



2026-27
**WOMEN'S WRESTLING
COACHES MANUAL**



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For National Championship Selection/Coaches Association/Event Administration contact-

Championship Sport Manager

Bruce Tate

btate@naia.org

816.595.8196

**For Ratings Administration contact –
Athletics Communications Manager**

Reanne Kietlinski

rkietlinski@naia.org

816.595.8349

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NAIA WOMEN'S WRESTLING — IMPORTANT DATES

2026-2027 WOMEN'S WRESTLING SPORT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 14	START – Practices, scrimmages, & exhibitions
OCTOBER 1	DEADLINE – Input team's competition schedule into Trackwrestling system
OCTOBER 22	START – Ratings <i>Dates: Oct. 22, Nov. 12, Dec. 3, Dec. 17, Jan. 28, Feb. 17</i>
OCTOBER 22	START – Competitions
NOVEMBER 11	START – National Wrestler of the Week Releases <i>Dates: Nov. 11, Nov. 18, Jan. 13, Jan. 20, Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 10, & Feb. 17</i>
JANUARY 30	DEADLINE – Nominations for NAIA Scholar-Athletes
JANUARY 31	DEADLINE – Undeclare from Postseason
FEBRUARY 1	RELEASE – Entry packets and National Championship Information
FEBRUARY 15	DEADLINE – NAIA Champions of Character Individual Award Nominations
FEBRUARY 18	Release of Conference Allocations for 2027 Women's Wrestling National Championships
FEBRUARY 28	DEADLINE – Affiliated conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group Tournaments
FEBRUARY 28	DEADLINE – completed Automatic Qualifier and At-Large forms from each qualifying tournaments (sent by qualifying group rater/chair)
MARCH 2	RELEASE – National Championship Qualifiers
MARCH 5	RELEASE – Release of Preliminary National Championship Brackets
MARCH 10-11	Team/Athlete Registration for NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championships
MARCH 11	RELEASE – Official brackets
MARCH 12-13	NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championship
MARCH 13	RELEASE – NAIA Women's Wrestling Coach of the Year and Most Outstanding Wrestler
MARCH 13	RELEASE – NAIA Women's Wrestling All-America Individuals
JUNE 30	DEADLINE – Nominations for NAIA Scholar Teams
JULY 15	DEADLINE – Nominations for Hall of Fame
JULY 16	DEADLINE – Submit Sport Motions
July 30 – August 1	NWCA Convention – Austin, Texas

FIVE-YEAR CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Conference Tournament Deadline	February 28	February 27	February 25	February 24	March 2
National Championship	March 12-13	March 10-11	March 9-10	March 8-9	March 14-15

National Championship Website – [Click Here](#)



PLAYING RULES AND REGULATIONS

PLAYING RULES

Rules governing competition at the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championships are specified in the [USA Wrestling Rulebook](#), except for those [NAIA Rules Modifications](#) changes approved by the NAIA-WWCA and the NAIA National Administrative Council (NAC).

WEIGHT CERTIFICATION

All NAIA wrestlers must be examined by a certified athletic trainer or other certified medical personnel not sooner than September 1 and no later than November 1 annually. During the initial weight assessment, a wrestler's minimum wrestling weight class for the season shall be determined. Each institution shall keep on file a copy of their wrestlers' NCAA Weight-Management Program forms.

All institutions are required to properly set up and use the NWCA Optimal Performance Calculator (OPC). Wrestlers descending to their lowest certified weight class shall not weigh in more than one weight class above their predetermined lowest weight class.

Hosts of all individual and team-advancement tournaments, including preseason open tournaments, shall record and retain a copy of the NCAA Official Weigh-In form (see Rule 9.2.5), which shall also include the results of medical examinations (See Rule 9.1.1.).

The National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) has created a computer program to assist coaches, trainers, and administrators in completing the weight certification process. The NAIA-WCA passed a motion (which was passed by the CAA) at the 2003 annual business meeting requiring all NAIA coaches to use the NWCA weight certification software. NAIA coaches can access the NWCA software at www.nwcaonline.com.

CONDUCT IN COMPETITION

EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

An ejection is an action enforced in conjunction with competition by a game official consistent with the playing rules in that sport. A suspension is required by NAIA bylaws (Article 6, Section B, Item 7) as an additional consequence related to ejections in conjunction with competition.

Ejection reports must be completed by the NAIA game official ejecting a student-athlete or coach and the athletic director of the ejected student-athlete or coach. The form must be submitted to the NAIA within 48 hours after the completion of the contest.

[Ejection Report Form](#)

Ejections are not subject to appeal. Some sport rules allow protests through an official process outlined in each sport rule book. Suspensions may be appealed starting with the Conference/Association of Independent Institutions. An institution must submit an appeal to their conference within 72 hours of the completion of contest. The conference will submit a recommendation to the national office within 72 hours of receiving the appeal from the institution. The Conduct and Ethics Committee is responsible for all appeals related to suspensions due to ejections of a coach and/or student-athlete.

Once an appeal with appropriate signatures has been submitted to the conference, the student-athlete/coach may continue to participate through the appeal process. If the appeal is not approved, then the student-athlete/coach must sit out of the next scheduled contest(s).

A suspended person cannot be in the competitive venue the day of the contest or communicate with any team personnel or game officials the day of the contest. The student-athlete/coach will be normally removed from the venue during a suspension. However, the game manager will use their best discretion on what is appropriate to risk management procedures regarding their venue.



POSTSEASON COMPETITION

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

OFFICIAL PARTY

Entry fee for the National Championship is **\$150.00** per individual entry and payment is due upon registration. Qualifiers will be released on **March 2, 2027**.

All entries certified on the Official Entry Form **MUST** be listed on the affiliated/conference ranking form in order to enter the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championship.

