

## 2023 USA Ultimate College Guidelines

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### I. **2023 USA Ultimate College Season Overview**

#### A. **USA Ultimate College Regular Season Overview**

1. **Timeline** – The official USA Ultimate College Regular Season will run from January 1, 2023 through April 2, 2023.
2. **Regular Season Games** -- The results of games between rostered college teams at USA Ultimate-sanctioned College Regular Season events will count towards the Official USA Ultimate College Rankings. USA Ultimate-sanctioned College Regular Season event organizers will be responsible for submitting or verifying the results of games between rostered college teams at their events through USA Ultimate’s online score reporting system.

3. Eligibility and Roster Verification – College teams at USA Ultimate-sanctioned Regular Season events will be required to submit their roster of participating players to the event organizer through the USA Ultimate online rostering system by 5:00pm Wednesday before the event. College teams participating in regular season games will be expected to do so only with players who meet, or who will meet, the [USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules](#) for the USA Ultimate College Series.
4. Minimum Requirements – Teams will need to have participated in a minimum of 10 regular season games to be included in the Official USA Ultimate College Rankings and impact bid allocation.
5. College Series Requirements – Participation in the USA Ultimate College Regular Season is not a prerequisite for USA Ultimate College Series participation.
6. Official USA Ultimate College Rankings -- Following their initial release, the rankings will be updated weekly throughout the USA Ultimate College Regular Season, after which the results will be used to determine strength bid allocations for Conferences to Regionals, and for Regions to the USA Ultimate College Championships. For Division III eligible schools, the rankings algorithm will also be used to determine strength bid allocations to D-III Regionals and the USA Ultimate Division III College Championships. Should a Division III team that factored into the strength bid allocation process subsequently choose to pursue Division I regionals, the associated bid will be reallocated based on the waitlist.

## B. USA Ultimate College Series Overview

1. Timeline – The USA Ultimate College Series will run from April 15, 2023 through May 29, 2023.
  - a. Conference Championships – April 15-16, or April 22-23
  - b. Regional Championships – April 29-30 or May 6-7
  - c. National Championships – Division III: May 20-22. Division I: May 26-29
2. Registrar Roster Deadline – Teams that wish to participate in the USA Ultimate College Series will need to use the [online rostering system](#) to create their Series Roster which they will need to give to their school registrar. This registrar-certified 2023 USA Ultimate College Series roster and registrar instruction form must arrive at USA Ultimate Headquarters by the 5pm MT Friday March 3, 2023 Roster Deadline in order for that team to participate in the 2023 USA Ultimate College Series. College Series registrar rosters can arrive via email.
3. Conferences Team Registration Deadline – The deadline to register your team for Conference Championships is Monday, March 27, 2023.
4. College Series “Event Roster” Deadline – The deadline to add players to your Conferences “event roster” is Wednesday, April 5. **The conference championship roster is the final roster for the entire College Series. If an athlete is potentially participating in regionals or the College Championships, but is unavailable during the conference championships, they MUST still appear on the conference championship roster.** You will not be allowed to add any players to your “event roster” after Conferences and prior to Regionals or Nationals.
5. Series Progression – Every team that meets the Roster Deadline will begin the series at their Conference Championship. Based upon the results of the Conferences, qualifying teams will advance to a Regional Championship. Based upon the results of Regionals, qualifying teams will advance to the USA Ultimate College Championships.

6. Bid allocation from Conferences to Regionals includes a combination of automatic bids (1 for each D-I and D-III conference) and strength bids (based on end-of-season official USA Ultimate College Rankings). Only D-III Conferences and teams in D-III Conferences are eligible to earn and compete for bids to D-III Regionals (where offered). Bid allocation for Regions to the USA Ultimate College Championships (Division I) includes a combination of 10 automatic bids (1 per Region) and 10 strength bids (based on end-of-season official USA Ultimate College Rankings).
7. Bid allocation from Regionals to the USA Ultimate Division I College Championships includes a combination of 10 automatic bids (1 per Region), and 10 strength bids.
8. Bid allocation for Regions to the USA Ultimate Division III College Championships includes a combination of 10 automatic bids (1 per Region) and 6 strength bids (based on end-of-season official USA Ultimate College Rankings). If a Division III team that has factored into the strength bid allocation process for its D-III region and subsequently chooses to pursue the D-I route, this strength bid will be reallocated to the region with the next highest ranked team.

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## II. USA Ultimate College Regular Season Guidelines

### A. **Regular Season Registration Guidelines**

#### 1. Official USA Ultimate College Regular Season Events

- a. Official college games (i.e. which rostered college teams play one another) may only take place at USA Ultimate-sanctioned events. These events may be college-specific events, events where there is a college division, or at non-college events where any two rostered college teams play one another. USA Ultimate sanctioned competitive events will be listed on the online USA Ultimate event calendar.
- b. The results of games between rostered college teams at USA Ultimate-sanctioned events will be utilized for College Series seeding purposes, provided that both teams' rosters pass the regular season eligibility check (see. II.A.4).

