



## Why are we raising the minimum age in the Open division to 18?

We've listened carefully to the USASF All Star community to understand a range of viewpoints as well as assess qualitative and quantitative data.

This includes:

- gathering data from the rules proposal survey in which a majority of voting-eligible members favored raising the minimum age of Open divisions to 18 years old;
- listening to many current and former athletes and coaches who shared their experiences and concerns about teams with younger athletes;
- hearing from several Clubs that believe the existing Open Age Grid is working for them;
- assessing reports against adult members of USASF which underscored a clear commonality across situations; and
- understanding that athletes who graduate high school at 17, 18, or 19 years old want to continue in All Star with college-age peers and adults.

We are driven by our members' needs, and they said we need to do more. We work diligently to enhance our sport based on accurate information and consultation with professionals and experts so that we help move All Star forward with safety at the forefront while continuing to promote the growth of Clubs and All Star. We ultimately want both safety and growth, but when those goals collide, the safety of athletes will always come first.

While public perception is often based on media coverage, we collect valuable information from brave survivors, their families, and experts to guide our decisions. We monitor this data for patterns of unacceptable behaviors and it informs our recommendations designed to help deter unsafe situations. We know these changes may be difficult or unwelcome for some, but we intend to maintain a place for every athlete in the Senior, U18, or Open divisions at Worlds.

This is neither an easy nor perfect solution nor ideal timing. We understand there may be business and competitive implications; we do not take those lightly. We aim to help create a better place for recent high school graduates to continue their love of All Star while allowing our high-school-age athletes to compete with school-age peers. For the 2023-2024 season, we will be requiring all **Open age athletes to be 18 or older on or before May 31, 2024**. This aligns with the current Adult Athlete Policy which requires adult athlete abuse prevention education and background checks. As with all divisions, we will reevaluate any additional adjustments needed for the 2024-2025 season during the annual review before the season begins.