Coaches may confirm up to twelve (12) wrestlers during registration. No roster/entry changes can be made after the close of registration. Specific information regarding official party, roster and credentials is included on the official roster entry form.

In the case of an injury to a national tournament qualifier prior to registration at the national championships, the head coach of the injured wrestler's institution will contact Bruce Tate (btate@naia.org). The head coach of the alternate wrestler will then accept or decline the invitation.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

Each team is allowed up to two athletic training/medical personnel on the team sideline. One of which must be an ATC, MD, or DO. A licensed health care provider's license information/number must be submitted in the application in order to receive any medical/athletic training credentials for your team. Applications will close 72 hours before the event starts. Medical personnel credentials can be picked up during team check-in/registration only with a photo ID.

[Please apply here for medical personnel credential.](#)

SPORTS INFORMATION/MEDIA PERSONNEL

All SIDs/Media personnel will need to apply for a credential for the final site. Applications will close 72 hours before the event starts. Media Credentials can be picked up at the box office only with a photo ID. Media credentials will NOT be included in the team packets at coaches pick up.

[Final Site Media Credential Application](#)

ADMINISTRATOR PERSONNEL

All Presidents and Athletic Directors from qualifying teams will each receive two credentials. These credentials can be picked up at the box office. All other administrators will receive free admission with their NAIA membership card when presented at the box office.

Official Postseason Roster forms will now be filled out via NAIA Connect (<https://www.naiiaconnect.org/s/login>) and sent to the NAIA National Office. If you do not have a login account, please contact naiiaconnectsupport@naia.org. Once you login, please follow these [instructions](#).

Postseason rosters (and ejection disclosures) will be processed electronically and the administrator completing the roster will sign electronically. Postseason rosters no longer need to be sent to the NAIA National Office.

If you have trouble with the online roster form, please contact **Reanne Kietlinski** (rkietlinski@naia.org) of the NAIA Athletics Communications Department. For any other general questions related to the official postseason rosters, please contact the NAIA Sport Manager.

EXPENSES

Participating teams are responsible for their own expenses to, during, and from all postseason events.

INSURANCE

Each participating team shall provide its own medical, hospitalization, travel and accident insurance for all members of its official party.

PARTICIPATION IN FUNCTIONS AT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

All participating teams and individuals competing in a National Championship must attend all functions including, but not limited to – Parade of Champions, coaches' meetings, Teaming Up for Character™ event and student-athlete experience event. Failure to comply will result in a penalty of a \$1,500 fine to the institution.

HEAD COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

The head coach or other designated person for each participating team must be in attendance and responsible for his/her team at all times while at the Championship site. This person shall accept the responsibility for the conduct of his/her student-athletes at the Championship site, during the Championship and at all activities connected with the team's Championship participation. In case of property damage, the offending institution shall be held financially responsible.

AFFILIATED CONFERENCE/CAC/UNAFFILIATED GROUP TOURNAMENTS

The Affiliated Conference/Continental Athletic Conference (CAC) (formerly the Association of Independent Institutions)/Unaffiliated Group wrestling tournaments are planned and administered by the Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group Wrestling Committee under the leadership of their respective chair and subject to approval of all standards and conditions as may be prescribed by the Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group Executive Committee/Commissioner.

Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group tournament plans for all winter sports must be submitted to the National Office no later than **November 1, 2027**.

DATES AND SITES

The deadline for completion of the NAIA wrestling national qualifying tournaments is midnight **Sunday, February 28, 2027**. Each conference/CAC/affiliated group is required to have a plan in place to alternate the hosting of their national qualifying tournament within the conference/CAC/affiliated group on an annual basis.

SELECTION OF WRESTLERS

Each school may enter up to 12 wrestlers in the conference/CAC/affiliated group tournament, with no more than two per weight class.

ADMINISTRATION

The conference/CAC/affiliated group wrestling chair (rater) will assist the host site coach and athletic director in the administration of the conference/CAC/affiliated group tournament. The group rater will oversee the pre- and post-tournament coaches' meetings and is responsible for completing the final group wrestler rating form.

SEEDING AND BRACKETING GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

All conference/CAC/affiliated groups will use the following criteria for seeding at that weight:

PRIMARY (in order listed below)

1. Head-to-head results – most recent results take precedence
2. Results vs. common opponents

SECONDARY (no weight order given)

1. Common tournament place finishes
2. Past National Championship or Conference Tournament finishes
3. Overall records – quality/strength of opponents and schedule hold precedence win-loss record

The Conference tournament shall not seed more than 12-wrestlers in a given weight class.

Separating teammates in conference/CAC/affiliated group tournaments/national brackets - The following seeding/bracketing criteria will be used for separating teammates and during the national qualifying tournament and National Championships brackets:

1. Teammates will be separated onto the opposite sides of the bracket unless seeding dictates otherwise (i.e. #1 vs. #4, #2 vs. #3).



2. No wrestler will compete against another teammate in the "pig tail" and first round of competition in the National Championship brackets unless seeding of individuals dictates otherwise.
3. In the event of a conference/CAC/affiliated group having 9 or more qualified competitors in a weight class at the National Championships, seeded wrestlers will be placed by using the pairing formula and the remaining wrestlers will be drawn into the bracket randomly creating a pairing of opponents from the same conference/CAC/affiliated group in the round of 16. If a conference/CAC/affiliated group does not have four seeded wrestlers in a weight class to place into the National Championship bracket formula, then the seeds will be drawn at random from all of the non-seeded qualifiers in the weight class.

Note: Conference/CAC/affiliated group tournament hosts are required to use the same tournament seeding & scoring software that is used at the NAIA National Championships.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

DATES

The 2027 NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championships will take place **March 12-13, 2027**.

