

WFTDA Competitive Play Taskforce Report

Creating Structures for 2023 and Beyond

Presented by

The WFTDA Competitive Play Task Force
3 November 2022



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Welcome and Meeting Agenda

- Welcome to the webinar!
- Meeting Agenda
 - Presentation of the WFTDA Competitive Task Force findings and initial recommendations
 - Background Past structure, Pandemic, ART Project, Member Meetings
 - Task Force Findings: New system recommendations
 - Next Steps for Task Force
 - Questions and Answers
 - Submit a question during the presentation by using the Q&A feature on your Zoom below. We will answer questions submitted before and during the seminar and will post them with the recording afterward.



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Project Background

**Karen Kuhn, WFTDA
Senior Director of Global
Programs**

- ★ Competitive Play History
- ★ Pandemic Effects and Review of System
 - ART Project
 - Pandemic Ramifications
 - League Interviews and Results
- ★ Goals for a New System



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Competitive Play History



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Past Competitive Structures and Issues

REGIONS 2005-2012

- WFTDA membership started at 28 leagues (2 regions) and grew to 171 leagues (4 regions)
 - Added Canada (2009), UK (2010), Australia (2011) and Europe (2012)
- Requirements to play a minimum number of games in-region
- Reps voted on their regional rankings (difficulty grew as we grew)
- 10 seeds per Playoff with top 3 going to Champs no matter how competitive the region was



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Past Competitive Structures and Issues

GLOBAL SYSTEM 2013-2017

- Membership increased from 230 (2013) to 385 (2017) including Asia, South America, New Zealand and South Africa
- Moved to global rankings using a mathematical algorithm
 - Adjustments: season division assignments dropped; Playoff weight dropped; created Strength Factor Challenge program
- Playoffs seeded by S-curve based on end-of-season ranking
 - Adjustments: number of events, location requests



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Past Competitive Structures and Issues

GLOBAL/REGIONAL SYSTEM 2018-2019

- Membership increased to 456 members in 2020
- Created host-run, regionally seeded Continental Cups
- Added decay feature to rankings algorithm
- Issues continued:
 - Still not enough rankings movement and play (2019: 429 leagues but only 1170 sanctioned games)
 - Difficulty finding tournament locations that worked for everyone
 - Playoffs location requests continued/leagues dropped due to finances (5 in 2019)



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Pandemic Ramifications and System Review



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Ramifications of the Pandemic on our Organizations

- Leagues have lost talent, venues and are having financial difficulty.
- WFTDA has 436 member leagues (21 leagues known to have withdrawn, closed or merged) and 120 leagues are currently inactive.
- WFTDA staff decreased from 7 full-time staff members to 2 staff members working reduced hours. Many committees are dormant due to the shutdown and lack of volunteer engagement/managers.
- WFTDA was in the middle of launch/development of new charter system and game system.
- WFTDA took COVID relief loans to survive and is beginning to restructure.



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ART Project Recommendations

- Reimagine competition for the WFTDA by centering Member Organizations, and dismantle “global” competitive structures which privilege member leagues in the US and Europe.
- Engage in community-building activities that support regional competition and increase the accessibility of play regardless of location
- Shift away from competition models focused on US and western constructs of “success” (e.g. winning at all costs) which center individualism
- Allow and uplift definitions of competition which center community growth and inclusion of all skaters regardless of ability e.g. ‘you’re welcome here as you are and we can build on what you currently have’



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League Interviews and Taskforce Born

- Board members DiFibrillator and Tifa Knoxhard met with 36 leagues in April and May 2022 to discuss our existing system
 - Leagues reported burnout due to the annual system and travel
 - Leagues with multiple teams (B & C) need more competitive play
 - High-level play important for WFTDA and for member-leagues training
 - WFTDA membership of less value to lower-ranked members
 - Leagues use rankings to set goals but the algorithm promoted points scored and limited play opportunities at all levels of play
 - Not enough time between rankings play and postseason events
- Volunteers joined a Competitive Play Task Force and have met weekly since August 4 create a new plan based on this feedback and task force experience.



