



2021 NWSL Draft

1. Overview

a. Eligible Players. Teams may draft players in the annual NWSL Draft from the list of eligible players determined by the League. These players are players who have registered for the Draft and been vetted as meeting the eligibility requirements by the League.

b. NWSL Draft Order. The natural Draft order is set by taking the reverse order of the Team standings at the end of each NWSL regular season (2020 Challenge Cup preliminary stage order), with new expansion Teams (if any) at the top of the order. In the event that Teams are tied, the tie-breaking mechanism shall be as outlined in the Competition Manual.

2. Draft Process and Draft Day Procedures

a. The NWSL Draft will consist of a total of forty (40) selections made over four (4) rounds.

b. Teams will select #1-10 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.

c. To make a selection, each Team must fill out its draft card and present it to the League before the League will announce the selection.

d. Each Team may request one 5-minute time-out per round for further discussion, rule clarification, or trade discussion. 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 five-minute time-out to discuss a trade with Team B. The discussion must be completed within the five minutes; Team B may not use its time-out in order to complete the discussion or trade. At the end of the five minutes, a Team selection must be made.

e. Teams that are unable to deliver their selection 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 its selection in the allotted time, it must wait until after the next selection is made to make its selection.

f. There will be a ten (10) 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 NWSL Protected List immediately following the Draft until the end of the End of Season Process (the “Protected Period”), except as noted below. Rights to players on a Team’s NWSL Protected List are assets of the Team and may be kept, waived or traded, at the Team’s discretion during the Protected Period. If waived, and not picked up off waivers by another Team, the player becomes discovery eligible.

b. Preseason Requirement. A drafted player shall be invited to participate in NWSL preseason training by the Team that drafted her in the season immediately following the Draft.



c. **Standard Player Agreement.** A player on a drafting Team's NWSL Protected List is not on the Team's Roster and may not play for the Team unless and until she is 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). 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. If a player is not offered a SPA, she will remain on the drafting Team's NWSL Protected List through the Protected Period unless sooner waived or traded. If a player is offered a SPA during the Protected Period but does not sign it, or chooses not to attend pre-season training once invited, she shall remain on her drafting Team's NWSL Protected List until the beginning of the following season's preseason.

d. **End of Protected Period.**

- i. A player not offered a SPA, and not traded or waived will process through the End of Season Process and if unclaimed will become discovery eligible.
- ii. A player who is offered a SPA but does not sign it, or chooses not to attend pre-season training once invited, will become discovery eligible on the first day of the following season's preseason.

NOTE: A Team claiming a player off waivers assumes the player's existing contract but may renegotiate with the player. If the player does not have a current SPA, the Team claiming the player must submit a PAF within fourteen (14) days or the player will be waived.

4. Undrafted Players

a. **Undrafted Players.** A player who was eligible and registered for the NWSL Draft, but is undrafted, will be discovery-eligible on the day following the completion of the relevant Draft.

5. General Information

- a. Team personnel must be seated and socially distanced according to local health guidelines.
- b. The League will assign specific positions for the virtual draft, which must be staffed by pre-identified and League-approved Team personnel.
- c. 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.
- d. Selected players will be contacted by a League representative to coordinate a remote interview for the draft broadcast. Selections will be updated and available on Box thirty (30) minutes following completion of the final selection in the Draft. Results can also be found online at NWSLsoccer.com.
- e. There will be a standing media Zoom call moderated by a League representative where draftees will be available for interviews following their selection. More information to follow. Please contact the NWSL Director of Communications for additional requests.
- f. Teams will be emailed the following: the full list of eligible registrants, order of selections by round, draft cards, 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 plastic cups to be provided at the event.
- g. All NWSL and Team personnel should be in professional attire for the NWSL Draft broadcast.