ADMINISTRATION

The NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championship is under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA and the NAIA Women's Wrestling Coaches Association Officers. The NAIA Wrestling Coaches Association is responsible for carrying out the policies approved by the NAIA National Administrative Council (NAC) including seeding the participants, managing the National Championship, and overseeing the welfare of the participating athletes and coaches.

NAIA matches are intended to provide National Championship competition among the best eligible student-athletes and teams at the conclusion of the respective sport season.

The NAIA will not consider a protest regarding the eligibility of a duly certified student-athlete within 15 calendar days prior to the beginning of national competition. Protests will be investigated after the event.

FORMAT

The NAIA Women's Wrestling Championship will be conducted in a two-day format. Individual Championship Championships will be determined in 10 weight classes, and the team National Champion is determined using tournament scoring as stated in the NCAA Men's Wrestling Rule Book with the exception of no bonus point scoring involving matches between wrestlers from the same team.

QUALIFICATION

National Tournament qualifying numbers will be 210, with a distribution protocol that will ensure the best possible wrestlers are represented at the National Tournament.

Automatic Qualifying – Individual wrestlers can qualify for the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championships by:

- Qualifying standards through conference/CAC/affiliated group tournaments:
- The top finisher in each weight class at the conference/affiliated group tournament will receive an automatic berth to the National Championships.
- Additional automatic qualifiers allocations for the National Championships will be determined based on the final regular season rankings for each wrestler ranked in the top 17 in a specific weight class. (e.g., four wrestlers from the Mid-South Conference are ranked at 103 lbs. in the final regular season top 17 ratings, the Mid-South will receive four automatic qualifiers at 103 lbs. to the National Championships.)

NOTE: If a ranked wrestler does not compete at their conference tournament, that conference allocation will be removed, and an additional at-large position will go into the national at-large pool. (e.g. four wrestlers from the Mid-South Conference are ranked at 103 lbs. in the final regular season ratings, Jane Doe is ranked at 103, however does not compete at 103 during the conference tournament. The Mid-South will receive three allocations at 103 for the National Championships.)

NOTE: Athletes cannot compete in a different weight class at the National Championships than they competed in at the postseason national qualifying tournament.

At-Large Qualifying – Individual wrestlers can qualify for the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championships by:

- 30 Conference At-Large Bids – Each of the conference/CAC/affiliated groups will receive six (6) conference wild cards, to allocate to a wrestler that did not qualify automatically.
- The number of Conference Wild Cards would be determined by the number of conferences as follows:
 - 4 Conferences – 32 Wild Cards (8 Each Conference)
 - 5 Conferences – 30 Wild Cards (6 Each Conference)
 - 6 Conferences – 30 Wild Cards (5 Each Conference)
 - 7 Conferences – 35 Wild Cards (5 Each Conference)
 - 8 Conferences – 32 Wild Cards (4 Each Conference)
- National At-Large Bids – the remaining national bids will be selected by the National Rating Committee (raters & oversight) via individual vote using the current at-large criteria until 210 wrestlers have been selected. Selection of these at-large qualifiers will be conducted in the following manner:
- A 10-member committee consisting of the rater and oversight member from each conference will vote for at-large selections.
- Up to 10 national at-large nominees from each conference/qualifying group will be emailed to the national office following the completion of the national qualifying events. Submissions must be received by 12 a.m. CST on the conference tournament deadline.

All qualifiers and at-large nominees will be distributed to the entire coaching body by the national office on **March 1, 2027**. Specific information regarding national at-large nominees should be directed by the individuals head coach to a region-specific committee member. Each of the 10-committee members will submit online votes to the national office. Each committee member votes on their top wrestlers regardless of weight, up to the number of at-large positions remaining. Each vote is awarded one point. The points will be tabulated at the NAIA National Office. The individual(s) with the most points garner the available at-large positions.

Note: In the case of ties for at-large selection where there is a tie with two individuals at the same weight class, the regular seeding criteria will be used to break the tie. If the individuals are at different weight classes, the seeding committee will vote to break the tie. In the case that the seeding committee ties on the deciding vote, the NAC liaison will vote to break the tie.

Alternates – Allow up to three alternates be entered into the NAIA National Championship in case of injury. The three alternates will be the top three vote receivers that did not qualify as an at-large qualifier to the national championship. The deadline for alternates to be entered will be the end of team qualifier registration at the national championship.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SEEDING AND BRACKETING GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

The National Seeding Committee will use the following criteria for seeding at that weight:

PRIMARY (in order listed below)

1. Head-to-head results (during current collegiate season) – most recent results takes precedence if wins and losses are even, otherwise the wrestler with more wins has criteria
2. Results vs. common opponents

SECONDARY (no weight order given)

1. Common tournament place finishes (must be at same weight class)
2. Past National Championship or Conference Tournament finishes (same weight class will take precedence)
3. Overall records – quality/strength of opponents and schedule hold precedence win-loss record

New for 2026-27 Season: The top twelve wrestlers will be seeded in each weight class.

A committee of two coaches from each conference/affiliated group consisting of the rater and oversight, will vote on the seeds for the National Championships. Each coach on the committee will submit votes on the top 15 seeds from each weight class. The 13, 14 and 15 seeds are considered alternates to the 12 seed. A #1 seed receives 15 points, #2 seed receives 14 points, a #3 seed receives 13 points, and down the line to the #15 seed receives 1 point. To ensure any outlying votes do not skew the results, the highest and lowest voted for each wrestler will be removed.



The coaches on the Seeding Committee are not to work together or communicate with each other at any point during this process.

The votes will be submitted electronically. The point totals will be tabulated to determine the preliminary seeds. The National Oversight Committee, comprised of two athletic administrators and one executive committee member who is not a member of the National Seeding Committee, will review the preliminary seeds and contact a member of the National Seeding Committee if any extreme outliers are identified.