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Goals for a New System



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Goals for a New Competitive System

- Create competition and community for participants of all levels
 - Opportunities for more skaters to participate in ranked play at all level of competition
 - Allow more teams to play each other and enjoy roller derby
 - Support overall regional growth and health for all leagues in a region
- Reduce the “gaming” of the ranking system
 - Allow for more sanctionable games
 - Allow more skaters to skate on their teams’ rosters by reducing fear of “giving up any points”



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Goals for a New Competitive System

- **Build a schedule that allows time for teams & athletes to rest and recover**
 - **Relieve the stress of training/fundraising/visas/last-minute travel with an annual global championship**
 - **Allow regions to schedule competition that works with their region's needs**
 - **Better coordination with national competitions**
- **WFTDA take a regional focus to promote growth and financial stability of our sport and our member organizations**



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A New Competitive System

**Presenter:
Dark Pistol
Antwerp Roller Derby**

- ★ Creation of regions around the globe
- ★ Opportunities for more teams and participants
- ★ A new season structure
- ★ Regional rankings



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Global Region System

- **Create global regions to better manage competition**
 - Leagues will initially be assigned a region but may opt to play in a different region owing to level of play
- **Leagues may opt in to a Geographically Unrestricted Region “GUR” for global play, in addition to their home region**
- **Extend the competition cycle from annual to allow for an off season and more flexibility to work within regional constraints**
 - Each region can have some flexibility within the cycle
 - Each region will be required to have an off season
 - Each region can better coordinate with national competitions



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Return to Regionalized Play - v 2.0

- Leagues may enter more than one team into the structure
 - Future cycles may see tiers within regions (e.g. D1 and D2)
 - Requirements for skater eligibility on multiple teams TBD
- Each region has a Regional Championship
 - The size, format and timing of the Regional Championship can be customized to the needs of and financial health of the region
- Top teams from the Regional Championships may be invited to the World Championship
 - The number of seats each region gets in the Championship will be determined by factors such as region size and performance and strength



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WFTDA Regions for 2023 (Draft)



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Return to Regionalized Play - v 2.0

- For the 2023-2024 Cycle
 - Europe with 1 or 2 regions (still under discussion)
 - North America with 3 regions
 - Asia-Pacific (including Oceania) with 1 region
 - South America & Central America with 1 region
- WFTDA would operate or support Regional Championships in each region
- For future cycles, we can split into more regions, or stack into fewer, depending on needs



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Longer Competition Cycle

- **First year of the cycle: Regionals qualification play**
 - **Second year (1st Half): Regional championships**
 - **Second year (2nd Half): World championships**
 - **Next cycle will overlap and would be an 18-month cycle for qualification play**
 - **Leagues not competing in World Championships start qualification play for cycle 2 in the 2nd half of the cycle 1's second year**
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- ★ **Each region will be required to set up an off season at some point in the cycle**
 - ★ **WFTDA Competitive Play will set up a schedule to assess and make adjustments**
 - ★ **WFTDA time to organize and announce tournament locations earlier**



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2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
23-24 Cycle	Regionals Qualification Period (23-24)									Offseason		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
23-24 Cycle	Offseason	Regionals				Offseason		Global Champs (Hydra)			Offseason	
25-26 Cycle								Regionals Qualification Period (25-26)			Offseason	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
23-24 Cycle												
25-26 Cycle	Regionals Qualification Period (25-26)									Offseason		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
23-24 Cycle												
25-26 Cycle	Offseason	Regionals				Offseason		Global Champs (Hydra)			Offseason	
27-28 Cycle								Regionals Qualification Period (27-28)			Offseason	

Sample Competition Calendar



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Rankings System Adjustments

- **Regional rankings only (to start), plus rankings for the GUR**
 - WFTDA Competitive Play will take the first six months of 2023 to assess game play and determine how to calibrate regions and re-align rankings
 - No mathematical way to do accurate global ranking without forcing teams to do significant global play
 - We will continue to pursue solutions going forward
- **System already set up to execute flexible regional as well as global rankings, either live or periodic**



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Rankings System Adjustments

- Team is analyzing our algorithm, Flat Track Stats, and algorithms from other sports to determine what adjustments would be best to achieve our goals
- Discussion in the early stages about how to adjust our algorithm to disincentivize blowouts, for example:
 - Different formula to calculate per-game ranking points
 - Cap on the impact of point spread
 - Mitigate loss of rank if a team wins a game (by any margin)
 - Make outlier games have less impact on overall score



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Next Steps

**Karen Kuhn, WFTDA Senior
Director of Global Programs**



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Next Steps

- The presentation and a document of all questions and answers will be posted on the [WFTDA Online Community](#).
- Board of Directors one-on-one meetings with Top 20 leagues from 2019 and with remote leagues to discuss their needs
- Task Force will finalize this system based on member feedback and WFTDA operational with targeted delivery by mid-December 2022.
- Looking to launch sanctioned game play in January 2023, even if our tech systems are not yet ready.
 - Games can be played and data collected to feed into the systems when they are launched.



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Q&A

Tifa Knoxhard
WFTDA General Board Member



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Thanks



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More Info

Contact the Task Force at games@wftda.com or post on the [WFTDA Online Community](#)

This presentation and a Q&A written document will be posted on the [WFTDA Online Community](#).

All assigned member league reps have automatic access, or you can join the WeFTDA Collective on the [member portal](#) to access it and member discussions.



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