



WGA COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDANCE

The following are the rules of the World Goldpanning Association (WGA) and will be used by all National Associations and Organizations organizing any competition under the banner of the WGA.

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GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR WGA GOLDPANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. World Goldpanning Championships shall normally take place in the second half of August. If the Organizer wishes to hold the championships at any other time this must be made clear when making the bid to host them.
2. The soil in or near the competition area must contain alluvial gold. The general public shall have access to this area to pan for gold.
3. The location or local areas must have a history of gold, and any monuments and places of interest relating to gold in the area shall be open to the public.
4. Competitors should have a choice of different types of accommodation, from hotels to camping sites in or near the competition area.
5. Competitors should be able to buy food and drink, if they wish to do so, in restaurants, bars etc. located in or near the competition area.
6. The organizer shall arrange local transportation, parking and other aspects of traffic.
7. The organizer must demonstrate that they have sufficient finances for running and concluding the championships as planned.
8. The organizer is responsible for arranging an interesting program of gold-related events during competition week. Visitors particularly must be offered an opportunity to learn the story of local gold, both past and present.
9. Local organizer must consider the importance of privacy when publishing material and pictures of the events in newspapers, internet and especially in social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat et al.).

Local organizer is always responsible that publication is in accordance with the privacy law.

Competitors must be informed as follows:

"By taking part in the championships, competitors give their tacit consent for competition results to be processed and published by the WGA and its Members, in the interests of presenting results to the general public and providing competitors' comparisons, rankings etc."

10. The official languages of the championships are the local language and English. It is also a good idea for programs, posters, announcements etc. to be in as many languages as possible.
11. Applications to host the World Goldpanning Championships shall be made

a minimum of four (4) years before the date of the requested Championships. Applications must go to the WGA President and will be considered at the next WGA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Applications to host the European Goldpanning Championships shall be made a minimum of two (2) years before the date of the requested Championships. Applications must go to the WGA President and will be considered at the next WGA AGM.

The correct bidding fee must be sent at the time of application. The organization proposing to hold the competition must present its plans and a preliminary program at the WGA AGM one year before the competition.

RULES FOR WGA GOLDPANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. COMPETITION ADMINISTRATION

A. ORGANIZING BODY

The Organizing Body for any National, European, or World Goldpanning Championship held under the rules of the World Goldpanning Association (WGA) shall be:

1. A National Association that is a current member of the WGA.
2. An Organization that is recognized by the WGA to the purpose of organizing a Championship.

B. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COMPETITION

1. The formal announcement of any competition is the responsibility of the organizer.
2. The selection of future World and European Championships will be at the WGA AGM by the vote of members present. It is then the responsibility of the organizers of the successful nation to formally announce the event.
3. Notification of any National Championship (held under these rules) should be sent to the WGA's Chairperson of Communications Committee at least 12 months before the event. It should include, date, place, time and registration instructions.

C. CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS

Each World or European Championship must include the following official categories and should include fun events. The Organizers must provide gold, silver and bronze medals for first, second and third place in the official categories:

Proficient Men

Proficient Women

Juniors- U 16 (Under 16 years at the start of the Juniors competition, both sexes).

Juniors-U 12 (Under 12 years at the start Juniors the competition, both sexes)

Veterans (60 years and over at the start of the Veterans competition, both sexes)

Classic Pan (Estwing 14" or Batea)

Two Persons Team

Three Persons Team

Five Persons Team

The National Team.

Fun Events

Organizers are encouraged to also arrange non-official fun goldpanning events that are open to all people.

Winners of these non-official events will not receive official medals or official titles of 'world champion'.

2. THE COMPETITION SITE

A. THE ARENA

1. The panning arena shall be a man-made area, at ground level with viewing seats for the competitors and spectators. Organizers must not use rivers or lakes to site the panning pools.
2. The boundary of the competition area must be clearly marked and competitors and officials are permitted to enter this area during the contest.
3. The arena for the World Championships must contain 30 individual panning pools. European Championships should have 30 individual panning pools. National Championships must have a minimum of 10 panning pools.
4. The practice area for the World and European Championships must contain a minimum of 4 practice pools and for National Championships a minimum of 1 practice pool. The pools shall be the same size as competition pools and be provided with competition gravel. The organizers must ensure that these pools are for competitors only and that they are maintained and open from early morning to late evening.