The preliminary seeding results will then be provided to the National Seeding Committee. The National Seeding Committee and National Oversight Committee will meet via conference call to discuss any seeding changes that may need to be made.

Only individuals whose point totals are within 10 points of one another may be considered for a seeding adjustment.

New for 2026-27 Season: Seeding adjustments shall be considered in sequential, top-down order, beginning with the #1 seed and proceeding numerically through the remaining seeds. The Committee shall address the #1 seed first, followed by the #2 seed, #3 seed, and so forth through the lowest seed under consideration.

For each seed, the National Seeding Committee may discuss and consider eligible seeding adjustments before a decision is made. The determination for each seed must be finalized before the Committee proceeds to the next seed. The Committee shall not move to a lower seed while the determination of the preceding seed remains unresolved.

Any change to the preliminary seeding must be approved by a unanimous decision of the National Seeding Committee. If the National Seeding Committee is unable to reach a unanimous decision, the National Oversight Committee will make the final determination regarding the seeding adjustment.

Separating teammates in conference/national brackets - The following seeding/bracketing criteria will be used for separating teammates and during the national qualifying tournament and National Championship brackets:

Teammates will be separated onto the opposite sides of the bracket unless seeding dictates otherwise (i.e. #1 vs. #4, #2 vs. #3).

No wrestler will compete against another teammate in the "pig tail" and first round of competition in the National Championship brackets unless seeding of individuals dictates otherwise.

In the event of a conference group having 9 or more qualified competitors in a weight class at the National Championship, seeded wrestlers will be placed by using the pairing formula and the remaining wrestlers will be drawn into the bracket randomly creating a pairing of opponents from the same conference in the round of 16. If a conference group does not have four seeded wrestlers in a weight class to place into the National Championship bracket formula, then the seeds will be drawn at random from all of the non-seeded qualifiers in the weight class.

New for 2026-2027 Season: National Tournament Bracket Procedures

When a wrestler withdraws from the National Championship after the championship bracket has been released, an alternate shall be identified in accordance with the NAIA Wrestling Selection Procedures.

The following procedures shall then be applied:

1. Withdrawal of a Seeded Wrestler

If a seeded wrestler withdraws:

- All remaining seeded wrestlers in that weight class shall move up one seeding position to fill the vacated seed (e.g., #8 moves to #7, #7 moves to #6, etc.).
- The first-seeded alternate shall become the new lowest-seeded wrestler in the weight class, and the second-seeded alternate shall become the first-seeded alternate.
- The National Championship Qualifier alternate shall be notified in accordance with NAIA policy. The identified alternate shall be placed into the appropriate weight class.
- The championship brackets for both weight classes shall be redrawn in accordance with the applicable bracketing procedures, including adjustments to the placement of unseeded wrestlers.

2. Withdrawal of an Unseeded Wrestler

If an unseeded wrestler withdraws:

- a. The identified alternate shall be notified in accordance with NAIA policy and placed into the appropriate weight class.
- b. The withdrawing wrestler shall be removed from the applicable weight class bracket.
- c. No seeded wrestlers shall be adjusted in either weight class.
- d. The championship brackets for both weight classes shall be redrawn in accordance with normal bracketing procedures, including the separation of teammates.

CHAMPIONSHIP SELECTION APPEALS PROCESS

If there is misapplication of NAIA policy and procedures regarding tournament selection, an institution may appeal to the NAIA National Office.

Criteria for filing an appeal –

1. A written appeal citing the specific NAIA policies and/or procedures that have been misapplied must be submitted to the NAIA National Office within 24 hours from the time the tournament field has been released.
2. Once an appeal has been submitted a response will be provided within 24 hours from receipt of appeal.
3. Appeals must be submitted and signed by the Athletics Director and President of the institution.

NOTE – The NAC sport liaison will be on-site at the selection to listen to the discussion of tournament selection. The NAC liaison will report any concerns to the NAIA National Office immediately following the conclusion of the selection. The national oversight committee will review ratings to prevent any ratings process violations or unethical use of the ratings process.

HOUSING

All participating teams **MUST** stay at the designated hotels. Failure to do so would make a team **INELIGIBLE** for participation.

PARTICIPATION IN FUNCTIONS AT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

All participating teams and individuals competing in a National Championship **MUST** attend all functions including, but not limited to – Parade of Champions, coaches' meetings and student-athlete experience event. Failure to comply will result in a penalty of a \$1,500 fine to the institution.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If inclement weather should cause travel delays for any team(s) competing in the National Championship, it will be up to the discretion of the NAIA Sport Manager and the Games Committee to make changes to the schedule to accommodate such delays.

It is the responsibility of the host Medial Director/Athletic Trainer at NAIA Championship events to determine when an event should be suspended and when it is safe to return to play as the result of severe weather. The Athletic Trainer is to notify the NAIA Championship Manager who, in collaboration with the appropriate personnel (i.e. Games Committee) will implement the predetermined action plan for both player and spectator safety.



OFFICIALS

3 officials per mat will be contracted to work the NAIA National Championship. The NAIA Women's Wrestling Sport Manager works with the national supervisor of officials to identify, contract, and retain National Championship officials as well as evaluators that also contracted to work the national tournament and provide feedback/evaluations to the NAIA, the supervisor of officials, and the Championship officials. Coaches will also complete a written evaluation/rating of the Championship officials.

Top-rated officials (based on evaluations from evaluators, supervisor and coaches) from the NAIA Championship will be offered contracts for the following year's Championship.

