



2024 NWSL Draft Rules and Procedures

1. Overview

- a. Eligible Players. Teams may draft players in the annual NWSL Draft from the list of eligible players. These players are those who have registered for the Draft and have been vetted as meeting the eligibility requirements by the League. In order to be eligible for the upcoming NWSL Draft an Individual must:
 - i. Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States; or
 - ii. Be a foreign national who is currently or was enrolled at a college/university in the United States during the 2023-24 academic year; or
 - iii. Be an Individual who has exhausted, lost, or renounced their remaining collegiate eligibility during the 2023 calendar year, including high school graduates choosing to forego collegiate eligibility; and
 - iv. Turn at least 18-years old on or before December 31, 2023; and
 - v. Not be under a current professional contract, nor have previously signed a contract to play soccer professionally; and
 - vi. Register for the 2024 NWSL Draft by 11:59 pm ET on Monday, January 8, 2024.
 - An individual may only register and participate in one NWSL Draft. If an Individual Enters the draft and withdraws prior to the NWSL Draft, they may enter a future NWSL Draft; however, if a Player registers for the NWSL Draft and goes undrafted, they are not eligible to re-enter future NWSL Drafts and may enter the League via another acquisition method in which they become eligible.
- b. NWSL Draft Order. The draft order will be determined by the reverse order of finish of the 2023 NWSL Regular Season, taking the Championship match into account. Specifically, the fourteenth selection will go to the winner of the NWSL Championship, thirteenth selection to the Championship runner-up and the third selection will be provided to the Team with the lowest position in the 2023 NWSL table. Bay FC and Utah Royals (Expansion Teams) will select in the order as has been previously determined by the League. Subject to trades, Utah Royals have the first selection in the first and third round. Bay FC have the first selection in the second and fourth round.
- c. On an agreed upon day after the NWSL Championship and prior to the NWSL Draft, the League will confirm all conditional picks and set the draft order.

2. Draft Process and Draft Day Procedures

- a. The NWSL Draft will consist of a maximum of fifty-six (56) selections made over four (4) rounds. Teams will select #1-14 (or “forfeit”) for all rounds based on the current order until the Draft is completed. For round 1, each Team will have five (5) minutes to announce its pick. For rounds 2, 3 and 4, each Team will have three (3) minutes to announce its pick.
- b. To make a selection, each Team must notify the League of its selection prior to the clock expiring and the League will announce the selection
- c. Teams may request three (3) time-outs during the NWSL Draft for further discussion, rule clarification, or trade discussion. Time-outs taken in all rounds will be three (3) minutes in length.



- d. Time-outs may not be “stacked” by Teams; that is, Team B may not use its time-out immediately following Team A’s use of its time-out. Example: Team A has been granted its three-minute time-out to discuss a trade with Team B. The discussion must be completed within the three (3) minutes; Team B may not use its time--out in order to complete the discussion or trade. At the end of the three (3) minutes, a Team selection must be made. If the Team fails to make or forfeit its selection in that time, it loses the opportunity to make its selection for the round.
- e. Teams that are unable to deliver their selection and fail to indicate a “forfeit” at the end of the selection clock time will be automatically assigned a Team time-out by the League Office, provided a Team time-out is available. If a time-out is not available and a Team fails to make or pass its selection in the allotted time, it forfeits its selection for the round.
- f. There will be a five (5) minute break after the first round, and a two (2) minute organizational break between each subsequent round.
- g. Trades must be approved by the League before they are official and announced to the public. No player names will be made public until they can be notified of the trade by their Team. The phrase “a player to be named later” will be used in those instances when a player name cannot be announced per these rules.
- h. The League may call a time--out at any time to resolve a procedural issue or for any other reason in its discretion.