B. PANNING POOLS

1. Each individual panning pool must have the following measurements:
 - a) Breadth (width) between 90 and 120 cm.
 - b) Length between 140 and 170 cm.
 - c) Depth of water in pool between 20 and 30 cm.
2. Each pool must have an area like a bench for the competitors to put down their pans and buckets (with stands for the Bateau pans) and a secure place for the tube.
3. Each pool must have a permanent number board clearly displaying its number.
4. The movement of water in any pool must not disturb competitors in other pools.

C. VIDEO

1. Each heat in every round in all the official competitions must be filmed. The picture must clearly show all the competition pools. These recordings must be available to the Jury should a protest be lodged.

D. THE TIMING CLOCK

1. A timing clock must be in a location that can be seen by the competitors, spectators and the video. The official time is kept by the Board of Judges' Timekeeper.

E. COMPETITION GOLD (SAMPLE)

1. A sample of the size and type of the gold being used must be clearly displayed for all competitors to see throughout the competition.

F. NOTICE BOARDS

1. Boards for displaying heats and results must be in a prominent position close to the arena. A separate display board next to the heats/results board should be provided for general information.
2. The heats time-table for each day must include all start times and be published at a minimum of two hours before the first heat. Once published, a heat cannot be run earlier.
3. The results must be published within 1 hour of ending of the heat.

3. EQUIPMENT FOR THE COMPETITION

A. THE PAN

1. Each competitor is allowed to use their own pan, but this must conform to the following;
 - a. Maximum diameter of the pan 50 cm.
 - b. Maximum height of the pan 15 cm.
 - c. Internal overhangs or grooves in the pan must not exceed 15 mm.
2. The pan must be a gold pan of traditional design.
Gold pans that have the correct measurements, but are not of traditional design, must be submitted to the Competition Committee for its approval. This committee meets before the start of the championships. In the urgent case the Chief Justice may make the decision.
3. Competitors may not use any other equipment or tools of their own.
4. The Classic Pan. WGA has approved two official types of Classic Pans to be used in its Championships, Klondike type working pan Estwing 14" or Batea.

When bidding the competition, the local organizer must announce to AGM, what type of Classic Pan will be used in an official category of Classic Pan in their championship event. If local organizer wants also to run a competition using the other type of Classic Pan, this will be categorized as a fun event.

5. The organizers will supply competitors of the Classic Pan with one of the two approved pans and all competitors will have the same pan.

B. THE SAND AND GRAVEL

1. The Bucket of Sand/Gravel will be the same mix and weight in each round.
2. Proficient and National Team Competitors will get a bucket containing between 15 and 20 kg of sand/gravel.
3. Juniors and Veterans will get a bucket containing between 10 and 12.5 kg of sand/gravel.
4. The sand/gravel mixture must not contain any gold except that placed there by the organizers.
5. The recommended mixture of the sand/gravel should be 5 parts sand to 2 parts gravel. (Gravel must not exceed 25 mm in size).

C.THE TUBE

1. The tube can be made of either glass or plastic.
2. Tube size minimum is inside 5cm x 1cm and maximum is outside 9cm x 1.5cm.
3. The tube must have a push-in cap.

D.THE COMPETITION GOLD

1. The minimum size of the gold flakes is 1.0 mm.
The gold flakes used must be natural alluvial gold flakes and equal to or more than 18 carats.
The gold must not be mechanically processed (e.g. hammered).
Exception from this rule is only acceptable for host countries that are not allowed to use alluvial gold due to national or local laws
2. The number of gold flakes for each competitor in a single heat must be the same.

The number of gold flakes between each heat and each round may differ. but in the same qualification round only by 1-2 gold flakes if time comparison is used.

The number of gold flakes must be between the following amounts:

- a. All individual competition heats between 5 –12.
 - b. All individual competition finals between 7 –12.
 - c. All team competitions between 10 –20.
3. The gold flakes must be seeded into a bucket, pre-filled with the correct amount of sand/gravel, under the official supervision of the Board of Judges' Sand Supervisor.
The seeding must be out of all competitors' sight.

E. CLEAN WATER

1. Clean water must be available for the competitors to put into their tubes.

F. IDENTIFICATION

1. The organizer must provide numbers for the competitors to wear for each heat. These numbers must be seen from the front and back and correspond to the pool number that the competitor is in.