RELATED INFORMATION

Code of Conduct

All wrestlers participating in the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championship shall agree to abide by the following standards of conduct:

- a. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- b. Exemplary conduct is expected in team travel, at eating establishments, at the Championship site and overnight accommodations before, during and after the National Championship.
- c. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT may result in either or all of the following actions:
 - i. The university or college president and athletics director will be notified by letter.
 - ii. The athlete will be banned from the following year's Championship. If the athlete is a senior, her team will be ineligible for the following year's Championship.
 - iii. All honors and awards, including All-America status and all points scored, will be taken away from the offending athlete.
- d. Upon notification of any violation of the Code of Conduct, the NAIA-WWCA will review the case and take prompt, appropriate action which may include the above.

NAIA coaches are responsible for ensuring that their athletes adhere to these rules of conduct.

Meetings

A pre-Championship meeting will be held on the Thursday afternoon/evening prior to the start of the Championship.

Medical Care/Weigh-Ins/Skin Checks

Training facilities and certified trainers will be available to the competing teams courtesy of the host. Medical doctors will be on-call and participants will have access to a medical facility. Weigh-ins and medical/skin checks must be conducted for each day prior to competition. The first weigh-in/skin check for the National Championship will take place two hours prior to the first session.

Admission/Credentials

All athletes and coaches must have credentials (participant passes) on their person in order to be admitted to the Championship and have floor access in the arena. Each school will be issued four credentials for coaches, assistants and support staff. Four additional coach/support staff credentials can be purchased for \$30.00 apiece. Additional credentials for assistants/support staff can be purchased for \$60.00 apiece.

Radio, Television and Online Broadcasting

The broadcast of any Championship event is governed by the NAIA broadcast policies as printed in the NAIA Policy Handbook. For information relative to these policies, contact:

Department of Athletics Communications
Phone – 816.595.8000



TRAVEL

SHORTS TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Qualifying institutions are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the National Championship.

The Official Travel partner of the NAIA is Short's Travel Management. Please contact Short's Travel (866-902-9654) to book your travel arrangements.

Short's Travel has contacts with charter air travel as well as charter buses for ground travel.

NATIONAL CAR RENTAL

National Car Rental/Enterprise Rent-a-Car is offering special rates for the NAIA National Championship. Teams will be able to access these special rates by providing the special NAIA contract ID #XZ05146.

Click [here](#) for account setup and instructions to use code.

MASTER'S TRANSPORTATION

Master's Transportation is the official provider of all shuttles/buses for your sale, lease and rental needs. Please contact Maria Duran at (816) 979-3493 or mduran@masterstransportation.com for more information.



NAIA POLICY HANDBOOK INFORMATION

The NAIA Policy Handbook can be found at [HERE](#). Please refer directly to the NAIA Policy Handbook for the following –

Competition

- A. Declaration of Intent to Participate – Bylaws, Article I, Section L
- B. Frequency of Play and Scheduling – Bylaws, Article I, Section F
- C. Criteria for Countable Contests – National Administrative Council, Article XXV, Section A, Item 12
- D. Reporting Results – National Administrative Council, Article XXV, Section A
- E. Forfeits – National Administrative Council, Article XI
- F. Conduct in Competition Guidelines – National Administrative Council, Article IV
- G. Ejection Policy – Bylaws, Article VI Section B Item 7
- H. Drug Testing and Reinstatement Procedures – Bylaws, Article VIII

Eligibility

- A. Definitions for Eligibility – Bylaws, Article V, Section B
- B. Eligibility Requirements – Bylaws, Article V, Section C
- C. Transfer Rules – Bylaws, Article V, Sections F-H
- D. Amateur Rules and Reinstatement – Bylaws, Article VII

Recruiting & Financial Aid

- A. Recruitment – Bylaws, Article II, Section D
- B. Campus Visitations and Tryouts of Prospective Students – Bylaws, Article II, Section C
- C. Financial Assistance – Bylaws, Article II, Section B
- D. Financial Aid Limits – Council of Presidents, Article XII

SUNDAY POLICY PLAY

As a matter of policy, NAIA Opening Round and National Championship competition will not be scheduled on Sunday. See NAIA Policy Handbook, National Administrative Council, Article XXIII for additional information.

DRUG TESTING

Drug testing may be done at any randomly selected NAIA National Championship competition for performance enhancing drugs. In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the National Drug Testing and Education Committee, the National Office will select which championships will incorporate drug testing each year. Student-athletes may be tested before, during and/or after NAIA National Championships.

For more information regarding championship drug testing, the National Administrative Council Drug Testing Policy Manual, the safety of supplements and over-the-counter medications and resources to increase awareness on your campus, please visit – <https://www.naia.org/student-athletes/current/wellness-center/>

DRUG TESTING CONSENT FORM

Each academic year all eligible NAIA student-athletes must sign a [Drug Testing Consent Form](#) in which he or she consents to be tested for the use of drugs prohibited by the NAIA Banned Substance List to participate in any NAIA National Championship competitions. This consent form shall be administered by the institution.

To ensure all student-athletes participating in NAIA National Championship competitions have signed a consent form and such form is on record with the institution, a representative of each institution participating in any NAIA National Championship competition must sign an [Official Certification of Student-Athlete Consent Form](#) at check-in.

It is recommended that before the season begins that an institution has all student-athletes complete the form to minimize the possibility of issues occurring when the post-season roster is submitted at a NAIA National Championship.

MEDICAL EXEMPTION FORM

The NAIA recognizes that some banned substances are used for legitimate medical purposes. Accordingly, the NAIA allows exemptions to be made for those student-athletes with a documented medical history demonstrating the need for regular use of such a drug. Exemptions may be granted for substances included in the following classes of banned drugs – Stimulants, anabolic agents, beta blockers, diuretics, peptide hormones, anti-estrogens, and beta-2 agonists.

