



Town Hall Meeting - 2023 Competitive Structures

Questions and Answers

This document contains answers to questions submitted prior to and during the 3 November 2022 Town Hall meeting on 2023 Competitive Structures. We will keep this document updated with answers to questions submitted to us while we finalize the competitive plan.

If you have further questions, please post on the WFTDA Online Community [discussion thread](#) or email games@wftda.com.

Updated April 15, 2023

Process

Q; The leagues you interviewed - how many were in the UK/ Europe, and how spread out across the rankings were they? How many from the Pacific region?

Answered November 4, 2022

Here's who we interviewed!

Arch Rival Roller Derby	Montreal Roller Derby (CAN)
Arizona Roller Derby	Naptown Roller Derby
Bay City Crawlers	Natural State Roller Derby
Birmingham Roller Derby (UK)	Northwest Derby Company
BisMan Bombshellz	NOVA
Boston Roller Derby	Philly Roller Derby
Cedar Rapids Roller Girls	Prairieland Punishers
Cincinnati	Rat City
Druid City	River City
Fox City Roller Derby	Rock and Roller Queens (SA)
Gotham Roller Derby	Rocket City Roller Derby
Gothenburg Roller Derby (EUR)	Sailor City (SA)
Greenville Derby Dames	Susquehanna Valley
Harrisburg Area	Sydney Roller Derby League (AUS)
Keweenaw Roller Derby	Tallahassee Roller Derby

Madison Roller Derby
Mass Attack Roller Derby
Minnesota Roller Derby

Tri City Roller Derby (CAN)
Windy City Rollers
Zurich Roller Derby (EUR)

3 leagues were from Europe, 2 from South America and 1 from the Pacific.

Results from these initial interviews are compiled in [this document](#).

Additionally the Board of Directors has conducted further interviews with leagues regarding the proposal. If you wish to set up a meeting to discuss your league/region with the task force, you may email games@wftda.com to set up a meeting or to submit feedback.

Regions

Q: Do regional games that count towards rankings need to be played w/in the region or just against teams w/in the region, e.g. playing a Northeast region team in the South \neq rankings towards region? Answered January 5, 2023

The teams need to be registered in the same region for it to count for regional rankings. The location of the game doesn't matter.

Q: If we play sanctioned games with teams outside of our regions, how does that affect our rankings? Answered January 5, 2023

Sanctioned games against teams from other regions can only count for the GUR. They do not affect regional rankings in any way.

Q: When and how will off-season periods be determined per region? Answered January 5, 2023

The regions will determine their off-season via consensus, based on their needs. Typically we wish to have three calendar months off per year, starting in 2024. The three months do not need to be all at once. We will abbreviate this to one month of off-season for this year, 2023. We are going to post on the regional boards on the WFTDA Community to start this discussion.

Q: I know the regions are determined by state, but is there a map somewhere where we can better visualize this? I think our geographic location puts our league at the edge of three different regions, and the teams we typically play are spread throughout all of them. How do we manage this without a heavy travel burden if we have to play more distant teams in the region we select?

Answered January 5, 2023

We are working on a map to give a visual representation of our regions. We just need to get the registration of teams a little more stable to be able to update the map. For the moment we do have the seeding list for reference.

Remember that any league can change its region. The state you are in only defines your “default” region. Being on a border of multiple regions is an issue that some teams have faced. We can support your league in navigating this change and determining what region to select. We think that once we get some experience with the system, we’ll find some different options from game play than you had in the past. Feel free to email games@wftda.com if you need support.

Q: What is the WFTDA plan for when there isn't sufficient linking of teams within a region (so what's the standard for evaluating if there are sufficient links for teams within a region and how will it be addressed if subset(s) of teams don't meet that threshold? **Answered January 5, 2023**

This might happen because a few teams refuse to play with anyone outside the group, in order to maintain their ranking together. This would be managed by the Fair Play Principle and compliance. Or, it might happen due to some quirk of geography: If teams from one side of the region cannot or happen not to travel to the other side for an entire season, and no teams from the center of the region play on both sides. This might necessitate that WFTDA creates a new region. WFTDA will look to support more game play and can consult on these situations. We are open to iteration on our system if “ranking bubbles” like this turn out to be common.

