



## UNITED STATES WHEELCHAIR RUGBY ASSOCIATION

21 December 2021

Dear USWRA Members:

As we look forward to a new year in the coming weeks, the USWRA Executive Committee has a few items that it wishes to communicate with the membership. Please take a moment and read through what is below and share with your teammates. Thank you and Happy Holidays!

### **COVID Update**

In the most recent several days/weeks, it has become clear that COVID-19 cases are on the rise, again. We recently encountered a scenario where a team was to attend a tournament, but, at least one member of the team had a positive COVID test result, and that athlete was at a team practice within three days of the tournament. The entire team, as a result, was exposed to COVID-19. The Executive Committee met quickly to discuss the case, and decided that rather than risk the chance of widespread exposure to the other teams at the tournament, that the affected team would need to stay back and not attend the tournament. We understand that the members of the team may have been disappointed by the outcome, however, the safety and health of all the members of the league is of paramount importance. We are thankful for the diligence and transparency of the team that reported this issue, prior to a flight and attendance at a tournament. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of all teams in keeping our season going along as smoothly and as safely as possible. If you have thoughts or concerns that you wish to share with the COVID Task Force, please email [COVID@USWRA.org](mailto:COVID@USWRA.org).

### **Low-Point Team**

The Low-Point Team Staff was announced a few weeks ago, and now it is time for preliminary invitations to be sent out for tryouts for the team. \*\*\* **The Preliminary Invitations will be announced in the next 24-48hrs – Please do not petition until seeing the initial list/email.**

The [selection process](#) is located on the website and can be accessed at any time. For individuals that were not initially selected for potential invitation spots, the petition process states that:

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“Athletes may file a petition for an invitation via email [lowpoint@USWRA.org](mailto:lowpoint@USWRA.org) including: a petition letter, any video footage and/or supporting letters from team coaching staff or other members of the USWRA, who are in good standing with the league, which must be received by the USWRA Low-Point Staff by **January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**”

### **New Awards**

**Nominations** – Send to [vp1@USWRA.org](mailto:vp1@USWRA.org)

**Deadline for all awards** – MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Coach of the Year**

The Coach of the Year Award is being established by the USWRA to recognize outstanding coaches. Any coach on any active USWRA team can be nominated for this award. The nomination can focus on achievements over the last few years (i.e. helping a team improve, recruiting and developing players) but there should be an emphasis on the season an applicant is nominated. Since the teams in this league are at different stages, the roles and responsibilities of a coach vary greatly. Below are justifications that would allow a coach to be nominated. This is not an exhaustive list.

Examples of justifications for nomination:

- A coach who develops a strong rapport and has earned respect from his or her players
- A coach who has actively recruited and/or developed players
- A coach who has demonstrated regional or national leadership
- A coach who has received outstanding results and helped players outperform expectations
- A coach who has demonstrated outstanding character both within his or her team, as well as with officials and other coaches

Requirements for application:

- The nomination should not exceed 500 words.
- Submit nomination to [vp1@USWRA.org](mailto:vp1@USWRA.org) by MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Developing Player of the Year Award**

The Developing Player of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding player that is within

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their first five years of being on a rostered USWRA team. If the player took years off, only the years they played are counted. This player has demonstrated outstanding, on court, play and the potential for improvement. They should have an impact on rugby at a regional or national level and meaningfully assist their team.

### Requirements for nomination:

- Athlete must be within five years of starting the sport
- The nominee should impact the sport at a regional or national level
- The nominee should meaningfully assist team performance
- The nominee should have potential for improvement
- The nomination should not exceed 500 words.
- Submit nomination to [vp1@USWRA.org](mailto:vp1@USWRA.org) by MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Event of the Year Award

Outstanding events make player's experiences better. Regular season events are the backbone of the league. A number of factors such as support for staff, player amenities, quality table staffing, facility quality, scheduling, and support for refs and classifiers are all important components for a successful event.

### Requirements for application:

- An event can be a tournament, clinic, or camp.
- Event cannot be a postseason event.
- The nomination should not exceed 500 words.
- The event had to occur during the current season
- Submit nomination to [vp1@USWRA.org](mailto:vp1@USWRA.org) by MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Residency Violations**

While this notice impacts very few players in the league, we believe it needs to be made publicly. We have been able to identify tools that have allowed us to determine, with full confidence, that a handful of players are violating residency rules. There is categorically no question in the matter in several cases. It is not the role of the Executive Committee to determine if rules are good or bad, it is our responsibility to enforce the rules as they are written. We understand this year is a unique year as we all are excited to get back to rugby. Furthermore, the season has already begun. Any player in violation of the current

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rules who is playing with a team out of compliance with USWRA rules can contact us before the end of the season. We will discuss with them actions that can be taken in subsequent seasons, and we will be more lenient. Any player who does not elect to do this and attempts to roster with a team, out of compliance with USWRA rules next season will face aggressive and punitive consequences. Furthermore, sanctions may be levied against the team or the coaching staff if this is endemic. Again, we do not right the rules, but rules must be enforced fairly and fully. If you have questions or want to discuss this further please reach out to the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Mike Cottingham – [vp1@USWRA.org](mailto:vp1@USWRA.org).

We wish you, your friends and families a safe and healthy new year and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2022!

Best regards,

USWRA Executive Committee