



# U16 REGIONAL CHALLENGE CUP

HANDBALL · SEASON 2026/27

## COMPETITION REGULATIONS

Season 2026/27 · Players born 2010 and 2011 · Boys and Girls · 12 participating associations

|                           |                          |                              |                     |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>12</b><br>ASSOCIATIONS | <b>4+4</b><br>GROUPS M+W | <b>3</b><br>TEAMS /<br>GROUP | <b>4</b><br>WINDOWS | <b>3</b><br>FINALS |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|

## PARTICIPATING ASSOCIATIONS

The following twelve national associations are confirmed participants. Group compositions differ between boys and girls, reflecting the different competitive levels in each category.

### BOYS GROUPS

| GROUP | ASSOCIATION                                                                                              | SEED |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| A     |  Slovenia             | A1   |
|       |  Croatia              | A2   |
|       |  Slovakia             | A3   |
| B     |  Bosnia & Herzegovina | B1   |
|       |  Serbia               | B2   |
|       |  Romania              | B3   |
| C     |  Montenegro           | C1   |
|       |  North Macedonia      | C2   |
|       |  Kosovo               | C3   |
| D     |  Turkey               | D1   |
|       |  Bulgaria             | D2   |
|       |  Greece               | D3   |

## GIRLS GROUPS

| GROUP | ASSOCIATION                                                                                            | SEED |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| A     |  Slovenia             | A1   |
|       |  Bosnia & Herzegovina | A2   |
|       |  Slovakia             | A3   |
| B     |  Croatia              | B1   |
|       |  Montenegro           | B2   |
|       |  Serbia               | B3   |
| C     |  Kosovo               | C1   |
|       |  Romania              | C2   |
|       |  Bulgaria             | C3   |
| D     |  Turkey               | D1   |
|       |  Greece             | D2   |
|       |  North Macedonia    | D3   |

**Kosovo restriction:** Kosovo is not placed in the same group as Serbia or Bosnia & Herzegovina in either the boys or the girls draw.

## ARTICLE 1 — COMPETITION FORMAT

Twelve associations per category, drawn into four groups of three. Separate draws for boys and girls.

### GROUP STAGE

- All teams within a group play each other once (round robin), spread across three separate tournament windows.
- Each window is one tournament hosted by one of the group's member associations.
- Six group matches per team in total. There are no bye weekends — every team plays in every window.
- Three match days per tournament: the host plays on the first and the last day, the two visiting teams meet on the middle day.

## FINAL WINDOW

- After the three group-stage windows, the final window hosts three parallel tournaments determined by group finishing positions.
- Cross-group seeding applies: Group A against Group D · Group B against Group C.
- Two semi-finals on day one, then the final and the third-place match on day two.
- Every team finishes the season with a definitive placement between first and twelfth.

## FINAL WINDOW

| FINAL   | PLACES | SEMI-FINALS (DAY 1) | DAY 2             |
|---------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Final A | 1–4    | A1 v D1 · B1 v C1   | Final + 3rd place |
| Final B | 5–8    | A2 v D2 · B2 v C2   | Final + 3rd place |
| Final C | 9–12   | A3 v D3 · B3 v C3   | Final + 3rd place |

Cross-group seeding: Group A against Group D · Group B against Group C.

## ARTICLE 2 — HOSTING OBLIGATIONS

Each of the twelve participating associations hosts exactly one group-stage tournament during the season, organising all matches within its group for that window.

## BOYS — HOSTING SCHEDULE

| WINDOW                         | GROUP A HOST | GROUP B HOST | GROUP C HOST | GROUP D HOST |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Tournament 1<br>6–8 Nov 2026   | Slovenia     | Bosnia & H.  | Montenegro   | Turkey       |
| Tournament 2<br>8–10 Jan 2027  | Croatia      | Serbia       | N. Macedonia | Bulgaria     |
| Tournament 3<br>12–14 Mar 2027 | Slovakia     | Romania      | Kosovo       | Greece       |
| Finals 1–12<br>6–8 May 2027    | —            | —            | —            | —            |