Q: How often can a league change their region? How often would a team be able to reclassify? **Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023 / Updated February 1, 2023**

Teams can request to switch to a new region once per season and request to change back to their original region once. But they will need to meet the new region’s minimum game requirement in order to be ranked/have a shot at Regional Championships.

Q: How big is a region? Answered November 4, 2022

To start in 2023, we will have six regions and each region is between 20 and 100 leagues.

Q: What are the 3 North American regions? Answered November 4, 2022

Here are the regions as currently defined:

1. North America West

Alaska, and western North America

CANADA: YT, NT, BC, SK, AB

US: AK, AZ, CA, CO, IA, ID, KS, MN, MO, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY

2. North America Northeast

All other Canadian provinces and territories, plus all other Northern US states except Kentucky.

CANADA: MB, NU, ON, QC, NL, PE, NS

US: CT, DC, DE, IL, IN, MA, MD, ME, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VA, VT, WI, WV

3. North America South

All other continental US states.

AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX

4. Latin America

Mexico, Central America, and South America (Remember: All leagues may opt into another region, so it is up to teams in Mexico, for example, whether they would prefer to join North America South.)

5. Oceania

Australia, New Zealand, and nearby Pacific Islands

6. Europe

All leagues from the political continent of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Note: In the town hall we said that Europe would be one or two regions. After hearing feedback from membership, the task force decided that we will start with one region in order to manage the system in its first year.

Note: Leagues outside of these regions (Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, islands, etc.) will need to decide which region to join. We are excited about expanding to new regions as Roller Derby grows worldwide.

Q: I didn't see Hawaii in the regional breakdown. I'm assuming they'll be North America West? Answered December 15, 2022

Leagues who don't neatly fall into one category are not listed, and they will need to choose their own region. Hawaii would probably choose North America West but it is up to them. We tried to err on the side of "not assuming" and to let leagues that are geographically far from other leagues make the call. But North America West sounds like a good choice!

Q: Does only in-region play count towards regional rankings? For example, if a team is on the edge of a region, could they play teams from both regions and still count them? Answered November 4, 2022

Only in-region games can be used for regional rankings. Consequently only those games are counted towards minimum games requirements.

Q: What sort of plan/structure is being established for teams within a region to collaborate? Answered November 4, 2022

We are hoping that leagues, existing tournament structures, and new tournament structures will include gameplay focused on helping teams achieve a ranking within their region. We believe that existing systems are set up to do this. The WFTDA is committed to helping regions host effective Regional Championship tournaments and a World Championship tournament as well as goals for the end of the season.

Q: How will the decisions within regions be made? How are decisions made for a region and who is making those decisions, i.e. when the offseason is? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023

Each region now has its own sub-section in which leagues can discuss regional matters. Per-region votes can also be held if needed.

Geographically Unrestricted Region (GUR)

Q: Regarding the GUR. What is the difference between competing within our region and if we were to do well/win our regional tournament compared to competing within the GUR? I only ask because the verbiage related to GUR suggested that it was created for those wanting to compete for a world championship?

Answered January 5, 2023 / Updated February 1, 2023

A: Only Regional sanctioned games affect your Regional ranking, which is how you can be invited to Regional Championships, which feed into Global Championships. The GUR provides a separate “global” ranking, and we are hoping to have (or host) additional tournaments that make use of GUR rankings, because inter-regional play is exciting! The “top” teams in each region may need to play inter-regionally to have close games, and may also wish to do so to prepare for Global Championships. We want to be sure that these games are sanctioned, recognized, and counted.

Q: How do we stop the GUR simply replacing the existing global system and becoming the default? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023

The GUR will be an additional region to the geographic regions, but the pathway to World Championships will be through the Geographic Regions and Regional championships. That will help teams prioritize whether a World Championship is important to them.

Q: What is the benefit for leagues to play in the GUR if it does not feed into World Championships? Just opportunities to play, but no ultimate goal? Are there any downsides to a league/team electing to participate in the GUR?

Answered November 4, 2022

The GUR offers not just opportunities to play, but a ranking for leagues that play games in the GUR. It is the only way for leagues in different regions to be ranked against each other. We also believe that some leagues may wish to organize their own tournaments with a specific eye to the GUR, to shine a light on international competition. We have heard from many teams that a structured way to obtain a ranking against teams across the world is desired. The GUR provides this.