#### 2. Sanctioned Event Requirements

- a. College teams attending these events will be required to:
  - i. Use the online rostering system to submit their roster of participating players for that event to the event organizer. The deadline for this is 5pm MT the Wednesday before the event.
  - ii. Play only with players from their online roster for that event.
  - iii. Include on their roster for the event only players who meet, or who will meet, the [USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules](#) for the USA Ultimate College Series. **Any player who is on a regular season roster for a team must also be on that team's registrar certified roster in order to allow for eligibility verification, which is required for the results of the regular season event to count towards the Official Rankings.**
  - iv. Players are required to have full College-level memberships, or the equivalent thereto, in order to participate in sanctioned regular season events.
- b. USA Ultimate-sanctioned event organizers will be required to:

- i. Provide teams in attendance with access to the rosters of all college teams in attendance in order to aid with peer-policing of rosters.
  - ii. Submit or verify the results of games between rostered college teams through the USA Ultimate's online score reporting system.
  - iii. Comply with all requirements for USA Ultimate-sanctioned event organizers outlined in the [USA Ultimate-sanctioned event](#) agreement.
- c. USA Ultimate approved non-consortium combined teams are permitted to play in college regular season events. Such teams consisting of athletes attending schools have not participated as independent teams in the college season for the previous two seasons. These programs are only allowed to participate in regular season events, and must have their roster approved by USA Ultimate in advance of any event they will participate in. All rostered players must comply with the academic and participation eligibility sections of the [USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules](#) with respect to the school they attend.
  - i. When such teams participate in an event, the event organizer must email all participants in the event to inform them that these teams are participating and that no games against such teams will be considered for College Series seeding.
- d. Only if the following circumstances have been met, will event organizers be allowed to admit non-college teams into their events:
  - i. Such teams are high school teams or alumni teams of the school hosting the event.
  - ii. There are no college teams on the waiting list for the event.
  - iii. The event organizer emails all participants in the event to inform them that these non-college teams are participating in the event, and that no games against such teams will be considered for College Series seeding purposes.

### 3. Regular Season Eligibility

- a. College teams participating in regular season games will be expected to do so only with players who meet, or who will meet, the [USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules](#) for the 2023 USA Ultimate College Series.
- b. Teams' registrar-certified rosters, submitted to the USA Ultimate in order to register for the USA Ultimate College Series, will be cross-checked against teams' online rosters from regular season events.
- c. Only game results from events where a team's online roster included only USA Ultimate-eligibility-verified players on their registrar-certified roster will be considered for College Series seeding purposes. USA Ultimate eligibility verification includes not only verification of required academic status through the school's registrar, but also adherence to all aspects of the USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules.
- d. Quarter-system schools – Teams from schools on the quarter system will be held to the same standard as all other teams competing in the Official USA Ultimate Regular Season. Quarter-system schools may be eligible for team registration deadline extensions when registering their roster for the USA Ultimate College Series.
- e. Teams that are found to have violated the letter or spirit of these rules or whose behavior undermines the competition structure (e.g. misrepresenting the composition of a team at a specific event,

misrepresenting the composition of a team over the course of the season, intentionally playing with ineligible players, etc.) may be subject to ramifications as outlined in the USA Ultimate College Season Guidelines section, “Violations and Sanctions”. Roster violations should be reported to [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org).

4. Gender Division Eligibility – In their USA Ultimate membership account, every athlete should select the gender identity option that best aligns with their gender identity. When registering for a USA Ultimate sanctioned or championship series event, athletes should select to participate in the division in which they feel most comfortable and safe based on their indicated gender identity. *Note: For those who select Prefer to Self-Report, there will be a fill-in option to provide any additional information regarding your gender identity. This is for internal educational purposes only and will not be shared.*
  - a. Players who select Man (cis or trans) as their gender identity option are eligible to compete in men’s divisions or as a man-matching player in mixed divisions.
  - b. Players who select Woman (cis or trans) as their gender identity option are eligible to compete in men’s or women’s divisions, or as a woman-matching player in mixed divisions.
  - c. Players who select the Non-Binary or Prefer to Self-Report gender identity option are eligible to compete in the division in which they feel most comfortable and safe, as per USA Ultimate’s Gender Inclusion Policy.
5. Retroactive Roster Issues
  - a. If a team plays with a legitimate roster against a college team that is determined after the fact to have not had a roster of eligible players at that event, the game results won’t impact College Series seeding.
  - b. If a team has a player who becomes academically ineligible mid-way through the season, games prior to the player becoming ineligible may still count for College Series seeding, provided that this can be established definitively by the team. Such situations should be brought to the attention of [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org) prior to the end of the regular season.
6. Rankings Algorithm
  - a. The algorithm in use will be the latest version of the [Top 25 algorithm \(revised in 2018\)](#).
  - b. The algorithm will be run and published weekly starting in March, although all rankings are tentative pending eligibility verification. At the end of the regular season, adjustments as to which game results will count will be made and the final rankings will be published.
  - c. Teams will need to have participated in a minimum of 10 regular season games to be included in the final Official USA Ultimate College Rankings and impact bid allocation. Participation in the USA Ultimate College Regular Season is not a prerequisite for USA Ultimate College Series participation.
  - d. If a team plays with a legitimate roster against a college team that is determined after the fact to have not had a roster of eligible players at that event, the game will count towards the eligible team’s 10 game minimum, although the game result won’t impact the rankings algorithm.
  - e. If a team has a player who becomes academically ineligible mid-way through the season, games prior to the player becoming ineligible may still count, provided that this can be established definitively by the team. Such situations should be brought to the attention of USA Ultimate Headquarters ([ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org)) prior to the end of the regular season.
7. Clarifications and exceptions

a. X/Y teams / split squads – A team is not allowed to split into two separate teams for the purpose of participating in the same tournament together or at separate tournaments occurring at the same time. If a team is splitting for the purpose of try outs, the alternative would be to utilize an A/B/C team structure. If a tournament is in need of another team, the tournament organizer must find an additional team rather than split an existing team into multiple teams.

b. A/B/C team movement – Player eligibility for all teams from a school will be verified without respect to A/B/C team affiliation, in order to allow teams to make final A/B/C team determinations until Monday, March 27. Reasonable movement of such players during the regular season is acceptable. However, deliberate mis-designation of a group of players at an event will be considered a roster violation and may be subject to ramifications as outlined in the section, “Violations and Sanctions”. If such deliberate mis-designation of players is discovered, USA Ultimate reserves the right to assign a game result to whichever team it deems appropriate.

