

# 2026 CAC African Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross Championships

Underberg, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa
Bulletin 1

# Invitation

On behalf of the Paddlesport South Africa Slalom Committee, we are thrilled to invite you to the 2026 African Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross Championships. This will be the first Continental championships on the African continent since 2015 and our race committee and federation is looking forward to bringing slalom and kayak cross back to Africa!

This event plays an important part in our plan to grow the sport, not just in South Africa, but within the wider Southern Africa region and beyond. Combined with the world famous Drak Challenge canoe river marathon, the race week looks set to be action packed! Underberg is no stranger to hosting large international events and being easily reachable from major metros such as Johannesburg and Durban makes it an ideal location to bring canoe slalom racing back to Africa

We are looking forward to welcoming the best slalom and kayak cross paddlers from Africa to our country!



Don Wewege
Canoe Slalom Committee Chairman and Event Organiser

# Provisional Event Schedule

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| Saturday 24 January | **Pre-African Champs and World Ranking Kayak Cross** |
| Sunday 25 January | **Pre-African Champs and World Ranking Canoe Slalom** |
| Saturday 24 January to Sunday 1 February | **TIP development camp** |
| Friday 30 January | **African Champs Kayak Cross** |
| Saturday 31 January | **African Champs Canoe Slalom and Medal Ceremony** |

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# Venues Overview

Due to the nature of the Umzimkulu river being entirely rain dependent, the kayak cross and slalom will be held on 2 separate rapids. This ensures that even with extreme low water scenarios, the slalom should be possible on flowing water.

## 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°

## Kayak Cross Race Venue



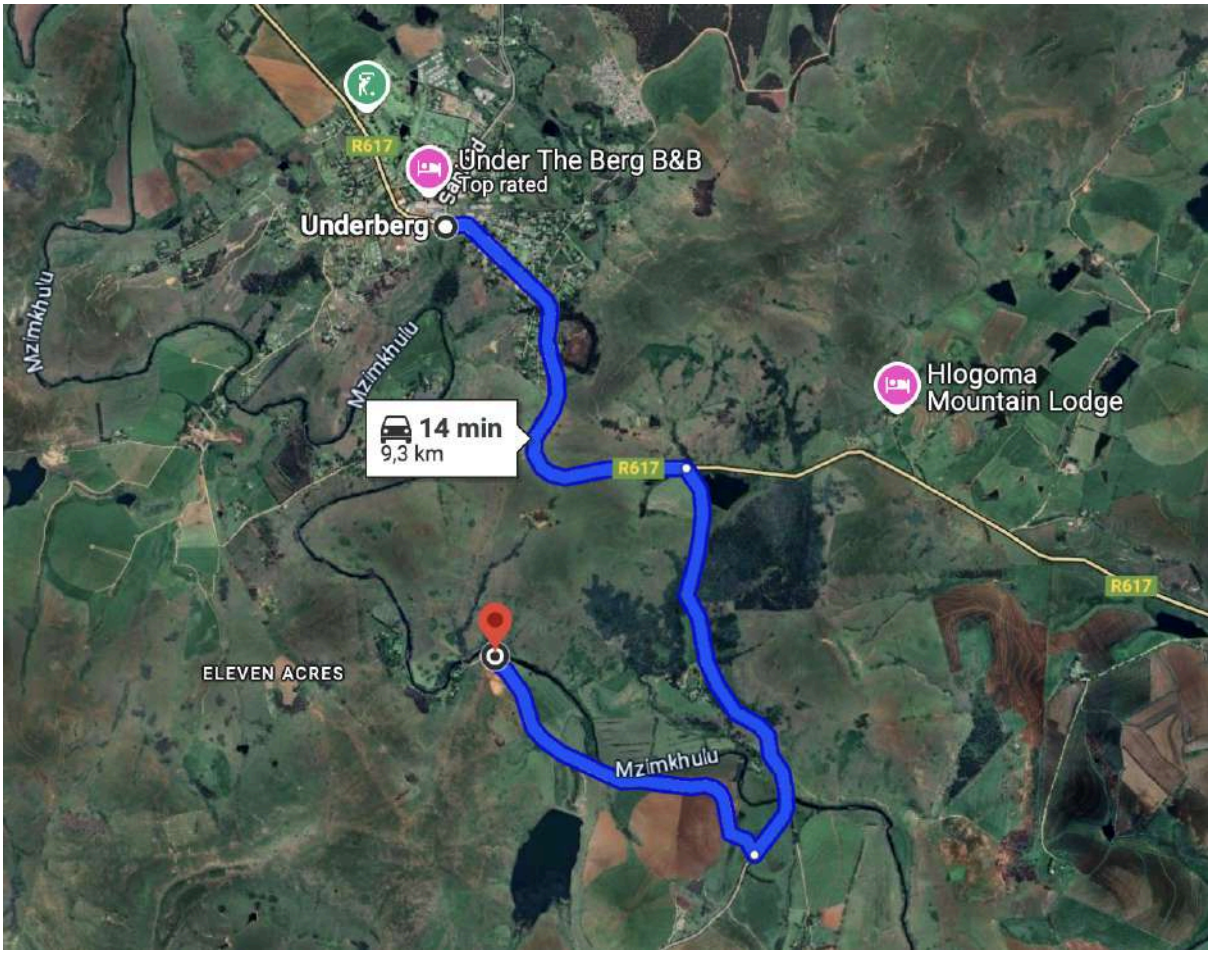
The venue is alongside a well known campsite and accommodation provider in Underberg, Glenhaven. During the event, storage for kayaks will be permitted next to the start pool. The start pool allows for training during any water levels.

## Rapid Overview

The rapid is a grade 1-2 sequence of 2 drops with a large pool above which will be the location of the start. The river channels into this rapid and the features are quite small which results in consistent water features across multiple levels.

### Venue Access

The venue is accessible by car and is just under 10km from the center of Underberg.



# Canoe Slalom Rapid,




The venue is on local farmland with a well defined mountain bike trail on the left bank and easy access to allow for multiple runs without difficulty walking back up the river.

## Rapid Overview

Canoe slalom race venue is a grade 1-2 stretch of water with small features which channel water quite well. This venue has features which remain consistent at a wide range of water levels. The venue is chosen as it is a lot deeper than the kayak cross course so would avoid damaging the more fragile composite slalom kayaks and canoes.

### Venue Access

The venue is accessible by car and is just under 10km from the center of Underberg. It is recommended to have a 4x4 or high ground clearance car to access this venue.

## Extreme Water Levels

The river used for the championships 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 final bulletin.

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# Event Details

## Communication

All official communication will be on the ICF 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: don@canoeslalom.co.za

## Transportation

The town of Underberg is 3.5 hrs by car from King Shaka International Airport (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.

## Entry

Entries will be done on the ICF entry system. Entries by South African paddlers will be done through the Paddlesport South African entry portal and then uploaded to the ICF entry system.

## Accommodation

Accommodation options will be suggested but there will be no official accommodation providers. Camping will be possible alongside the official camping option of the Drak Challenge. The town is a popular tourist destination and there are hundreds of B&Bs, Guesthouses and Airbnb options available for paddlers. Bulletin 2 will contain some suggestion accommodation providers

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# Timeline

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| **October 2025** | Bulletin 1 Published |
| **15 November 2025** | Bulletin 2 Published<br>● Accommodation Options<br>● Entry fees |
| **1 December 2025** | Entries Open |
| **15 December 2025** | Bulletin 3 Published<br>● Schedule |
| **20 January 2026** | Entries for both World Ranking and African Champs Close |