Currently the plan for reaching world championships is via Regional Championships, so the downside is likely to be based on the impact of this gameplay on regional play, including the time and money it takes to play in two regions.

Q: Is the GUR then just a separate fun/competitive chance to play global games?

Answered November 4, 2022

Yes, and for very high level or outlier teams to maintain skills, to have more level-competitive game opportunities, and to obtain a ranking against teams from outside of their region.

Q: Has there been any talk about Diaspora teams and providing more opportunities for them to play? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023

We have talked about how to allow teams to form outside of an existing WFTDA League. This is still under discussion. For the 2023/2024 season a member league will have to host a team in order for it to participate in WFTDA competition.

Q: So how do I sign up for, or opt into the GUR? Answered February 22, 2023

Applying to sanction a game against a team from another region opts you in automatically, no other action is needed. Once you have played five sanctioned games against teams from other regions, you will have an established rank in the GUR.

Championships

Q: For 2024 regional competitive tournaments, is there a thought on what ranking would be realistic for invites to the tournaments? Has it been decided yet how the Regional Tournaments will flow into the overall Championship system? Answered January 5, 2023

We have not yet decided how to set up the tournaments as we've been focusing on the basic requirements and registration system. We would like to have a Regional Championship for every region that has enough qualified teams. The size and timing of the event within the first six months of 2024 will depend on the size of the region and the venue/season needs of the region. We want to do a better job of supporting regions with their specific needs, rather than just forcing a single model everywhere. Make sure your reps are in the community so they can participate in these discussions!

We also need to determine what we can handle operationally and what would be possible to ask hosts in each region to manage. We are hoping to get bids out in February so keep an eye out for more discussions on this coming soon.

Q: Why have champs only every two years? How do you see this change positively impacting competitive play? Very few highly competitive teams were surveyed and it shows. The entire top 10, minus Rose is all frustrated. Answered January 5, 2023

We had discussions with numerous higher level teams and included representatives from several of them on the Competitive Play taskforce. We are in a period of

recovery, both for WFTDA and our member leagues and need additional time to rebuild our structures in a more sustainable way and for WFTDA to obtain the resources necessary to relaunch our events. We feel a longer cycle would be best for us and for our member leagues. Some thoughts on why this change is important:

Regions

- We are growing globally. This is great. But a single global rankings model and tight yearly schedule forces teams outside (and inside) of the US to make multiple long distance trips each year. This is difficult in terms of money, time, time off work, etc. for refs, players, and staff
- Imagine adding B and C teams to that load!
- Even American teams near big airports know how complicated/expensive travel logistics can be. Multiply that by 4 for more distant leagues!

Off-season

- As many of you on this call know: home team seasons, or practice/bout venue availability throughout the year, mixed with the WFTDA season often means no off-season, ever, for some skaters. 1-week off in June and Dec really doesn't count as an off-season!
- Lots of skaters, including members of the taskforce, are willing to sacrifice their time and parts of their life plans to skate 3, 5, or 7 times a week, because we love our sport. But the cost of doing this *year-round every year* is burn-out, injury, and people needing to be all-in-100%-derby or just quitting, and then our sport loses amazing athletes. Can we keep the high level of competition, push our sport forward, and also make this more manageable for people to participate?

Diversity

- A related point, when it comes to "sacrifice" and sport-life balance, not everyone has the same resources or social/cultural situation. We believe firmly, and WFTDA as an org does, that we need to increase the diversity of folks participating in our sport. Keep an eye out for the ART (Anti-racist team) project report coming very soon.
 - Having more people with different voices and backgrounds participating, and if overall people are more happier and balanced, we will all play better and harder and our sport will be more intense and more competitive than ever.
- Lastly, as regions expand and the sport recovers, it's possible the right thing will be to eventually go back to a yearly Hydra, or maybe a different structure altogether. We'll have to see. But for the next little bit, this seems like the right structure to balance all these factors.

So to actually answer the question directly: we think that the 2-year structure is a natural evolution in our sport that takes into account financial and geographical

realities. We think it will absolutely increase competition and push the level of sport higher. Supporting *functioning* seasonal schedules will increase participation, increase the number of meaningful games, and reduce burn-out and excessive and exclusive financial and travel pressure.