## B. **Regular Season Competition Guidelines**

1. Event formats, game rules, seeding, and use of Observers are all at the discretion of the regular season event organizers, provided they meet event guidelines outlined in the USA Ultimate sanctioned-event agreement. Note that only USA Ultimate certified Observers may be used at USA Ultimate-sanctioned events as outlined in the "Observer" section of these guidelines.
2. In order for USAU ultimate-sanctioned events to have their results count:
  - a. The competition rules must designate the number of players on the field for a team to be 7.
  - b. Each game must be, at minimum, to 11 points and 60 minutes in length.
    - i. Games that are suspended due to inclement weather or other unavoidable reason will be counted only if a team has reached at least half the minimum point total or half the minimum game length.
3. Sanctioned Match Play – Individual games may be sanctioned at the discretion of USA Ultimate in order to provide flexibility for teams in planning their seasons and scheduling playing opportunities. [Click here](#) for more information on event sanctioning and requirements.
4. USA Ultimate reserves the right to disallow regular season results for reasons not outlined in these guidelines, if they are determined not to be in line with the goals of the USA Ultimate College Season or the mission and policies of USA Ultimate.
5. USA Ultimate-sanctioned College Regular Season event organizers will be responsible for submitting or verifying the results of games between rostered college teams at their events through USA Ultimate’s online score reporting system.
6. Forfeit Rule (Regular Season) – As a general rule, USA Ultimate prohibits the forfeiting of scheduled games during the regular season. Teams are expected to play out their entire schedule of games at events they have chosen to enter. The competition format of an event and the season as a whole rely on scheduled games being played.
  - a. Any team that declines to finish a scheduled game or games, plays in a manner indicative of intent to lose or attempts to decide a match by any manner other than playing ultimate on the field will forfeit those games and all following games in the tournament. Should both teams in a match choose not to play, then it will be considered a double forfeit.

- b. A team will be considered to have forfeited any game where the number of players that can safely participate falls below the minimum requirement set by the competition minimums below.
- c. Teams that withdraw from an event 7 days or less of the event without approval from the Tournament Director and USAU HQ may be subject to the sanctions described in Part e. In the event of a withdrawal, Tournament Directors or teams negatively impacted by the withdrawal can report a violation to USA Ultimate HQ ([ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org) or [leah@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:leah@hq.usultimate.org)).
- d. Exceptions - The safety of athletes is a top priority and must be considered when determining whether a game should be played and under what conditions. This includes following COVID-19 protocols, contact tracing, and adherence to both university and location safety regulations.
- e. Sanctions - USA Ultimate reserves the right to sanction teams that forfeit games during the regular season (examples include disqualification from season and/or series, bid allocation penalties, team and/or player/coach suspensions). Game forfeits will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

### III. USA Ultimate College Series Guidelines

#### A. USA Ultimate College Series Registration Guidelines

1. Team Info - All teams must submit a registrar-certified 2023 USA Ultimate College Series roster and registrar instruction form by March 3, 2023. USA Ultimate membership dues and individual waivers must also be submitted by the deadline to add players to your Conference event roster, although due to the processing time, it is advisable to submit membership dues and waivers with the roster prior to the March 3 Roster Deadline to ensure that players are listed as paid and waived in time for the Series.
  - a. Roster Deadline: 5pm MT, Friday, March 3, 2023:
    - i. Registrar-certified roster **and signed** registrar instruction form must be **received**, not postmarked, at USA Ultimate Headquarters by **5pm MT March 3, 2023**. (Note: it may take your registrar several weeks to process these materials, so turn them in as early as possible in the spring).
    - ii. The registrar or an employed school official may email the registrar roster (with the cover page and signed instructions) to [collegerosters@usultimate.org](mailto:collegerosters@usultimate.org). **Verified rosters emailed by student athletes will not be accepted.**
    - iii. Rosters not emailed by school staff will be required to be mailed to USA Ultimate at the following address:

College Series Roster  
USA Ultimate  
5825 Delmonico Drive, Suite 370  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
    - iv. A valid roster consists of at least 10 players. There is no maximum roster limit. Teams registered with fewer than 10 players at the Roster Deadline must follow the late registration process in order to play in the Series.
    - v. **D-III teams will be required to decide their path through the Series upon submitting their Series roster.** This is accomplished by including their route choice with their submitted roster materials. If a team wishes to alter their decision, they must submit a written request to [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org) by Monday, March 27.

