



## West End Slo-pitch Association's Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) Eligibility Policy

In 2022, WESA moved to an Open Roster qualification process for GSWS C, D and E divisions. Masters' teams (comprised of players who are 50 years old by December 31st of that year) attending the GSWS have always used the Open Roster process. An Open Roster team means all members of the team are picked from the pool of all WESA members interested in participating.

This policy explains WESA's approach to fulfilling its obligation to the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) to send at least one representative team to the NAGAAA GSWS every year.

The intended audience for this policy is WESA Members interested in playing for or coaching a WESA GSWS team.

### POLICY GOAL

**The goal of this policy is to increase WESA Member participation in the GSWS.**

In addition to Masters' team(s), the ability to send three divisional teams, one each representing C, D and E divisions, creates an opportunity for more WESA Members with a variety of skill levels to play in the GSWS and experience the annual event and festivities (Yes, it's a lot of fun!).

### REASONS FOR THE POLICY

***This new policy echoes most recent past practices.***

WESA has not sent a berth team, meaning a team that played together on a league team during the regular season, since 2017. Since then, all WESA teams attending the GSWS have been Open Roster teams.

### ***NAGAAA rules limit the choice to either Berth teams, or Open Roster teams.***

WESA is not allowed to send Berth teams for one division, and Open Roster teams for another division.

### ***Streamlining the process to Open Roster teams will be more efficient.***

While the former Berth process could and did lead to Open Roster teams, the lengthy timeline and administrative work has become unsustainable and inefficient for WESA.

### ***Aligning WESA members and teams into the proper NAGAAA divisions of play that reflect NAGAAA player and team ratings.***

The structure and makeup of WESA's divisions of play are misaligned with the overall NAGAAA divisions of play. WESA's Tier 2 division (formerly referred to as C) contains a majority of players who have a NAGAAA D rating. WESA's Tier 1 division (formerly referred to as D) contains a majority of players who have a NAGAAA E rating. At the time of writing (January 2023) almost half of all WESA members are NAGAAA E-division eligible.

Historically, WESA Berth teams have played against teams at the GSWS with significantly higher ratings, which can be a discouraging playing experience. The Open Roster process should result in better alignment for our WESA teams attending the GSWS by:

1. increasing the overall number of teams that WESA sends to the GSWS; and
2. providing a better match for WESA Members to the GSWS division play that matches their NAGAAA rating.

### ***Limited realities of continuing to follow the Berth process.***

If WESA continues to follow the Berth process, then it is likely we will send one or two GSWS D division Berth teams from WESA Tier 1, limiting the opportunity for WESA members who are not eligible to participate in the GSWS D division or have a skill level not commensurate with D division tournament play.

Qualifying WESA Tier 2 teams will likely continue to decline their GSWS C division Berth, and - along with E division rated players – would not be allowed by NAGAAA rules to field an Open Roster team for reasons mentioned above.

## OPEN ROSTER TEAM FORMATION

*The processes below shall be followed to select GSWS Open Roster teams in the Masters, C, D and E NAGAAA divisions of play.*

### PLAYER SELECTION

1. Any WESA Member in good standing who has played at least 10 (5 for Masters' team participants) regular season games (playoff games are not included) is eligible to participate in the GSWS (NAGAAA rule).
2. WESA Members may play in any GSWS division for which they are eligible, regardless of the WESA division (Tier 1 or Tier 2) they play in. For the 2023 season, GSWS player eligibility is as follows:
  - C division – NAGAAA rating of 15 or less.
  - D division – NAGAAA rating of 12 or less (and cannot have Q5; pages 20-22 in the [NAGAAA Governing Manual<sup>1</sup>](#)).
  - E division – NAGAAA rating of 8 or less (and cannot have Q3; pages 20-22 in the [NAGAAA Governing Manual<sup>1</sup>](#)).
3. NAGAAA rules state that players may play on only one team (NAGAAA rule).
4. Masters' players must be 50 years or older by December 31, 2023. Masters' players may be from other NAGAAA cities provided the player is GSWS-eligible (NAGAAA rules).
5. Coaches will select their teams from the pool of eligible WESA players, ensuring the selection process is equitable and transparent. Players must accept or reject a coach's offer no later than June 15, 2023.

### COACH SELECTION

6. Any WESA Member in good standing can apply to be a GSWS Open Roster Coach.
7. The WESA Commission will appoint GSWS Open Roster Coaches.
8. GSWS Open Roster Coaches will have full autonomy to select their team from eligible WESA members. A liaison will be appointed by the Commission to support Coaches throughout the duration of the GSWS annual program.
9. The Commission will select the Coach based on criteria that will optimize the GSWS experience for participating WESA Members including:
  - a. appropriate experience and effective coaching style;
  - b. effective communication skills;
  - c. facilitate a fun, fair, supportive team environment;
  - d. effective team management skills to organize and lead a travel team through a 5-day tournament;
  - e. ability to run practices and facilitate player development;

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<sup>1</sup> NAGAAA Governing Manual - <https://www.nagaaasoftball.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NAGAAA-Governing-Manual-61922.pdf>

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- f. embodiment of WESA values of sportsmanship, participation, and inclusion; and
  - g. a fundamental knowledge of the game of softball, GSWS rules of play, and the [NAGAAA Governing Manual<sup>2</sup>](#).
10. WESA Members can express interest in being a GSWS Open Roster Coach by submitting an application to [Commission@WESA.net](mailto:Commission@WESA.net) before April 1, 2023, that includes:
- a. A brief statement (150 words or less) addressing how the member meets the criteria laid out in paragraph 9, above and why they wish to take a team to GSWS.
  - b. A bullet-point plan for how the member intends to organize:
    - i. player recruiting and selection;
    - ii. practices and player development;
    - iii. player management and discipline;
    - iv. other coaching staff (if any);
    - v. travel and fundraising (if any); and
    - vi. equipment and uniforms.
11. Selected GSWS Open Roster Coaches will be notified no later than April 15, 2023.

### ***FEES, FINES, AND OTHER EXPENSES***

12. GSWS Open Roster teams shall be fully responsible for all financial costs and expenses related to uniforms, equipment, travel, and participation in the GSWS.
13. GSWS Open Roster teams shall pay all GSWS team fees and deposits to WESA by June 28th. Failure to do so may result in the loss of GSWS Open Roster privileges.
14. Players shall pay all GSWS player fees to NAGAAA by the NAGAAA-imposed deadline. Failure to do so may result in the loss of GSWS Open Roster privileges.
15. In accordance with NAGAAA policy, players may not be remunerated in cash or in-kind (e.g.: airfare, accommodation, equipment, etc.) for participating in GSWS. This does not preclude team fundraising activities or team sponsorship.
16. All NAGAAA governance, policy and rules shall be followed by GSWS Open Roster teams. Fees for protests under Chapter 50 Section 1 of the [NAGAAA Governing Manual<sup>2</sup>](#) and any fines for coach/player behaviour, game defaults, etc. shall be borne by the Open Roster Team with the exception of protest penalties assessed to the League by NAGAAA under Chapter 50 Section 3 of the [NAGAAA Governing Manual<sup>2</sup>](#).

### ***QUESTIONS & COMMENTS***

As always, please email the WESA Commission anytime at [Commission@WESA.net](mailto:Commission@WESA.net) should you have any questions or comments to share. Thank you!

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<sup>2</sup> NAGAAA Governing Manual - <https://www.nagaaasoftball.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NAGAAA-Governing-Manual-61922.pdf>