Lastly, an invitation: we are definitely hoping to see competitive events this year, in 2023. We will be sending out a framework of how this could look for regions and the GUR. If you want to be involved in that conversation, we'd love to have your voice so let us know.

Q: Will the WFTDA have a hand in helping create these Regional Championships and/or playoffs? Answered November 4, 2022

Absolutely.

Q: Who decides who is invited to Champs? Answered November 4, 2022

Each region will be assigned a number of “slots” based on the region’s strength. Regional Championships will then decide who fills those slots from each region. We are still discussing how to determine the number of slots per region.

Q: Does this mean regional champs will only be once every two years? Answered November 4, 2022

Regional Championships will be the pathway to World Championships, occurring every two years. Outside of these tournaments, it is up to the leagues in each region if and when they want to host any additional competitions or tournaments.

Q: Are you saying that the first competitive championship for a region will be 2024? Answered November 4, 2022

Yes - and the first World Championship will also occur in 2024.

Q: How much flexibility will each region have to determine their own rankings and who goes to world championships? Answered November 4, 2022

The number of "slots" each region sends will be defined by the WFTDA. We are seeking feedback on how much flexibility each region should have in defining their Regional Championships structure. Rankings will be defined by the new algorithm and it is expected that Regional Championship invitations will be based on regional rankings.

Q: Why not have a games minimum by level to determine postseason eligibility. This model still seems restrictive to play as leagues are still rebuilding. Does this model seem appropriate based on current player registration numbers and league numbers.... Why not be more similar to other sports where playoffs lead to champs at multiple levels. This seems complicated and un-administrable at this time. Answered November 4, 2022

The games minimum will be determined by what the rankings algorithm needs in order to place a team with sufficient accuracy. And that number will almost certainly be independent of level. A core assumption of our committee is that we cannot force one team to travel to play another team, as other sports do, which limits our ability to model our competitive pathway on that used by other sports.

We are also hoping that in the future we can have “tiers” within regions that feed into additional Regional Championships. At the moment, we don’t have a strong indication of how many teams will return and at what levels, so this first cycle will provide a baseline for us to improve the structure in the future.

Q: A slide mentioned that different tiers/divisions of competitive play were also being considered. Is that likely to be a factor in the 2023-2024 competitive season or is it more likely to be considered in future seasons? Answered November 4, 2022

This is likely to be considered in future seasons, or earlier in some regions if they feel they have enough teams and logistical support to introduce them sooner. For example, to have a Tier 2 Regional Championship, a region would need to have enough teams to qualify, to find a host, and to effectively run the tournament on its own, as the WFTDA’s ability to coordinate / organize multiple tournaments is already strained.

Q: Will there be mini hydras for regional champs? Answered November 4, 2022

There will be something!

Q: If the regions are drastically different in size, will larger regions be given more slots for champs? Answered November 4, 2022

Yes, if this larger region has more strong teams. Number of "slots" will be based on the strength of the teams that compete in the region.

Timing

Q: When will the date of the Regional Championships be announced? Answered February 1, 2023

We will announce them as soon as we have the date and venue confirmed, so teams can plan as early as possible. The new two-year cycle will hopefully allow us to plan earlier and give teams more lead time than in the past.

Q: Which rankings will be used to decide who qualifies for Regional Championships? Answered February 1, 2023

When we announce the timing of Regional Championships, the rankings published two months prior will be used to determine who is invited. So if the tournament occurs anytime in June, the April 1st rankings will decide who is invited.

Q: Will there be a cut-off date after which games do not count for qualifying to Regional Championships? Answered February 1, 2023

Yes. The cut-off is the same as the “rankings release” date. So if the tournament starts in June, games played in March will count for qualifying. April 1st’s rankings will decide who is invited, so games played on or after April 1st will not count for Regional Championship eligibility (but will still affect rankings, see below).

Q: When will we know who will be invited to Regional Championships? Answered February 1, 2023

Rankings will be calculated up to and including the “cutoff month,” three months prior to the month in which the tournament starts. So if the tournament starts in June, the cutoff month is March, all games in March will “count,” and qualified teams will be invited to Regional Championships based on April 1’s rankings. Formal invitations will go out a few days later.