- vi. **Teams may not be allowed to participate in the series if their roster materials do not arrive at USA Ultimate by the Roster Deadline.** If your roster will not be received at USA Ultimate HQ by the 5pm MT, March 3 deadline, please contact [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org).
- vii. Any player who is on a regular season roster for a team must also be on that team's registrar certified roster in order to allow for eligibility verification, which is required for the results of the regular season event to count towards the Official Rankings.
- b. Roster Additions:
- i. Late Team Registration – A team that has missed the March 3 Registration Deadline may apply to participate in the 2023 USA Ultimate Series by contacting [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org). At this time teams will be required to submit a letter detailing the reason for late registration as well as a final roster for the 2023 College Series. If allowed to participate in the College Series, teams will be expected to accept Administrative Probation for a period of one year and these teams will be required to pay a late registration fee and potentially an administrative fee to roster for the College Series.
- ii. Individual Roster Additions – If a player has been accidentally omitted from a team roster or requires additional clarification after the roster deadline, please resubmit a roster with the updated players names added. Please note that this process is not for teams that missed the Roster Deadline; this only applies to individual players who require additional clarification (i.e. a player who is on the registrar-verified roster, but due to registrar error, was not signed off on properly) or who are omitted from a team roster that has otherwise been properly submitted. The deadline for submitting a Player Appeal Form (including registrar-verified materials or any other requested documentation) is **5pm MT Friday March 10, 2023** (received at headquarters, not postmarked, by 5pm MT March 10). Appeals for late or incorrect registration of players may or may not be granted. Fees and/or fines may be associated with certain appeals. **After this deadline, no players can be added to a registrar roster for the remainder of the Series.**
- iii. Quarter School Conflict Extension – Quarter Schools should submit a registrar roster with their entire team by March 3. However, if you have students only academically eligible for the Fall+Spring or Winter+Spring quarters, please email [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org) by March 3 to request an extension for those students only. Please include the team contact, school name, and URL of the school calendar in your email.
- c. Conferences Registration Deadlines:
- i. The deadline to register your team for Conference Championships is **Monday, March 27, 2023**. This applies to both semester schools and quarter schools. **Teams may not be allowed to participate in the Series if they are not registered by this deadline.** Events will be [online](#) in mid- to late-February.
- ii. The deadline to add players to your Conferences “event roster” is **Wednesday, April 5**. This “event roster” will lock for the entirety of the College Series. Teams will not be allowed to add players to their Regionals or Nationals roster after this date.
- d. Registration clarifications and exceptions:
- i. A and B teams -- Programs should submit registrar rosters for A and B (and C, D, etc.) teams. Teams wishing to move Registrar-cleared players between team rosters (A to B, B to C, etc) need to make the change in the online roster system prior to Monday, March 27, 2023.
- ii. Canadian Teams -- Canadian schools must also have their players' eligibility approved via Ultimate Canada in accordance with the [college eligibility rules](#). Official Ultimate Canada Start Dates

must be provided to USA Ultimate Headquarters. Please contact [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org) for further instructions.

iii. All teams should contact their [Conference Coordinator](#) at least one month prior to the Conference Championship to confirm with the coordinator that they intend to participate (or any other deadline as set and communicated to the teams by the coordinator)

e. Registrar certification clarifications and exceptions:

i. The USA Ultimate College Championship Series roster and registrar instruction form provided through the USA Ultimate website are the only forms teams can use for participation in the Series.

ii. Individual certifications -- if your school issues individual student certifications instead of certifying the entire roster:

- teams are responsible to make sure each individual certification includes **hours enrolled** and **degree program**
- for schools on the quarter-system, verification of enrollment in two of the three quarters (fall, winter, spring) must be included.
- teams are responsible for making sure an individual certification is included for each player on their online roster
- teams must include a printed copy of their uncertified roster PDF generated via online rostering
- due to the longer processing time for these materials, such teams are encouraged to register as early as possible

iii. Teams should make a copy of their roster prior to mailing it to USA Ultimate Headquarters for their records. This copy should be brought to the Conference Championships in case it needs to be referenced.

2. Player Info –

a. All players participating on a team for any and all Series events must be listed on the team roster.

b. All players listed on the roster must be current [USA Ultimate members](#) in good standing. Non-members must purchase an appropriate college-level membership and sign the individual waiver form prior to being rostered for their Conference Championship by Wednesday, April 5 in order to be eligible to play in any portion of the Series.

c. All USA Ultimate members must sign an individual waiver form for the calendar year prior to being rostered. Players may sign the waiver through their online member account page.

d. Players may appear on only one event roster for the Series and may not switch teams for any portion of the Series. This rule also applies to A and B teams from the same school.

e. All players on the team must meet the player requirements AND the team must meet the team requirements of the [USA Ultimate College Eligibility Rules](#) throughout the entire College Series.

i. USA Ultimate reserves the right to use additional relevant information, should it become available, in a fair and consistent manner to ensure player and team eligibility standards are met throughout the Series.

ii. Player eligibility status may be re-checked at any point prior to, during, or following the Series. Rosters will be randomly re-verified with school Registrar offices following each stage of the Series (Conference Championships, Regionals, USA Ultimate Championships).

f. Failure to abide by any of the above rules may result in ramifications outlined in the section, "Violations and Sanctions."

3. Minor (Under 18) Player Info – Minors participating in the Series must have the appropriate forms completed prior to participation (waiver, medical release) and meet the [chaperone requirement](#). A copy of the chaperone form must be included with the roster. The [medical release form](#) is the responsibility of the chaperone; it must be brought to each Series event and kept on hand by the chaperone. This form will allow medical personnel to treat an injured minor without a parent/guardian having to be present.

## B. USA Ultimate College Series Competition Guidelines

1. Spirit of the Game – Ultimate has traditionally relied upon a spirit of sportsmanship which places the responsibility for fair play on the players themselves. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of the bond of mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules of the game, or the basic joy of play. Protection of these vital elements serves to eliminate adverse conduct from the Ultimate field. Such actions as taunting of opposing players, dangerous aggression, intentional fouling, or other 'win at all costs' behavior are contrary to the Spirit of the Game and must be avoided by all players. Spirit of the Game sets Ultimate apart from other competitive team sports. The organizational challenge for the USA Ultimate is to foster an environment where the challenge does not become, "to see what I can get away with". For 40 years, Ultimate has flourished, reaching a highly competitive level, without the use of referees. In Ultimate, the honor system works. Sure, human nature rears its ugly head from time to time - just as in any sport, just as in life. Yet, one of the many beauties of Ultimate is how, even amid the most difficult of situations, utmost graciousness is allowed to meet that challenge head on. Through this balance, Ultimate players are free to demonstrate the most honorable and the most joyous sides of human nature in sport.
2. Player Minimums: USAU College Series Events set specific player minimum requirements for as defined below:

Registration Minimums: Whether a team can officially register for an event. For Series Events: 10 players

Competition Minimums: Whether a team can continue to compete safely at an event. For Series Events: 7 players to start, 6 to continue playing. Fewer than 6 is a forfeit.

