



2026-27 Women's Wrestling Policy Updates

This document outlines all rules motions presented to the NAIA National Administrative Council (NAC), including both approved and denied proposals.

Approved Motions	Effective Date
Approved procedures for replacing wrestlers who withdraw after brackets are released. If a seeded wrestler withdraws, remaining seeds move up, the first alternate becomes the lowest seed, and the affected championship brackets are redrawn. If an unseeded wrestler withdraws, the alternate is placed into the appropriate weight class without adjusting seeded wrestlers, and the applicable championship brackets are redrawn.	2026-27
Approved increasing the number of seeded wrestlers from eight to 12 per weight class at the NAIA National Championships, with a three-year sunset clause on the approved change.	2026-27
Approved requiring seeding discussions to begin with the wrestler receiving the highest vote total and proceed down the list within each weight class.	2026-27
Approved an NAIA modification allowing a one-pound weight allowance for all wrestlers during back-to-back team competition and when a team competes within a 48-hour window, measured by event start time. The allowance applies to all wrestlers competing in the subsequent event, including wrestlers on opposing teams who did not compete the previous day. The maximum allowance is one pound regardless of the number of consecutive events, all competitions must be official team dates of competition, and the allowance does not alter a wrestler's weight-loss descent plan for subsequent weigh-ins.	2026-27
Creation of the Red Banner Scholar Award, beginning with the 2026-27 academic year. The award will be presented at each NAIA National Championship Final Site and will recognize the championship participant with the highest cumulative institutional GPA among eligible NAIA Scholar-Athletes competing in the event. The award utilizes the existing NAIA	2026-27

Approved Motions	Effective Date
Scholar-Athlete nomination and approval process and requires no additional submissions from member institutions.	

Denied Motions	Rationale
Increase the number of National Qualifiers to 240. Making each of the 10 weight classes have 24 athletes per weight, with balanced brackets.	The motion was denied because increasing the field to 240 would raise the national championship access ratio, which was determined to be too high. While the proposal would provide more uniform brackets and support continued growth of the sport, the current priority is to maintain an appropriate balance between championship access, competitive quality, and the overall size of the national championship field.
To allow inclusion – as secondary criteria – International and NCAA results in both the rankings and National Tournament Seeding criteria.	This motion was denied because international results, particularly those from previous years or overseas competitions, are not consistently tracked or verifiable within the current system. Relying on such subjective and unconfirmed information would not support the national tournament seeding process.