



Wrestlers WithOut Borders (WWB) GGs9 Pairings Process (generic/final 09.11.2014)

Mission and Philosphy:

1. DEFINITIONS:

Unique Medal Events (UMEs) are the exact Gender, Age, & Weight categories that a FreeStyle and/or Grappling competitor qualifies for after weigh-in verifications. **UMEs** are the advertised legally binding registration categories for which **Gay Games (GGs)** Gold/Silver/Bronze Medals are awarded.

'**Collapsing**' is a term used to describe the 'creative' mix & match of competitive brackets and bouts that combines different genders, ages, weights in order for there to be an event. **Fédération Internationale de Lutte Amateur (FILA)** of Laussane Switerland through local organizations like **USA Wrestling** dictates the legal parameters for safely '**Collapsing**' categories because they supply the sanctioning, insurance, and officials.

'**Contested**' means that a bracket has 2 or more competitors.

'**UnContested**' means that a bracket has only 1 competitor.

2. **NOT THE OLYMPICS:** The GGs is **NOT** the **Olympics** per a **Supreme Court of the USA (SCOTUS)** decision back in the '80s. Any *comparison* on any level of the GGs to the **Olympics** does a disservice to both events. Actual use of the term '**Gay Olympics**' is illegal in the USA, and there are branding issues affected by the **Federation of Gay Games (FGG)/United States Olympic Committee (USOC)** agreement that resolved the dispute. A highly charged emotional/political use of the term is not just illegal, it is irrelevant and counterproductive given the positive progress that has been achieved since the '80s.
3. **NO QUALIFYING DATA:** We do not have **ANY** skill/experience seeding information other than what is supplied by the competitors in the pre-tournament surveys from which **WWB** builds preliminary brackets and pair bouts (nb: this is empirical data!). There are no qualifying events and no records other than previous **GGs** and **WWB** tournaments. Therefore **COMPETITOR SAFETY** is the governing principle that will override all other concerns.
4. **PERSONAL GOALS:** The goals of the **Gay Games** competitors are not all the same. Some registrants are very elite athletes, some are novices who have never competed, most are somewhere in the middle. However all are welcome under the **GGs** Mission/Mantra of '**Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best**'. Therefore parings are to say the least challenging as they are for any mainstream tournament that tries to use some skill level data in constructing brackets. The process **WWB** used in **GGs9** Cleveland was similar to what **WWB** did at smaller **WWB** FreeStyle tournaments, which has decades of experience putting on exciting, competitive, and **SAFE** tournaments whenever the registration #s are not enough to justify a standard **UME** tournament. San Francisco'82 &'86 ran strictly **UME** brackets. NY'94, Sydney'02, and Chicago'06 had sufficient registration #s to run a strictly **UME** event. However Vancouver'90, Amsterdam'98, and Koeln'10 did have to resort to '**collapsing**' into exhibitions (**EXH**) in order to give competitors enough matches after the **UMEs**. Remember there are no Belt Skill level designations in FreeStyle as there are with Grappling. The '**Collapsing**' exhibition method (**EXH**) is not new or unfamiliar to FreeStyle and Grappling competitors. However the **EXH** collapsing method has become more important and acceptable in Grappling as it is more common in their tournaments.

5. **EVENT MISSION:** The **GGs** was not designed to be another elite competition to compete with the **Olympics** and other **FILA/USAW/NAGA etc..** events. The **GGs** was designed to create a critical mass of diverse LGBT athletes every 4 years to celebrate their chosen sport in a safe and welcoming atmosphere. Therefore this **Pairings Process** focuses primarily on the non-elite competitors, and expects the elite athletes to support the event by participating, mentoring, coaching, and engaging the novices. Accepting the 'Exhibition Bout' (**EXH**) mechanism plays a huge part in this. The elite athletes have this seriously explicit *responsibility* to the novices, the tournament, **GGs**, and the LGBT community... i.e... to insure that the competitive experience for everyone is a safe and memorable one. We all know the power of becoming a member of the wrestler/grappler cult: enhanced self-esteem, personal satisfaction, self-discipline, humility, and a serious sense of belonging to a 'family'. Everyone deserves a chance at that and **GGs** is one of those powerful egalitarian vehicles. So if your personal motivations are not quite in sync with this philosophy, and/or you have a problem with this *Pairings Process*, then please contact one of the **WWB** people ASAP, **as GGs FreeStyle/Grappling may not be the best event for you!**
6. **RELAX, have fun, and do not take it all too seriously... Paris '18 is just around the corner.**

Pairings Process Flow:

This schedule (starting on a MONDAY) is what has been used since **GGs5'94**. The reasoning was always driven by having a very small short event early in the week to accommodate cutting weight, having the fewest # of required normal work days to compete, and getting officials. After **GGs9**, **WWB** is considering recommending that our event start on **SUNDAY instead of MONDAY** and only consume 2 work days instead of 3.

1. **~2 weeks before tournament:** The first draft of the subscribed **UME** categories per the **WWB Survey Monkey Data** will be published sans Names... i.e... the raw gender/age/weight categories #s that would comprise the Gold/Silver/Bronze **UME** brackets for the (**UMEs**). These #s are strictly informational since we have not yet verified your gender/age/weight. It is imperative that we have accurate/current data from the competitors at various intervals during the lead up to **GGs!**
2. **Sunday Clinic/Weigh-Ins/etc...:**
 - a. 10:00am accreditation verification (age/gender/licenses), skin checks, and initial weigh-ins
 - b. ~12:00pm Noon (after rules clinic) a re-posting of the *raw verified UME* categories per #1 above
 - c. 4:00pm late weigh-ins
 - d. 4:30pm (or anytime during the day) submit private request (note) to move up a weight class and/or down an age group. **You get ONE CONFIDENTIAL CHANCE at this.** *This status/designation then becomes the official UME category of the competitor for BOTH FreeStyle and Grappling.*
 - e. 5pm Posting of the official **UME** and exhibition FreeStyle (**EXH**) brackets
 - f. Creation of official bout sheets for Monday/FreeStyle
3. **Monday Freestyle Tournament:**
 - a. The **UMEs** categories must be formally competed for first for **UME** Gold/Silver/Bronze... An opt out is a Forfeit/Loss. If the **UME** is '**UnContested**', then the competitor will be required to compete in the **EXH** brackets in order to collect their **UME** medal.
 - b. The assigned exhibitions (**EXH**) may be opted out of by either competitor, and new one off single nonbracketed exhibitions dynamically requested.
 - c. If a competitor wins a medal in **UME** and in **EXH**, he will be awarded the higher of the 2 medals (not 2 separate medals)
 - d. The Grappling brackets will be posted during the day
 - e. Creation of the bout sheets for Tuesday/Grappling
4. **Tuesday Grappling Tournament:**
 - a. Same as #3a -> #3c above