### 3. Conference Championships

a. Conference Participation -- Any team may participate in Conference Championships provided they have met the team and player requirements for participation. There is no additional qualifying process for the first level of the USA Ultimate College Series.

b. Conference Assignment -- Teams will be [placed into one of three types of Conferences](#): D-I Conference, D-III Conference (limited to schools with <7500 enrollment), or a Developmental Conference (limited to 2nd/3rd/etc teams from a given school; see v. below for potential exception).

i. In Regions without D-III Conferences (i.e. regions with just one D-III team), the D-III teams in that region will be placed into the appropriate D-I Conference. D-III teams that earned their Region's bid to D-III Nationals may still participate in the D-I Conference event, however if they earn a bid to D-I Regionals, they will need to decide at that time whether they will take either the D-I Regionals bid or D-III Nationals bid.

ii. In Regions without Developmental Conferences, the Developmental teams in that region will be placed into the appropriate D-I or D-III (if available) Conferences, depending on the size of the school they are from.

- iii. Developmental Conferences events will be determined between the March 3 roster deadline and the March 27 team registration deadline.
  - iv. D-III Conference schools that have qualified for the D-I College Championships in any of the prior 4 years will be placed into a D-I Conference by default and thus, in regions where there are D-III Conferences, will not be eligible for the D-III postseason. Those schools may apply by March 3, 2023 to stay in a D-III Conference if that is their preference. In the case where a D-III school has their 1st team in a D-I Conference, the 2nd team from a school may apply (by March 3, 2023) to be placed into a D-III Conference instead of a Developmental Conference. To apply, email your request to [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org).
  - v. Notwithstanding section iii above, a D-III team can choose to participate at their D-I conference championship event if they have participated at their D-I regional championship for each of the previous three years. To apply to be placed into a D-I conference, the team must apply before the beginning of the college regular season. To apply, email your request to [ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org).
  - vi. Once a D-III team opts out of their D-I path earned through participating at their D-I regional championship, the team will return to its D-III Conference, and will need to re-qualify for D-I Championships in order to be again be eligible for the 4-year window in part B.3.a.iv. above.
  - vii. If a team last participated in the Series in 2019 or earlier, that team is eligible to participate in their respective Developmental Conference for the current season only. This division switch requires approval from the College Manager and National Developmental College Coordinator. Teams must apply by March 3 to be considered for the current season. To apply, email your request to [ndevcc@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ndevcc@hq.usultimate.org).
- c. Conference Size -- Conferences are targeted to be between 4 and 14 teams.
- i. As new teams form, they will be added to existing Conferences based upon the type of team and/or size of school. When a Conference has more than 14 or fewer than 4 teams participating in a given year, it may be split or reorganized the following year to keep all the conferences in the 4-14 team range.
  - ii. If fewer than 4 teams in a Conference register for the series in a given year, those teams may be migrated to another Conference for that year's series at the discretion of USA Ultimate.
- d. Alternate Deadlines -- USA Ultimate Conference Coordinators and/or Tournament Directors may impose a deadline by which teams must decide whether they will attend the tournament. This deadline may be associated with submission of a tournament entry fee. Tournament Directors may keep entry fees from teams that pull out of the tournament beyond a certain date, provided that date (it cannot be before the USA Ultimate Conferences Registration deadline, for instance) and the fee are reasonable, were approved by the event's USA Ultimate coordinator, and were communicated to the teams ahead of time (coordinators are to put the approved deadline on the event's page on the USA Ultimate tournament page). Any deadline imposed that would restrict access to the tournament for teams that would otherwise be considered eligible must be announced well in advance and must be approved by the National Director.
4. Regional Championships
- a. Regional Event Scaling
    - i. The size of regional events will be based on the number of teams that meet the Registrar Roster Deadline and the Conferences Team Sign Up Deadline.

Size of Regionals -> Number of registered teams.

8 teams -> 13 teams or fewer

10 teams -> 14-18 teams

14 teams -> 19-22 teams

16 teams -> 23 or more teams

- In an effort to provide more valuable playing opportunities for women's division teams, for the women's division in regions with up to 16 teams, and which meet the Roster Deadline, all teams will be invited to the regional tournament. For regions with more than 16 teams, 16 teams will be invited using the bid allocation formulas as used in the other divisions.
- In regions with a sole "Conference-Regional" event, e.g. a Nationals-qualifying Conferences tournament, the above women's division exception does not apply. USAU is evaluating the possibility of adding a post-Regionals non-Series event for these teams.
- USAU is also evaluating the possibility of adding a post-Regionals non-Series event for Developmental teams participating in a "Conference-Regional" event.

ii. For D-I Regionals, all the D-I and Developmental teams in the Region will count for determining the event size. D-III teams that opt for the D-I pathway will also be included in the count.

iii. For D-III Regionals, all the series-registered teams from small schools (<7500 enrollment) in a Region will count for determining the event size.

iv. For Developmental Regionals, all the series-registered 2nd/3rd/etc teams from schools in the region will count for determining the event size.

b. Division I Regionals – Bids will be allocated to Conferences as outlined below:

i. Automatic bids – Each Division I Conference will receive 1 automatic bid to Division I Regionals. Each Division III Conference will initially receive 1 automatic bid to Division I Regionals. Developmental Conferences will not receive automatic bids to Division I Regionals.

ii. Strength bids – The remaining bids will be based on the ranking of teams in each conference in the end-of-season official USA Ultimate College Rankings, as outlined below.

Team strength – Strength bids will be awarded to Conferences with the "next" highest ranked team, where "next" describes one more bid than the Conference has already been awarded up to that point. For example, a Conference with 4 bids and a Conference with 2 bids will compare their 5th and 3rd ranked teams, respectively, for a Team strength bid.