3. Drafted Players

- a. Protected Period. The rights to any players selected in the NWSL Draft shall be assigned to the drafting Team’s College Protected List immediately following the Draft. Rights to players on a Team’s College Protected List are assets of the Team and may be kept, waived or traded, at the Team’s discretion during the Signing Window, as outlined below.
- b. Preseason Requirement. A drafted player shall be invited to participate in NWSL preseason training by the Team that drafted them in the season immediately following the Draft.
- c. Signing Window. A Team will have an exclusive Signing Window for a Player that it drafts during the NWSL Draft to either offer the player an SPA, trade the player’s rights to another Team, or waive the player’s rights. The Signing Window is sixty (60) days and begins on the first day the Player reports for training.
 - i. If waived, and not picked up off waivers by another Team, the player becomes discovery eligible.
 - ii. For any player whose rights were acquired by a Team via trade or waivers and has never a) signed a professional contract, and b) was selected by another Team in the NWSL Draft, the Team will have a Signing Window that begins on the date the player reports to the Team to offer an SPA, trade the player’s rights, or waive the player’s rights.
 - iii. If a player is unable to participate in training for more than ten (10) consecutive days during the Signing Window, the Signing Window will reset beginning with the first day the player is able to participate in training.
 - iv. The Team holding a Signing Window with a Player will have that Player on its College Protected List for the duration of the Signing Window.
- d. Standard Player Agreement. A player on a drafting Team’s College Protected List is not on the Team’s Roster and may not play for the Team unless and until they are offered and signs a SPA. If



a player is drafted by a Team in the Draft and the Team wants to add that player to its roster, the League will attempt to sign the player to a Standard Player Agreement (SPA) at a salary approved by the League office. There is no guarantee that a drafted player will be offered or will agree to sign a SPA with NWSL. Once a drafted player signs a SPA, NWSL will assign the player to such Team Roster and will not return to the Team's Protected List.

- e. End of Protected Period.
 - i. If a player is not offered a SPA, they will remain on the drafting Team's College Protected List through the Signing Window unless sooner waived or traded.
 - ii. Teams will retain the rights for any player whose rights were acquired via the NWSL Draft but who instead chose to sign with a non-NWSL team, until the shorter of (a) January 30 of the third year following the NWSL Draft, or (b) the term (including any option years) of the SPA offered by the NWSL Team to the player.
 - iii. Teams will retain the rights of players until January 30 of the third year following the NWSL Draft for any player whose rights were acquired by a Team via the NWSL Draft but who chose to sign with a non-NWSL team prior to the Team offering and SPA to the player.

4. Undrafted Players

- a. A player who was eligible and registered for the 2024 NWSL Draft, but is undrafted, will be discovery eligible following the conclusion of the 2024 NWSL Draft.
- b. Per NCAA legislation, undrafted players may return to school and retain their collegiate eligibility if they notify their institution's Director of Athletics within seventy-two (72) hours following the Draft. In such a case, the player would be required to register for a subsequent NWSL Draft in order to play in the League in the season following said NWSL Draft.

5. General Information

- a. Team personnel will be seated together at their assigned table.
- b. Teams should submit their pick as soon as it is prepared in order to keep the event moving. Do not hold picks until the selection clock time expires if the pick is ready prior to expiration.
- c. Selected players who are present at the NWSL Draft will be given a team scarf (distributed by the League), brought up on stage, and will proceed through a series of broadcast and media interviews.
- d. Selections will be updated on the digital draft board (screen) during the Draft and will be available in print thirty (30) minutes upon completion of the Draft following the last selection. Live results can also be found online at NWSLsoccer.com.
- e. Teams will be provided with the following at their tables: wireless internet and power, the electronic versions of the full list of eligible registrants under Section 1(a)(i) above, order of selections by round, draft card forms, trade forms, and a current roster for all NWSL Teams. Team tables should be kept neat and free of food and trash as these areas may be on the broadcast. Beverages must be kept in unbranded plastic cups.
- f. All NWSL and Team personnel should be in professional attire for the NWSL Draft broadcast. Any athletic apparel or accessories visible during the draft must be Nike or unbranded.
- g. Please contact League staff if at any time during the Draft more materials are needed or if a procedural issue or question should arise.