[Medical Exemption Form](#)



COACHES ASSOCIATION

NAIA-WRESTLING COACHES ASSOCIATION

The NAIA-Wrestling Coaches Association (NAIA-WWCA) is an organization of collegiate wrestling coaches at NAIA member institutions. The NAIA-WWCA meets annually, conducting its business in conjunction with the National Wrestling Coaches Convention.

2026-2027 NAIA-WWCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

POSITION/TITLE	NAME, SCHOOL, & CONTACT INFORMATION
President	Tyreece Gilder , 641-585-8595, Waldorf (Iowa), tyreece.gilder@waldorf.edu
1st Vice-President	Ashley Flavin , 405-795-2779, Life (Ga.), ashley.flavin@life.edu
2nd Vice-President	Matt Atwood , 406-788-6914, Bellevue (Neb.), maatwood@bellevue.edu
Secretary	Kevin Corbett , 660-831-4307, Missouri Valley, corbettk@moval.edu
Past President	Paul Rademacher , 260-422-5561 x2415, Indiana Tech, prademacher@indianatech.edu
NAC Liaison	Britt Einerson , 512-263-2882, Asst. Ath. Dir., Grand View (Iowa), beinerson@grandview.edu
NAIA Staff Liaison	Bruce Tate , 816-595-8196, Championship Sport Manager, btate@naia.org

NAIA-WWCA CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be called the NAIA-Women's Wrestling Coaches Association, hereinafter referred to as the NAIA-WWCA.

ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 NAIA-WWCA membership is comprised of wrestling coaches whose institutions are current members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The NAIA-WWCA is charged with the responsibility of carrying out programs beneficial to the sport of wrestling, and to the NAIA member coaches. The programs of this section shall be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the NAIA, and under the guidance of the NAIA National Administrative Council (NAIA-NAC).

Section 2 The NAIA-WWCA shall submit to the NAIA-NAC recommendations for approval to enhance the program, and in every way cooperate with the Council in furthering the stated aims and objectives of the organization.

ARTICLE III - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The NAIA-WWCA shall supervise and conduct programs, utilizing the guidance of the NAIA-NAC. The NAIA-WWCA will foster and promote interest and enthusiasm in wrestling programs at the conference and national levels, and provide international recognition for teams, competitors, and coaches.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Any active wrestling coach (assistant or head coach) from a member institution of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics shall automatically be a member of the NAIA-WWCA.

ARTICLE V - DUES

No dues are currently assessed.

ARTICLE VI - VOTING POWER

Current membership in the NAIA-WWCA entitles the member (head coach only) to one vote in all democratic actions held in open assembly of the NAIA-WCA.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

- Section 1** Officers shall be elected from the active membership of the Association at the annual meeting as follows: The members shall elect a secretary from the membership. Normal rotation from secretary to second vice president to first vice president to president will occur. The position of ex-officio tournament host shall be filled by the tournament director of the next championship, and they shall then be moved to the position of ex-officio past tournament host the following year.
- Section 2** The term of office of the president, first vice president, second vice president and secretary shall be for two years.
- Section 3** The progression in the office shall be from secretary to second vice president to first vice president to president; each office to be held for two years. In the event a vacancy occurs, the Executive Committee of the NAIA-WWCA is empowered to appoint members from the membership at-large to fill normal progression officers unless duly elected by the membership at the next annual meeting.
- Section 4** The NAIA-WWCA officers will serve as members of the Executive Committee (see Article IX).

ARTICLE VIII - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- Section 1** The duties of the president are to afford leadership and guidance to NAIA-WWCA through all possible channels and to direct his efforts specifically to conducting the annual meeting of the Association, as well as conducting committee meetings and clinics. The president is the executive officer of all appointed and standing committees of the Association. The individual serving in the role of President for the NAIA-WWCA during the Current academic year will also be a member of the Council for Student- Athletes (CSA). This role on the CSA is a two year responsibility, regardless of their term lengths as an officer of the NAIA-WWCA.
- Section 2** The duties of the first vice president are to assume leadership at all meetings unattended by the president and to serve as a member of the Games Committee at the National Championship.
- Section 3** The duties of the second vice president are to assume leadership at all meetings unattended by the president and first vice president, and to serve as a member of the Games committee at the National Championship.
- Section 4** The secretary shall make an annual report to the NAIA-WCA Executive Committee, supervise the Association correspondence, maintain a roster of members, notify members of meetings, and other duties which are incidental to the office. The secretary will assume leadership at all meetings unattended by the president, first vice president and second vice-president; and will serve as a member of the Games Committee at the National Championship.

ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Section 1** The NAIA-WCA Executive Committee is composed of the officers of the Association, the Association's immediate past president.
- Section 2** The NAIA-WCA Executive Committee shall approve the appointment of the national qualifying group/committee representatives to one, two, or three-year terms of office.
- Section 3** The members of the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee, the NAIA-WWCA president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary, and the qualifying group chairs shall act as the Games Committee for the NAIA Wrestling National Championships.

ARTICLE X - MEETINGS

- Section 1** The annual business meeting of the Association shall be held in conjunction with the NWCA National Convention at the time and place set by the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee.