- A Conference may earn more than one team strength bid.
- If a Team strength bid cannot be awarded because teams in a region's Conferences do not meet the participation requirements, the un-awarded bids will be allocated to each non-developmental conference in order of official team count (highest to lowest).

iii. College Series Registration - If a team earns a strength bid to Regionals for its conference, but the team earning the bid declines to register for their or the team drops out of their Conference Championship, the earned bid will be awarded to the Conference with the “next” highest ranked team. Registration is defined as submitting a registrar verified roster and signing up on the USA Ultimate website for the event.

ix. Division III pathway to Division I Regionals – Prior to participation in the Division III Conference Championship, all Division III teams must elect which pathway they will take to either Division I Regionals or Division III

Regionals. This election must be made on the registrar-verified roster that was submitted by the team when registering for the College Series. Teams that elect a certain pathway cannot change pathways after their election has been made. Therefore, if a team elects the Division I pathway but does not perform well enough at their Division III Conference Championships to earn a bid to Division I Regionals, they cannot then opt for Division III Regionals. Teams that elect the Division I pathway who do not perform well enough at their Conference Championships to earn a bid to Division I Regionals still have the opportunity to improve their position for a waitlist bid based on their overall performance at their Conference Championship event.

c. Division III Regionals -- Bids will be allocated to Conferences as outlined below:

i. Division III Regionals will occur in Regions with more than one D-III Conference. Regions with one D-III Conference will have that Conference Championship serve as the D-III Regional event (for the purposes of D-III Nationals qualification). Regions without a D-III Conference will allocate bids to D-III Nationals directly to teams based on the end-of-season rankings.

ii. Automatic bids – Each Division-III Conference will receive 1 automatic bid to Division-III Regionals.

iii. Strength bids – Strength bids will be allocated in the same manner as Division I Regionals bids, using the Division-III subset of teams.

iv. Division III teams that opt for the Division I Regionals pathway are no longer eligible to participate in Division III Regionals. If a team that elects the Division I Regionals pathway does not place high enough to qualify for Division I Regionals, they are not eligible to qualify for Division III Regionals either. Any team that wishes to change their pathway from their original election on their registrar-verified roster must email the Manager of Competition and Athlete Programs ([ben@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:ben@hq.usultimate.org)) by the Monday before their Conference Championship event.

d. Developmental Regionals – Bids will be allocated to Conferences as outlined below:

i. Developmental Regionals will occur in Regions with more than one Developmental Conference, unless the National Developmental College Coordinator and the regional director agree that there should not be a regional event, based on feedback from the developmental conference coordinator and the teams within the region.

ii. Automatic bids – Each Developmental Conference will receive 1 automatic bid to Developmental Regionals.

iii. Strength bids – Strength bids will be allocated in the same manner as Division I Regionals bids, using the Developmental subset of teams.

- f. Unaccepted bids -- If a team declines its bid to Regionals, the bid will be offered to the next highest finishing (eligible) team from the Conference that is next in line in the Team Strength waitlist. The Team Strength waitlist is the ordered list of conferences beyond the original number of bids allocated, based on the ranking of their "next best teams", according to the Team Strength process.
- i. This procedure will be followed until the bid is awarded.
  - ii. If the next highest finishing team within that Conference declines the bid, this process will be repeated starting with the Conference next in line to receive a bid according to Team Strength waitlist order.
  - iii. If a team drops out less than one week prior to the tournament, the Regional Director may accelerate the above process by shortening response times and immediately contacting all potential replacement teams.
  - iv. If the spot has not been filled 3 days prior to the tournament, the RD may award the bid at his/her discretion with the approval of the National Division Director. The team being awarded the bid must be competing in that event's respective competition/gender divisions and must have participated in Conferences.
  - v. In D-III Conferences that have bids to both D-I Regionals and D-III Regionals, a qualifying team will have to choose one type of bid and decline the other (or decline both).
  - vi. If the declined bid is a Conference's single automatic bid to Regionals in the same division, that bid will stay within the Conference and be offered to the next highest finishing team in that Conference.
- g. Attendance deadlines -- For the purposes of tournament logistics, Regional Directors and Tournament Directors may impose a deadline by which teams must decide whether they will attend the tournament. This deadline may be associated with submission of a tournament entry fee, as determined by the coordinator. Tournament Directors may keep entry fees from teams that pull out of the tournament beyond a certain date, provided that date (it cannot be before the USA Ultimate registration deadline, for instance) and the fee are reasonable, were approved by the event's USA Ultimate coordinator, and were communicated by the TD or coordinator to the teams ahead of time (coordinators are to put the approved deadline on the event's Score Reporting Tool page). Any deadline imposed by a coordinator or tournament director that would restrict access to the tournament for teams that would otherwise be considered eligible must be announced well in advance and must be approved by the National Director.

## 5. D-I College Championships

- a. USA Ultimate Division I College Championships – This four-day event will be held on May 26-29. There will be 20 bids available to each division (Women's and Men's) of the Division I College Championships. Bids will be assigned in the following order:
- b. Automatic bids – Each region will receive 1 automatic bid to the USA Ultimate College Championships.
- c. Strength bids - The remaining 10 bids will be based on the ranking of teams in each Region in the end-of-season official USA Ultimate College Rankings, as outlined below.
  - i. Team strength – All 10 strength bids will be awarded to regions with the "next" highest ranked team, where "next" describes one more bid than the region has already been awarded up to that point. For example, a region with 2 bids and a region with 3 bids will

compare their 3rd and 4th ranked teams, respectively, for a Team strength bid. A region may earn more than one Team strength bid.

- ii. College Series Participation – If a team earns a strength bid to the College Championships for its region, but the team earning the bid declines to participate in their Conference Championship, the earned bid will be awarded to the region with the “next” highest ranked team.
- d. Unaccepted Bids - In the event a bid is declined by a team, that bid will be awarded to the next Region on the Strength Bid Waitlist, unless the declined bid is an automatic bid, in which case it will remain in the Region. Should a team be disqualified from accepting a bid, the vacated bid will stay in Region and be awarded to the next highest finisher at that Regional Championship event.