4. RULES FOR THE COMPETITION

A. DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF ROUNDS

1. For any category with more competitors than the number of panning pools more than one round will be organized.
2. A minimum of 1 in 2 competitors must qualify for the next round.
in each round, heats should have the same number of competitors, +/-1.
'No shows' in a heat will count as being present in respect of this rule.
3. All competitors in a heat must compete at the same time and place.

B. THE DRAW

1. The draw for each round must be completely random and all competitors for a round must be part of the draw.
2. All heats in a round must be displayed together once they have been drawn.

C. PRELIMINARIES

- 1.The Call: A competitor must arrive at the bibbing area in time to prepare to compete. A competitor failing to arrive at the competition bibbing area 2 minutes before the heat is due to start may be disqualified.
2. Identification: Each competitor must wear their identification number.
3. Selection of Sand/Gravel: Each competitor will choose a bucket of sand/gravel from those reserved for that heat.
4. The Tube: Each competitor will be given a tube in which they will place clean water.
5. The competitor moves to their numbered panning pool and prepares for the start. The pan must be clean and empty.

D. THE START

- 1.During the start if a competitor is having any problems they must raise one arm to alert the pool-side officials.
- 2.The start is by three commands:
 - 1, "Take Your Place",
 - 2, "Get Ready" and
 - 3, Start signal.

Once competitors are at their pools the starter will command, "Take your place" this is to alert the competitors that they are about to start.

Then the command will be given to “Get Ready”. Competitors at this point should be ready to start and not touching the pan or bucket.

A clear signal to start will then be given and competitors are free to start panning.

The competitors may sit or stand.

3. The False Start: If no competitor has poured any sand/gravel into their pans the Chief Justice can stop the contest and order a restart. (Competitor(s) responsible for the false start will be given a warning. If any competitor gets another false start warning at any time during the competition, they will get a 2 minutes penalty.) If competitors have already started to pour sand/gravel into their pans the competition will not be stopped. (The competitor(s) who committed the false start offence will get a 2 minutes penalty.)

E. THE EVENT

1. Using the water in their pools and their pans the competitors will wash the sand/gravel from their buckets to extract the gold flakes as quickly as they can.
2. The competitors may transfer the gold flakes from their pan to the tube at any time.
3. Sand/gravel already washed into the pool or spilled must not be taken back into the pan. Competitors will be disqualified instantly for this offence.
4. When a competitor has finished panning they must:
 - a. Close the tube by placing the cap on securely.
 - b. Give the finishing signal, which is to raise the pan above the head or push the button according to the timekeeping system. From this moment they are not allowed to remove the cap from the tube.
 - c. Leave the pool immediately without disturbing the other competitors. A competitor who disturbs other competitors could face disqualification.
 - d. The competitor must then place their tube in their pan and move to the verification area as directed by pool officials.
5. The total panning time allowed in a heat is 15 minutes.

F. CAPPING

1. If a competitor gives the finishing signal and the cap is not on the tube they will get a 2-minutes penalty.
2. If a competitor has placed the tube in their pan and then the cap comes off the competitor will get a 2-minutes penalty. The competitor must not touch the tube or the cap but must signal for assistance. Any gold flakes out of the tube will not be counted. The official will replace the cap.

3. Any competitor removing the cap from the tube after giving the finishing signal will be instantly disqualified.

G. TEAM COMPETITIONS

(This is a relay of two, three or five individual competitors)

1. Each team will occupy 1 panning pool and only one person may be in the pool or panning at any time. Team members must not significantly disturb any other team. Verbal advice only may be given to the one panning by the other members of the team.
2. Each team member has their own bucket of sand and gravel. They must only pan their own sand and gravel. They are not allowed to pass any sand and gravel or gold (unless in the tube) between team members.
3. Each team member must bottle their own gold. A team member must leave the pool before the next person enters. If a team member touches the water in the pool before his team-mate has completely left the water in the pool, the team will get a 2-minutes penalty. If a pan is to be passed between team members it must be washed upside down by the panner in the panning pool after it is passed on.
4. No team member is allowed to touch the bucket, pan or sand and gravel of the person who is panning. The others are permitted to prepare to pan.
5. Competitors 1 (for a two-persons team), 1 and 2 (for a three-persons team) and 1 to 4 (for a five-persons team) do not have to place the cap on the bottle. The last competitor is the one who caps, under capping rules, and any penalties will be added to the team time.
6. The last competitor (wearing the number) will finish and verify following the normal rules. Only the last competitor will line up for verification. Once finished panning, other team members should leave the pool area.
7. The total panning time for two and three-persons team competitions is 20 minutes and for five-persons team competitions is 30 minutes.
8. A competitor is allowed to start only in one team in every team category. If the composition of a team has to be changed due to special circumstances (illness, accident, etc.) a competitor may be replaced by another competitor who has not panned in that category. Competitors panning in more than one team in a category will be disqualified together with their teams.

