b) Accommodation at the official team hotel used by the athlete's National Federation for the period commencing on the first day of official training and ending on the day after the final day of competition.

All travel and accommodation arrangements will be coordinated by the World Aquatics Office.

12. Dispute Resolution and Interpretation

In the event of any dispute arising under this Programme, the World Aquatics Executive shall determine the matter. Such decision shall be final and binding, exercised in its sole and absolute discretion, and without any right of appeal.