## 6. D-III College Championships

The Division III structure will include a national championship event and regional or conference qualifiers in regions where they are viable.

- a. School size – In order to be eligible for Division III, a team must be from a school that has a total enrollment of less than 7500 students (undergraduate and graduate combined) based upon the National Center for Education Statistics Fall 2019 enrollment data.
- b. Official USA Ultimate Division III College Rankings – Division III rankings will be contained within the overall USA Ultimate College Rankings. In other words, teams from Division III schools will be included in the primary rankings just like all other teams and will be held to the same standards. The DIII rankings will compare only the DIII teams to each other.
- c. USA Ultimate Division III College Championships – This two-day event will be held on May 20-22. There will be 16 bids available to each division (Women’s and Men’s) of the Division III College Championships. Teams will not be permitted to compete in both the Division I USA Ultimate College Championships and Division III College Championships. Bids will be assigned in the following order:
  - i. Automatic bids – One automatic bid will be awarded to each Region. If there are no teams in a region that meet the minimum requirements to be included in the rankings, their geographic bid will be added to the team strength bid process.
  - ii. Team Strength bids – Six team strength bids will be awarded. The highest ranked Division III qualifying team in the rankings that has not yet been awarded a bid will have their Region receive a Team Strength bid to Division III College Championships. Bids will continue to be awarded in this manner until all bids have been awarded.

If a team that is involved in the allocation process of a Division III strength bid chooses to participate in Division I regionals instead of Division III, that bid will be reallocated to the home region of the next highest ranked team.
  - iii. Bid cap - No D-III region can receive more than four bids to the D-III College Championships.
  - d. Unaccepted Bids - In the event a bid is declined by a team, that bid will be awarded to the next Region on the Strength Bid Waitlist, unless the declined bid is an automatic bid, in which case it will remain in the Region. Should a team be disqualified from accepting a bid, the vacated bid will stay in Region and be awarded to the next highest finisher at that Regional Championship event.

7. Name/Logo/Uniform Guidelines - USA Ultimate reserves the right to alter, or require a team to alter, a team name, player or coach nickname, team logo, jersey graphic, or uniform and/or suggest alternatives at or in conjunction with a USA Ultimate program or event should USA Ultimate personnel determine that the existing name, logo, graphic, or uniform might hinder the mission of the organization or the goals of a specific USA Ultimate program or event. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual references, profanity, drug references, and any discriminatory language or graphics. Alterations must meet with the approval of USA Ultimate personnel.

a. Player Uniform Requirements

i. All series events – Names, logos and graphics on jerseys must comply with the Name/Logo/Uniform Guidelines above.

ii. Conference Championships – Teams and players are encouraged to follow the uniform requirements for the College Championships.’

iii. Regional Championships – Teams participating in the finals of regionals are required to have players on their team wear the same color jersey while playing. Teams and players are encouraged to follow the uniform requirements for the College Championships.

b. College Championships

i. All players participating in the USA Ultimate College Championship tournaments (both D-I and D-III) for a given team must wear jerseys of identical color and design.

ii. Teams must have two jerseys of distinctly different color, one predominantly white and one predominantly dark. A jersey that is not white does not automatically qualify as a dark. Any color that may be described as light does not qualify as a dark jersey (e.g. yellow, pink, light blue, etc.).

iii. Jerseys must have numbers on the back and front of the jersey. The numbers on the back must be at least six inches high, be one or two digit Arabic numerals, be solid and in clear contrast with the jersey. Numbers on the front of the jersey must be at least four inches high, be located above the waist and clearly visible if tucked in. The front of the jersey is anything on the chest or abdomen; numbers on the front of sleeves do not fulfill this requirement. No two players on a given team may use the same number or numbers with the same value (e.g. 00 and 0, 01 and 1, etc.).

iv. Uniform bottoms (shorts, pants, skirts) worn by players on the field must be of identical color and design. Teams are not required to have numbers on their uniform bottoms, however if teams do opt to include numbers, they must be on the front left or right leg of their uniform bottoms (shorts, pants, skirts), although teams may opt to do both. The placement must be the same for the whole team. The numbers must be at least two inches high, match the number on the back of their jersey and be in visible contrast with the background material.

v. Uniform accessories including tights, undershirts, compression sleeves and hats must be either solid black or coordinated with one team uniform color. Socks that are mid-calf or lower must be black, white or coordinating with one team color. Socks that sit above mid-calf must abide by the tights requirement.

vi. For broadcast games, USA Ultimate reserves the right to increase requirements to comply with broadcast partner standards and requirements. In light of this potential, it is recommended that teams and players prepare for the possibility of additional requirements, such as matching hats, socks and under-layers.

vii. USA Ultimate reserves the right to disqualify and/or fine players who fail to meet the uniform requirements.

viii. Examples of style decisions to avoid:



ix. Examples of style acceptable jerseys:



c. Coach Attire Requirements

i. All coaches participating in the USA Ultimate College Championships (both D-I and D-III) must wear either a uniform of identical color and design as the team, or professional coaching attire as defined below while at the competition site and/or while engaged in any activity associated with the team or event.

ii. Professional coaching attire is defined as any combination of the following:

- The team jersey, or a sleeved shirt/polo matching the team uniform colors (and/or university, if the team uses the university colors for their uniforms).
- Team shorts/skirt or hemmed slacks/shorts/skirt of an appropriate solid color.
- Business casual attire.
- Closed toe shoes such as cleats, flats or athletic shoes. Flip flops, open toed sandals and bare feet are not considered professional coaching attire.
- Coach jerseys and shorts are not subject to the number requirements for players.
- Names, logos and graphics on jerseys must comply with the Name/Logo/Uniform Guidelines above.
- All uniform accessories, including but not limited to, tights, undershirts, hats and socks, must be of identical style and color. It is recommended that uniform accessories are also coordinated with the uniform bottoms and jerseys.
- USA Ultimate reserves the right to remove from the sideline and/or fine coaches who fail to meet the uniform requirements.
- These requirements do not apply to Conference Championships or Regional Championships.

