



2027 African Open & Slalom Paddle World Ranking

Underberg, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa
Bulletin 1





**Paddle
Worldwide**

Event Details

Host Federation	Paddlesport South Africa
Event Dates	6 to 7 February 2027
Location	Balam River Deck, Underberg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
Venue Type	Natural River
Categories	Slalom Paddle and Kayak Cross
Age-groups	U16, Junior, u23 and Open
Event Level	PW Level 3
Chief Technical Organiser	Don Wewege: don@canoeslalom.co.za
Federation Support	Colin Simpkins: sg@paddlesportsa.co.za
Local Event Website	https://canoeslalom.co.za/african-open
PW Event Website	https://paddleworldwide.com/competitions/underberg-ranking-race-2902

Provisional Event Schedule

Saturday 30 January	Thrombi X-Fest Kayak Cross
Monday 1 February to Friday 5 February	Open Training
Saturday 6 February	African Open & Slalom Paddle World Ranking Slalom Racing Day
Sunday 7 February	African Open & Slalom Paddle World Ranking Kayak Cross Racing Day





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Venue

The venue location is capable of hosting events in all water levels. There is a coffee shop with a large deck overlooking the mid-part of the course allowing for coaches and spectators to watch the whole race from one location. The rapid difficulty is Grade 1-2 depending on the water level. The venue played host to the 2026 African Championships



Kayak storage will be possible at the venue and a fully adjustable gate system is available from the official training opening on Monday 1 February.

Venue Access and Race Village

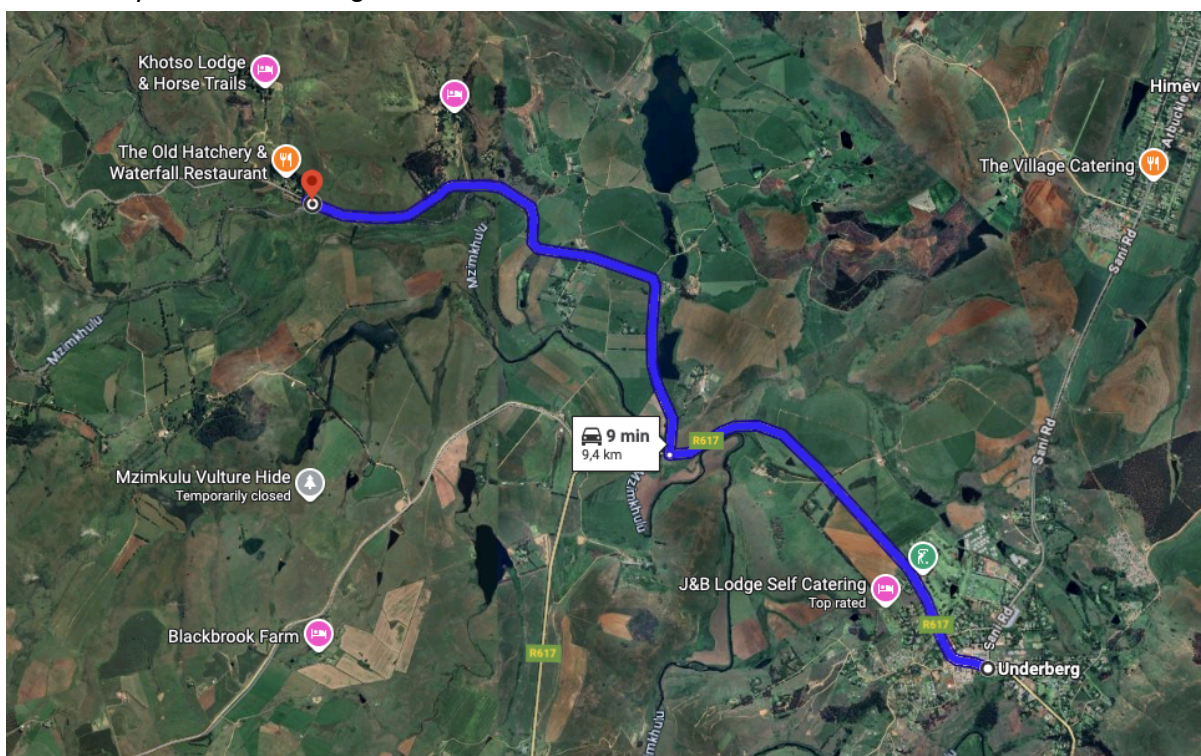
The venue is accessible by car and is just under 10km from the center of Underberg. The official race village will host a Saturday braai evening and official accommodation will be Khotso Lodge, located 300m from the race venue.

The Balam River Deck Coffee shop will provide the viewing deck overlooking the rapid as well as facilities for food, coffee and drink purchases.





Route Map from Underberg to race venue.



Anticipated Weather Conditions

The weather conditions are mild to warm in late January in Underberg with regular evening thunderstorms. Air temperature ranges from lows of 15° to highs of 30°. The race schedule will be built around possible storms during competition days.

Extreme Water Levels

The river used for the event is one of the largest rivers in South Africa that does not have a dam. Because of this, the river levels are extremely dependent on rainfall. The race organisation has some alternative venues which can be used in the case of extreme drought or low water. These alternative venues and criteria to move to those venues will be indicated in the team leaders guide.



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Communication

All official communication will be on the PW event page or the teams whatsapp group. Scan the QR code to join:



Visas

South Africa allows visa free travel for many countries although if you require a visa the organisation will be able to assist. Once the entry is confirmed, please send a copy of the passport and other supporting details to the competition organiser: sg@paddlesportsa.co.za

Visa invitation cutoff: Visa letters need to be requested before **1 December 2026**. Any requests after this date will not be guaranteed support.

Transportation

The closest international airport is King Shaka international airport, with the airport code of DBN. The town of Underberg is 3.5 hrs by car from DBN. Most major airlines fly into DBN including Turkish, Qatar and Emirates. When flying out of King Shaka International on the return leg, it is very important to verify with the airline that the slalom kayaks will be accepted.

OR Tambo Note

It is possible to fly into Johannesburg OR Tambo international although it is not recommended to fly out of Johannesburg as they have a very strict **max length limit of 2.5m** for oversized equipment when departing South Africa.

Entry

Entries will need to be done on both the PW entry system as well as the official Paddlesport South Africa entry portal. This double entry system is due to the event license rules for South African events. Entry fees will be paid through the PSA portal.





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Accommodation

Khotso Lodge will be the official accommodation partner of the event and participants and spectators are encouraged to book their accommodation there.

Please reach out to Khotso directly for accommodation. The event organisation and Paddlesport South Africa will not be able to make or adjust any bookings with Khotso.

<https://www.khotso.co.za/accommodation>

info@khotso.co.za