H. THE NATIONAL TEAM

1. Members of each National Team must be from that nation, No 'guest' panners are allowed.
2. A National Team consists of 5 competitors irrespective of gender.

I. THE NATIONAL TEAM COMPETITION

(This is a relay of five individual competitors)

1. Each National Team will occupy 1 panning pool and only one person may be in the pool or panning at any time. Team members must not significantly disturb any other National Team. Verbal advice only may be given to the one panning by the other members of the team.
2. Each team member has their own bucket of sand and gravel. They must only pan their own sand and gravel. They are not allowed to pass any sand and gravel or gold (unless in the tube) between team members.
3. Each team member must bottle their own gold. A team member must leave the pool before the next person enters. If a team member touches the water in the pool before his team-mate has completely left the water in the pool the team will get a 2-minutes penalty. If a pan is to be passed between team members it must be washed by the panner in the panning pool after it is passed on.
4. No team member is allowed touch the bucket, pan or sand and gravel of the person who is panning. The others are permitted to prepare to pan.
5. Competitors 1 to 4 do not have to place the cap on the bottle. Competitor 5 is the one who caps, under the capping rules, and any penalties will be added to the team time.
6. Competitor 5 (wearing the number) will finish and verify following the normal rules. Only competitor 5 will line up for verification. Once finished panning, other team members should leave the pool area.
7. The total panning time for the National Team competition is 30 minutes.

J. VERIFICATION

1. On leaving the panning pool the competitor must put their tube into their pan and carry it in that position until they reach the gold counting area. Please note Capping rules. When competitors are in line they may count the gold in their tube by holding the pan in one hand and lifting the tube with the other hand. The tube must be kept over the pan. Once the gold is counted the tube must be returned to the pan. The pan with the tube in it must be offered to the scrutineer.
2. The scrutineer must be able to see and count the gold flakes in the tube. This means that the water in the tube must be clean and the gold must not be obscured by other materials in the tube.
3. The competitor must inform the scrutineer how many gold flakes they believe are in the tube. The scrutineer will check the tube and if they agree, this number is recorded and the competitor signs. This signature means that they agree with the count and once signed it is final decision. Scrutineers must ensure the secrecy of the number of nuggets found by participants during the nugget counting process.
4. If the scrutineer disagrees with the competitor, they will inform them of this and will give the competitor the chance to recount the gold in the tube. If, after recounting, the competitor and the scrutineer now agree, this number is recorded and the competitor signs.
5. If the competitor and scrutineer still do not agree or the gold flakes cannot be counted because of dirty water or sand in the tube, the Chief Justice and/or the Chairperson of the Competition Committee will be called. The tube will then be opened, and the gold flakes counted. The competitor may request someone to be present on their behalf. The Chief Justice and/or the Chairperson of the Competition Committee are responsible to tell the scrutineer how many gold flakes are to be recorded. This decision is final.
6. Once an agreement is reached, or a decision by the Chief Justice and/or Chairperson of the Competition Committee is made, the competitor must sign the sheet. If he does not sign, he may be disqualified.
7. A competitor is given back the tube with gold in, after he has signed the count.
8. If the gold flakes could not be counted because of dirty water or sand in the tube, then the competitor will be given a warning and "yellow card". This means that if the same happens in any round of the same championship the competitor will receive a 2- minutes penalty each time.
9. For each flake of gold lost a penalty time of 3 minutes will be added to the competitors' finishing time.

