

## **GHSWPA – Gender Separation Phase-In Plan (February 2022)**

This document is to outline policy revisions to the current GHSWPA co-ed rostering rules to move in the direction of separating men's and women's play for safety & liability reasons, while also promoting competitive play and growth in the Women's division.

The ultimate goal is to completely prohibit co-ed play. Given the hardship that may create in the interim for newly formed and smaller existing teams, a phased-in approach is proposed.

### Fall 2022

**A. If a GHSWPA club (new, proposed, or existing) has a women's team, all female players from that club must play on that club's women's team. Those players may not simultaneously roster to another team in any division of the league.**

**B. If a GHSWPA club does not have a women's team, all that club's female players wishing to play GHSWPA water polo may do one of the following:**

- 1. Start a brand new women's team in the Women's Division, either as a competition team or exhibition only. (Creation of a new women's team is the Board's preferred outcome)**
- 2. Or, play for another team in the Women's Division, following GHSWPA's "geography rule" then in effect. (For example, in 2022 a player brand new to water polo can choose which team to join, but an experienced player must play for their school girls team, or if none, a girls team in their county of residence, or if none, the closest girls team. This will prevent an existing women's team from recruiting for competitive advantage.)**

The GHSWPA Board will consider allowing an experienced female player to join an existing women's team other than indicated by the geography rule if that team, in the opinion of the Board, is in dire need of players in order to be viable. A geography rule petition should be submitted to request that exception.

### Phase-In

For **existing** GHSWPA clubs without a separate women's team, there will be a 1 season phase-in period, during which that club's females may play for their club's men's team, but only if

necessary to create a viable team. If the team is viable without the use of female players, every effort should be made to start a new women's team or support an existing women's team until a new women's team can be created. A team playing with females under this phase-in exception may only play in the Intermediate or Developmental divisions.

For clubs without a separate women's team which are **new** to GHSWPA (or returning to GHSWPA after a hiatus of one season or more), there will be a 2 year phase in period during which that club's female players may play for their club's men's team. Such teams must play in either the Developmental or Intermediate division to use this phase-in exception.

### Double Rostering

Under a compromise proposed by Julie Ferris of Spartans Water Polo and adopted by the Board for the Fall 2021 season, female players utilizing the phase-in period to play for their club's Men's team shall have the option to double roster to a Women's division team, consistent with the Geography Rule. This exception (to allow double rostering) will apply only to female players during the team's phase-in period.