Q: When does the new season begin with respect to Regional Championships? Answered February 1, 2023

The new season begins on July 1st of even years (2024, 2026...). Regional championships will all finish before July 1st.

Q: What is the point of playing sanctioned games between the cut-off date and the new season start? Do those games count? What if you aren't invited to Regional Championships? Answered February 1, 2023

For ALL teams, regardless of if they are invited to Regional Championships or not, all sanctioned games will count for rankings in the season in which they are played. That ranking becomes the “seed” for the next season, so it still has meaning. Games played at Regional Championships also count for rankings! On the day of the start of the new season (July 1st), the old ranking will serve as your initial seed for the next season.

Q: What about the Regional Championships games themselves? Do they count for rankings? Answered February 1, 2023

Yes. They count like any other sanctioned game toward your rankings for the season in which they occur.

Q: Can you give an example of the dates surrounding Regional Championships and the cut-offs? Answered February 1, 2023

Sure, example:

On Jan 15, 2023, the Regional Championships date for Europe is announced to be May 11-13th. February is three months prior to May, so games in February count.

Jan 15: Tournament Announced. Now we know that the cutoff month is February.
Feb 28: Games played this day (and before) count towards minimums and rankings! Games played after this day are still in the 2023-2024 season and count towards rankings.

March 1: These rankings decide who is invited to Regional Championships

May 11-13: Regional Championships

July 1: The next season begins! Rankings as of this day become “seeds”.

Q: What about the GUR? Is there a season or a cutoff for the GUR? Answered February 1, 2023

The GUR does not have a season, and does not feed into the Championship Tournaments, so it does not have any cutoffs. However, to maintain an established ranking in the GUR, a team needs to play 5 games outside of their home region in a two-year rolling window. GUR teams that have not met this minimum have a “provisional” ranking.

Q: Will competitive/sanctioned games be played between Jan and Sept of 2023? Answered December 15, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

Sanctioning will begin in January of 2023, and will end on July 1, 2024.

Q: If we do not qualify/are invited to a regional tournament, will there be no sanctioned games played between Oct '23 and Jan '25 for us? Answered December 15, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

Play will be sanctionable all year every year, up until the start of the new season, which is July 1 of even-numbered years. Your region cannot sanction during your region's Off Season, which your region will determine for themselves.

Q: Will there only be a regional tournament and championship every other calendar year? Answered December 15, 2022

For our new international competitive pathway, this is correct. But any league can host their own tournaments whenever they want, and they are free to base invitations on rankings!

Q: Are off-seasons proposed to be the same across a Region, to be decided by region members, or ad-hoc on a by-league basis? Answered November 4, 2022

Same across a region to ensure real recovery and consistency.

Q: Does this mean World Championships would be offset - i.e. the first cycle could be in fall/winter but cycle 2's would be 18 months later in spring/summer? Answered November 4, 2022

No. World Championships will always be in the second half of even numbered years.

Q: What's the minimum length for required off season? If not decided, what lengths are being considered? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023

There will be three months of off-season each year (except 2023, where it's only one month). They do not have to be in a single block.

Q: So WFTDA would define off-season from a region as no sanctioned game play? Answered November 4, 2022

The region would decide when to have their off-season, during which no gameplay amongst teams in that region would be sanctionable, count towards regional rankings, or qualification for a regional rank.

Teams

Q: When can a team add their additional team (b team) if we didn't add them with our original registration? Answered January 5, 2023

If you have not yet submitted the registration form, you may add your additional team or teams via that same form. If you have already submitted the form, email games@wftda.com and provide us with the FTS links, if applicable. If there is no FTS link, that is fine, your B team will start out unranked and will need to play a Seeding game, just like every other team.

Q: Can a "C" team opt into the regionalized championship structure or are leagues restricted to entering a maximum of two teams per league? Answered November 4, 2022

Leagues may enter as many teams as they wish into this structure.

Q: Can regions form all-star teams to send to the world championships? Answered November 4, 2022

For a team to compete, it must be managed within a WFTDA League. Any such team that completes the requisite games and follows associated regulations during the Regional Qualification period will be eligible for participation in Regional Championships. If that team places at Regional Championships and the placement at Regional Championships qualifies them for World Championships, they are eligible to compete there.

Q: Can you enter different teams into different regions? Answered November 4, 2022

Yes.