- Section 2** A wrestling clinic or rules interpretations meeting may be held in conjunction with national events, or at a time and place designated by the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee.
- Section 3** The NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee shall meet prior to weigh-in time, and immediately following weigh-in time of the NAIA Wrestling National Championship to carry out the duties of the Games Committee.
- Section 4** Voting on all issues shall be by voice or hand in executive sessions or in open meetings of the Association. The national qualifying group chairs (solely) shall have votes with regard to seeding issues.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENT

The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at the regular or special meeting of the Association by a two-thirds majority of the members present at such meeting. Any contemplated change or changes in the Constitution and/or Bylaws must be fully explained, in writing, to the members of the Association and the Executive Committee at least 30 days prior to the date on which such a change will be presented for discussion.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business at the open business meeting shall be as follows:

- A. Reading of the Minutes
- B. Report of Officers
- C. Committee Reports
- D. Old Business
- E. New Business
- F. Adjournment

ARTICLE II - COMMITTEES

- Section 1** Standing and temporary committees shall be appointed by the president as deemed desirable by the NAIA- WWCA Executive Committee or the president. The term of the office of the appointed members shall be at the discretion of the NAIA-WWCA president.
- Section 2** The NAIA-WWCA president is empowered to appoint committees which will assist in programs designed to produce conference, group, and national recognition of teams, athletes, and coaches. The president is also encouraged to appoint competent NAIA-WWCA members who will assist in any and all ways to foster the aims and objectives of the NAIA as they relate to the sport of wrestling, the participants, coaches, spectators, and individual institutions represented by their individuals, and groups.

ARTICLE III – NATIONAL QUALIFYING GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

- Section 1** The NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee shall appoint two NAIA-WWCA members to represent each national qualifying group listed in the NAIA Wrestling Coaches Manual.
- Section 2** The duties of the qualifying group representatives shall include the following:
- A. To serve the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee.
 - B. To organize, promote and conduct the NAIA Wrestling National Championships.
 - C. To function as an advisory, games, and seeding committee for the National Championship.
 - D. To coordinate the rating process within the qualifying group and participate in the national rating system.
 - E. To coordinate the weight class ratings (which will be forwarded to national office for seeding) at the conclusion of their respective qualifying group championship.
 - F. To recommend conference and qualifying group competition in wrestling.
 - G. To organize and establish a set of criteria, practices, and procedures for NAIA Wrestling National Championships.
 - H. To recommend individuals, coaches, and participants for special awards.
 - I. To appoint a proxy when unable to attend a regular meeting of the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV - DATE AND SITE OF WRESTLING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Section 1 The date to be recommended for the annual NAIA Wrestling National Championships will be the second week of (or weekend of) March.

Section 2 Each member institution sponsoring wrestling shall have the opportunity to bid to host the NAIA Wrestling National Championships. When two or more bids of equal support are received, the NAIA-WWCA recommends that sites be rotated as follows: From West to Midwest, to East to Midwest, to West, and continue in that order.

ARTICLE V - OFFICIALS FOR WRESTLING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Officials for NAIA Nationals Tournament must be approved by the NAIA-WWCA Executive Committee.

AWARDS

NATIONAL WRESTLER OF THE WEEK**Conference/Affiliated Group Wrestler of the Week**

All NAIA member institutions are encouraged to nominate candidates for Conference/Group Wrestler of the Week honors for all sports in which they declare for NAIA postseason.

National Wrestler of the Week

All NAIA member institutions are permitted to nominate candidates for National Player of the Week for all sports in which they declare for NAIA postseason. Nominations from the conference/independent/unaffiliated sports information director or their designated representative must be received by the NAIA Department of Athletics Communications by 5:00pm (CST) each Monday, starting **November 19, 2025**, and ending **February 25, 2026**.

The nomination process is handled through the [NAIA Awards Platform](#). Release of National Player of the Week will be made weekly on Wednesdays during the season. National Players of the Week are selected from the pool of Conference/CAC/Group Players of the Week. A full calendar of National Player of the Week release dates are located [HERE](#).

NAIA SCHOLAR-ATHLETE

Criteria for the NAIA Scholar-Athlete Award are as follows:

1. Nominee must be a sophomore or above in academic standing;
2. Nominee must have been in attendance at the nominating institution one full academic year at the time of the nomination deadline (Jan. 31)
3. Nominee has a minimum grade point average of 3.50 (on a 4.0 scale) at the time of the nomination deadline (for transfer students the GPA is only at current NAIA institution).
4. Nominee has been certified as eligible and is listed on the eligibility certificate submitted to conference eligibility chair.
5. Nomination form is complete and submitted through NAIA Connect.
6. All the above information is to be received by Jan. 31 to be eligible for national press release/website, certificate and honors database – All criteria must be met by this date.

NOTE – There are no statistical/playing requirements needed to receive this award. NAIA Scholar-Athlete nominations will be filled out via NAIA Connect.

If you do not have an account, please sign up and create your own. Access will be granted (usually) within 24 hours. Nominations will be processed entirely electronically. To complete a nomination, the student-athlete must have approved and signed a release of their cumulative grade point average for nominating purposes. If you or your sports information office does not have a signed release form from the nominated student-athlete on file, a blank document (PDF) will be available for download.



This release form does not need to be turned into the NAIA National Office. You are asked to retain it for your institutional records. The administrator nominating the student-athlete will sign electronically. To be eligible for listing on website or honors database, forms must be submitted by **January 31**. Late nominations will not be accepted.

To download a template to create an award certificate for your student-athletes that have earned this honor, [CLICK HERE](#).

RED BANNER SCHOLAR AWARD

New for 2026-2027: The Red Banner Scholar Award recognizes the highest level of academic achievement among student-athletes competing at each NAIA National Championship Final Site. The award celebrates the NAIA's commitment to developing champions in the classroom, character, and competition by honoring the student-athlete(s) with the highest cumulative institutional grade point average participating in the national championship.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Red Banner Scholar Award, a student-athlete must:

1. Be listed on the official active championship roster (team sports) or be an official qualifier and active participant (individual sports) at the NAIA National Championship Final Site.
2. Be recognized as an NAIA Scholar-Athlete for the applicable academic year.
3. Meet all established NAIA Scholar-Athlete eligibility requirements and be submitted through the official NAIA Scholar-Athlete nomination process by the applicable sport deadline.

Selection Process

The NAIA National Office will determine the recipient(s) using approved NAIA Scholar-Athlete data.