8. Coaching Certification Requirements - To have support personnel rostered and allowed on the field at DI or DIII College Championships, a team must have at least one coach who has completed the College Coach Certification. All other people listed as a coach must have completed the Foundational Coach training. All coaches must have their SafeSport training and background check current through the last scheduled day of College Nationals.

To attend a certification clinic (several are offered virtually), you must first complete the [Foundational Coach training](#). Certification clinics can be found after logging into the [membership portal](#).

9. Formats - Conference Championship and Regional Championship tournament formats will be determined by coordinators using guidelines in the USA Ultimate Formats (updated in March 2023)
10. Seeding
  - a. Seeding for Conference Championships, Regionals, USA Ultimate Division I College Championships, and USA Ultimate Division III College Championships will be done by the coordinator using the following information: input solicited from all the captains of participating teams, sanctioned results (e.g. rankings algorithm, head to head, common opponents, tournament finish), results of last year's Series, and other applicable information (e.g. team composition, conditions). The coordinator has the authority to adjust seeding according to the best information available.
  - b. Seeding for Regionals will additionally be held to the following guideline: No team that finishes ahead of another team at Conferences may be seeded behind that team at Regionals.
  - c. Seeding for the USA Ultimate Division I and Division III College Championships will additionally be held to the following guideline: The order of finish at Regionals will be strongly considered in determining seeding for Nationals, but will not be binding.
  - d. Seeding for Conference Championships must be pre-approved by the appropriate Regional Director. For Developmental Conferences without a coordinator, seedings are also pre-approved by the Regional Director.
  - e. Seeding for Regionals must be pre-approved by the National Director.
  - f. Seeding for the USA Ultimate Division I and Division III College Championships must be pre-approved by the Manager of College Competition and Athlete Programs.
  - g. For d. and e. above, If the Regional Director is affiliated (player, coach, alum, etc.) with a team participating in the event, seedings must be approved by the National Director. If the National Director is affiliated with a team participating in the event, seedings must be approved by the Manager of College Competition and Athlete Programs.

11. Forfeit Rule (Series)

- a. A team must play all of its games at a "qualifying" tournament in order to qualify for the next tournament in the Series. This includes all women's division teams in regions that meet the Regional Event Scaling guideline found in Section 4.a.i.
- b. A team must start its first game in the Series with 7 players and play each point with at least 6 players.
- c. A team that forfeits a Series game, and every player on that team's roster, is disqualified for the remainder of the current Series.

- d. Any team that declines to finish a scheduled game or games, or attempts to decide a match by any manner other than playing ultimate on the field, will forfeit those games. Should both teams in a match choose not to play, then it will be considered a double forfeit.
- e. At the discretion of the event's USAU coordinator, consideration may be given to situations that might warrant an exception being made, provided it does not affect the fairness or integrity of the competition.
- f. Consideration should be given if a team misses the first game of the first day because of travel problems.
- g. If one team is not ready to play at game-time, points may be assessed. Under these conditions, if the score of the game reaches 8-0, the team that has failed to signal readiness will technically forfeit the game.
- h. A team will be considered to have forfeited any game where the number of players that can safely participate falls below the minimum requirement set by the competition minimums above.
- i. The list of allowable forfeit scenarios is found in the [formats manual](#).

## 12. Rules

- a. Regular Season - USA Ultimate College Regular Season events must be played in accordance to the guidelines for USA Ultimate Sanctioned Events. Rules changes (i.e. those outside of the current edition of the USA Ultimate Official Rules) may be permitted, but must be communicated in detail during the sanctioning application process and must be pre-approved by USA Ultimate.
- b. College Series - The USA Ultimate College Series will be played using the [2022-2023 Rules of Ultimate](#). Any changes to these rules must be pre-approved by the Manager of College Competition and Athlete Programs.

## 13. Observers

- a. Regular Season -- Only USA Ultimate Certified Observers are permitted to officiate at USA Ultimate-sanctioned (i.e. College Regular Season) Events. USA Ultimate College Regular Season events must be played in accordance to the guidelines for USA Ultimate Sanctioned Events. Experimental changes in officiating responsibilities (i.e. those outside of the current edition of the [USA Ultimate Observer Manual](#)) may be permitted, but must be communicated in detail during the sanctioning application process and must be pre-approved by USA Ultimate.
- b. College Series -- Only [USA Ultimate Certified Observers](#) are permitted to officiate at USA Ultimate Championship or Championship Series Events. If officials are used during the USA Ultimate College Series, their duties must be in line with those described in the USA Ultimate Observer Manual. Any changes to these duties must be pre-approved by the SOAR Committee.

## IV. Violations and Sanctions

Failure to abide by any of the College Guidelines may result in sanctions on individuals or teams by the College Working Group, or through the USA Ultimate conduct process. Such sanctions may be imposed on a team or individuals associated with a team deemed to be in violation of the guidelines, and may include, but are not limited to,

suspension or disqualification from USA Ultimate competition. Because consistency in holding all participants to the same administrative and competitive standards is vital to the integrity of the College Season, because many violations lead to unfair advantages in competition, and because it is often difficult to determine intent, **guideline violations will result in serious repercussions.** Such repercussions will provide an incentive for players and teams to understand the guidelines fully, follow the guidelines carefully and avoid intended or unintended violations in the future.