10. In a World or European Championship competition if a competitor or team finds more gold flakes than were seeded, the heat is declared void by the Chief Justice. The heat will be re-run as soon as possible. In the case of re-runs the organizer will publish that the heat was void and the time of there-run. No results for this heat will be published. The names of those finding extra gold will be recorded by the Competition Committee. If a name appears 3 times in 3 years, the jury will be called, and the person/team be disqualified from any event organized under the WGA rules for 3 years. Names recorded will be made known to the WGA Council at the next AGM.
11. Cheating. If a competitor is caught cheating, or is reasonably suspected of cheating, the Chief Justice will be called immediately and will suspend the competitor until a hearing can take place. This hearing must be held as quickly as possible so that if the competitor is found to be innocent, they may continue in the competition. The Chief Justice will summon the Jury, under the chair of the WGA Vice President (or President if the Vice President is absent). If, at the hearing, the competitor is found guilty, he will be disqualified immediately and banned from any competition organized by the WGA or National Competitions organized by a Member Nation for 5 years. Names recorded will be made known to the WGA Council at the next AGM.

4. OFFICIALS AND PROCEDURES

A. RUNNING AUDIT

1. Members of the Competition Committee will be allowed free and full access to all the organizational areas for the purpose of ensuring full compliance with the WGA rules and to record good practice. They will inform the Chief Justice where the WGA rules are being broken and offer help and advice when requested by the organizers or a competitor.
The organizers will issue any necessary passes for access to all areas of the competition arena. The Competition Committee Chairperson will be advised of any problems.

B. PROTESTS

1. There are two types of formal protest:
 - a. Protest against a disqualification.
 - b. Protest against a published result.
2. A competitor may formally protest to the Jury in written English about a disqualification or published result within 30 minutes of the disqualification decision or the result being published. Their letter must explain their case and include the 20 Euro protest fee. If the protest is successful the money will be refunded, if not the money goes to the WGA Treasurer.
3. Once the organizers have received a formal protest, they will summon the Jury for the hearing.

4. All protest hearings will be in English.
5. The Jury's decision is final and there is no right of appeal.
6. The Jury must announce the result as soon as possible to the protesting competitor.
7. This protest procedure does not apply to verification of gold flakes.

C. THE JURY

1. The Jury for a World or European Championship will be appointed by the organizers and will be made up of the following members who must be familiar with the WGA competition rules:
 - 2 male panners from the proficient category and from different Nations
 - 2 female panners from the proficient category and from different Nations
 - 2 members of the Competition Committee.
2. The Jury's role is to sit in judgement on all protests. For any hearings, the number of Jury members required will be four. One male panner, one female panner and 2 from the Competition Committee. These members must not be from the protesting nation. This will allow for protests from nations who have supplied Jury members. The Jury spokesperson will be a member of the Competition Committee. If the Jury cannot reach a decision, then the WGA vice president (or president if the vice president is absent) will be called to direct them. All Jury decisions are final for this competition and must be reported to the Chairperson of the Competition Committee.

D. THE BOARD OF JUDGES

1. The following people will be appointed by the Organizer and will be the Board of Judges. Their function is to ensure that the rules and spirit of the competition are followed in all times. They have the power to report any competitor to the Chief Justice if the competitor breaks the rules.
 - **Chief Justice.**
His decision in all matters is final if this decision is not changed by the Jury under a protest hearing. He has the power to discipline any competitor for breaking the rules.
 - **Time Keeper.** The official responsible for timings during the championships.
 - **Pool Supervisor.** The official responsible for the problem-free running of the panning pools area.

- **Chief Scrutineer.** The official responsible for the verification counting of the gold flakes at the end of each heat.
 - **Sand Supervisor.** The official responsible for the preparation and seeding with gold of the buckets of sand/gravel used in the competition.
 - **Bibbing Supervisor.** The official responsible for the allocation of numbered bibs to the competitors.
 - **Tube Supervisor.** The official responsible for giving out the empty tubes before the start.
 - **Data Supervisor.** The official responsible for the output of data and for publishing the heats and results.
2. The names of the Board of Judges, the Jury and reserves must be displayed for all to see before competition starts.
 3. The following members of the Board of Judges are barred from competing:
 - **Chief Justice,**
 - **Chief Scrutineer**
 - **Sand Supervisor**

The current rules are available on the WGA website.

Earlier version of the Rules was updated 10th May 2024 at SBM in Oppdal Norway.

Updating accepted 7th August 2025 at AGM in Tineo Spain.

Updated 16th August 2025

Chairperson of the Competition Committee Esko Orava

President Sanjay Singh