## GIRLS — HOSTING SCHEDULE

| WINDOW                         | GROUP A HOST | GROUP B HOST | GROUP C HOST | GROUP D HOST |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Tournament 1<br>23–25 Oct 2026 | Slovenia     | Croatia      | Kosovo       | Greece       |
| Tournament 2<br>27–29 Nov 2026 | Bosnia & H.  | Montenegro   | Bulgaria     | N. Macedonia |
| Tournament 3<br>4–6 Dec 2026   | Slovakia     | Serbia       | Romania      | Turkey       |
| Finals 1–12<br>8–10 Apr 2027   | —            | —            | —            | —            |

## HOST ASSOCIATION OBLIGATIONS

- Provide a suitable indoor venue with a minimum capacity of 200 spectators.
- Ensure changing rooms, medical assistance and basic media facilities.
- Arrange accommodation for visiting teams upon request, or provide a hotel list.
- Appoint a local organising committee and a tournament director.
- Submit a venue confirmation form to U16@rr-liga.com no later than 60 days before the tournament.
- Provide match officials in coordination with the national referee commission.
- Report results to the competition office immediately after each match day.

## SEASON CALENDAR

The detailed season calendar, including preparation weeks and exact match days, is provided in the accompanying document “Season Calendar 2026/27”. A summary is given below.

| WINDOW | BOYS                          | GIRLS                         |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| W1     | Tournament 1 — 6–8 Nov 2026   | Tournament 1 — 23–25 Oct 2026 |
| W2     | Tournament 2 — 8–10 Jan 2027  | Tournament 2 — 27–29 Nov 2026 |
| W3     | Tournament 3 — 12–14 Mar 2027 | Tournament 3 — 4–6 Dec 2026   |
| W4     | Finals 1–12 — 6–8 May 2027    | Finals 1–12 — 8–10 Apr 2027   |

## ARTICLE 3 — SCORING AND RANKING

| WIN      | DRAW     | LOSS     |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 3 points | 1 points | 0 points |

### POINTS SYSTEM

- A win is worth 3 points, a draw 1 point and a loss 0 points.

### GROUP STAGE RANKING

- In the event of equal points between two or more teams, the tiebreaker criteria are applied in order until the tie is broken.
- A team that fails to appear for a scheduled match without a valid, documented reason receives a technical defeat of 0:3 and 0 points. Repeated no-shows may result in exclusion from the competition.

### TIEBREAKER CRITERIA

1. Total points accumulated across all three group-stage tournaments
2. Goal difference — all matches
3. Total goals scored — all matches
4. Head-to-head points between the tied teams
5. Head-to-head goal difference between the tied teams
6. Draw conducted by the Regional Handball League

### QUALIFICATION FOR THE FINAL WINDOW

- 1st place in each group → Final A (places 1–4)
- 2nd place in each group → Final B (places 5–8)
- 3rd place in each group → Final C (places 9–12)

## ARTICLE 4 — FINAL TOURNAMENT HOSTING

Hosting rights for each final tournament (Final A, B and C) are awarded to one of the four qualified associations in that final.

- Available indoor venue — minimum 500 spectators for Final A, 200 spectators for Finals B and C.
- Confirmed accommodation for four delegations.
- Previous experience organising international handball events.
- Hosting application submitted no later than 30 days after the conclusion of the third window.
- Boys and girls final tournaments are hosted separately, on different weekends. An association may apply to host both if it has sufficient venue capacity.

## **ARTICLE 5 — GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

- Players must be born in 2010 or 2011 (U16 category, season 2026/27).
- Players must hold the nationality of the association they represent and be eligible under EHF and IHF regulations.
- Each association enters one boys team and one girls team.
- Each association may register a squad of up to 16 players per gender per tournament.
- Players may not represent more than one association during the season.

### **MATCH RULES**

- Matches are played under the current IHF Rules of the Game as adopted by the EHF.
- Standard match duration is two halves of 30 minutes with a 10-minute half-time interval.
- In group-stage matches a draw stands — there is no overtime or shootout.
- In final-window semi-finals and finals, a draw is decided by 2 × 5 minutes of overtime, then a penalty shootout.
- IHF-approved match balls are provided by the host association.

### **OFFICIALS AND REFEREES**

- Each tournament is officiated by referee pairs approved by the host national federation.
- The Regional Handball League may assign or approve officials for the final window.

### **DISPUTES AND APPEALS**

- Protests must be submitted in writing to the match commissioner within 30 minutes of the final whistle.
- Decisions on protests are made by the Regional Handball League within 24 hours.
- Appeals may be referred to the competent arbitration body under EHF statutes.