- The eligible student-athlete with the highest cumulative institutional GPA at the national championship final site will receive the Red Banner Scholar Award.
- In the event of a tie for the highest GPA, all tied student-athletes will be recognized as co-recipients.
- No additional nomination is required beyond the NAIA Scholar-Athlete submission process.

SCHOLAR TEAM

In recognition of academic achievement, the NAIA names a Scholar Team for all sports in which Scholar-Athletes are recognized.

Based on a cumulative 3.0 season GPA for the current academic year on a 4.0 scale, all members of the team who appear on the eligibility certificate will be included in the GPA compilation.

The deadline for Scholar Team nominations is **June 30**. Download the [NAIA Scholar Team Award Form](#)

NATIONAL WOMEN'S WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

The NAIA National Women's Wrestler of the Year is voted upon by all participating coaches at the NAIA Wrestling National Championship.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COACH OF THE YEAR

The NAIA National Women's Coach of the Year is voted upon by all participating coaches at the NAIA Women's Wrestling National Championship.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS

Official NAIA individual awards for All-America recognition will be presented to the top eight (8) individuals in each weight class at the National Championship.

Team trophies will be awarded to the top **four** teams. The team champion will also receive the traditional NAIA Championship Banner.

There is also an award for the Most Outstanding Women's Wrestler at the National Championship.



ORDERING AWARDS

Conference/independent awards are ordered by the Conference/Independent Commissioner and are the financial responsibility of the conference/independent or postseason host institution. Official NAIA awards MUST be [ordered](#) from:

Collegiate Awards, 18081 E. Trafficway St., Springfield, MO 65802

Contact: Brad Stout, brads@collegiateawards.com, 417-873-9280



NAIA WOMEN'S WRESTLING — SELECTION TIMELINE

2027 NAIA WOMEN'S WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP – SELECTION TIMELINE

Sunday, February 28

- NAIA Conference Qualifying Tournament Deadline
 - o After the event – each conference selects its six wildcards
 - o After the event – each conference can submit up to 10 additional wrestlers, along with accolades to be considered for at-large selection.
- Qualifying Conference forms due to the national office – DEADLINE midnight (local time to host site)
 - o National office recommends that this be submitted immediately following the coaches' meeting
 - o Additionally, the six wildcards and up to 10 national at-large nominees are due to the national office
 - o Conference qualifying forms must be emailed to Bruce Tate (btate@naia.org)
- National office compiles forms
- National office distributes automatic berths, conference wildcards and national at-large nomination forms to entire coaching body

Monday, March 1

- Entire coaching body has ability to comment and crosscheck information distributed by the national office.
 - o Specific information regarding national qualifiers should be directed to conference-specific committee members
- National Seeding Committee Conference Call - 2 p.m. EST/1 p.m. CST/12 p.m. MST/11 a.m. PST
- o Goal is to review roles and responsibilities during seeding process.

Tuesday, March 2

- All national qualifier information returned to conference rater and oversight – by 9 a.m. EST/ 8 a.m. CST/7 a.m. MST/6 a.m. PST
- National Selection Committee Zoom conference call –11 a.m. EST/10 a.m. CST/9 a.m. MST/8 a.m. PST.
 - o Goal is to allow each conference to give some additional feedback on wrestlers. At least one representative from each conference must be present on the call.
- National Selection Committee At-Large Voting – DEADLINE 3 p.m. EST/ 2 p.m. CST/1 p.m. MST/ 12 p.m. PST
- National office will release the qualifiers for the national championships – 5 p.m. CST
- National office will send list of qualifiers (by weight class) to seeding committee for review – by 7 p.m. CST
- Qualifier spreadsheet emailed to Trackwrestling/Flo for upload into national championship system
 - o Done by the national office

Wednesday, March 3

- National seeding committee votes due – **DEADLINE 6 p.m. EST/5 p.m. CST/4 p.m. MST/3 p.m. PST**
 - o Email Bruce Tate (btate@naia.org) once completed
 - o National office compiles votes and distributes to the seeding oversight committee and voting committee
 - *Note – the high and low vote are eliminated from each point total in order to eliminate outliers.*
- Postseason roster information due to national office – 12 p.m. CST
 - o Submission via NAIA Connect (<https://www.naiiaconnect.org/s/login/>)
 - Original request will go to both SIDs and Coaches.

Thursday, March 4

- National seeding grid will be distributed by national office for review by 9 a.m. EST/8 a.m. CST/ 7 a.m. MST/6 a.m. PST
- 8 a.m. – Seeding Grid Finalized and Distributed for National Seeding Committee Conference Call
- National Seeding Committee Zoom conference call – 2 p.m. EST/1 p.m. CST/12 p.m. MST/11 a.m. PST
 - o Goal is to discuss potential changes to the seeding. The only seeding changes that can be discussed are between two individuals whose point totals are within 10, in which case the coaches committee will provide insight, and the oversight committee will rule.
 - o Following the call, the national office will distribute seeding to national championship official scorer.



Friday, March 5

- National Bracketing Committee Zoom conference call – 1 p.m. EST/12 p.m. CST/11 a.m. MST/10 a.m. PST
 - o Goal is to set the preliminary brackets for the national championships
- National office releases the preliminary brackets – by 5 p.m. CST

Wednesday, March 10

- Team/Athlete registration for the national championship at the arena – 5 – 6 p.m. CST

Thursday, March 11

- Team/Athlete registration for the national championship at the arena – 12 – 2 p.m. CST
- National bracketing committee meeting – 2 p.m. CST
 - o Finalize the brackets based on entries
 - o Official brackets will be released on NAIA.org following the committee approval

Friday, March 12 – Saturday, March 13

- NAIA Wrestling Championship