Rosters

Q: How does a skater join a second team in the member portal? Answered February 1, 2023

If the team is in the same league, the skater does not have to do anything. Once the skater is assigned the role of Skater, they will be able to be added to any one of the league's teams.

If the team is in another league, the skater needs to request a transfer to join the second league (but do not remove their relationship with the original league). Once the league admin from the second league approves the skater, and assigns the skater the role of Skater in their league, then the skater will be made available in the charter roster submission tool for both leagues. If there are any problems with this process, email portal@wftda.com for assistance.

Q: What are the rules for dual chartering and charter transfers? If they're not yet solidified, when can they be expected to be released? Answered January 5, 2023

Skaters are allowed to be on two active charters at the same time. The two charters can be on different WFTDA leagues if they want. We do not care if a skater is also playing in another organization or outside of WFTDA leagues. After adding a skater to your charter, there is a 30-day waiting period before they can participate in a sanctioned game. This does not apply to the “initial charter” for a team, which will have no waiting period. We are working on updating the sanctioning and charter system as well as policy documents and will release them as soon as possible.

Q: For clarification, skaters can play on an A team and B team, but can only be associated with one WFTDA league, correct?

Curious if skaters could play in multiple leagues or if that might be restricted to playing for one league, but multiple teams within that league. (Hope that makes sense.)

Can a player play on more than one WFTDA team per region?

Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated February 28, 2023

This is our proposal for charter requirements for the new system:

For Individual Skaters:

- All skaters must be 18 years old or older.
- A skater may only be on two WFTDA Charters at any one time. These Charters are not required to be from the same league.*

**A skater may additionally be on the Charters of other governing bodies (e.g. MRDA, JRDA, USARS), according to the rules of those organizations. WFTDA does not restrict participation in other sporting organizations.*

For Chartered Teams:

- A Chartered Team must be affiliated with a WFTDA league.
- No two Chartered Teams may exceed a maximum of 8 overlapping skaters.

- If two Chartered Teams with shared skaters reach post-season tournaments, the maximum number of overlapping skaters is reduced from 8 to 3.
- Chartered Teams will be a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 20 concurrent skaters, with a maximum of 15 rostered on a per-game basis. **(EDIT: The existing minimum of 7 was not included, and is now added for clarity.)**
- Changes to Chartered Team membership will take 30 days to process.
 - Teams have until noon the following day to make edits to names/numbers or remove skaters, but they cannot add skaters after charter submission.
 - Roster deadlines are set by the organizing league or organization.

For WFTDA Leagues:

- A WFTDA League can have as many or as few Chartered Teams as they would like. There is no requirement to have a charter team or to participate in sanctioned play.

Q: If multiple charters can rank from the same league, will there rules preventing sanctioned games between charters associated with the same league? What would prevent one charter team benefiting from another charter team in the same league "taking a result for the league" to "allow" one charter to earn the result necessary for the other to qualify for a particular ranking or tournament?

Answered November 4, 2022

Games between teams from the same league do not count towards rankings.

Q: Curious how team membership, charters, etc will impact rankings if B and C teams are playing competitively (which is great!). Also with post COVID there has been so much sharing and borrowing of players, curious how some leagues will be able to play sanctioned games if they don't have enough skaters.

Answered November 4, 2022

Teams will still need to roster a minimum number of skaters in order to apply to sanction a game. We have seen in some areas that teams who have had significant attrition have banded together to compete while they recruit and regrow. We want to support this strategy.

Q: Would the number of allowed crossover skaters be different at all if the teams were in two different regions? Answered November 4, 2022

We are not considering this for the 2023-2024 cycle but will reconsider if the need arises.

Q: How do we encourage developmental gameplay (gameplay that is not necessarily about rankings or winning but more about learning from a higher ranked team in your region) to potentially slowly alleviate the ranking anomalies we see in some regions?

I'm hoping to hear about opportunities for sanctioned and ranked competitive gameplay (including tournaments) for D3 teams in 2023.

Answered November 4, 2022

The goal of the system is to provide appropriate competition for more teams in more leagues, by having the first step “big deal” tournament on the way to World Championships within local regions. By defining qualifying gameplay more narrowly and in a geographic context, increasing gameplay within regions, and improving our algorithm, it ensures that most teams are not required to travel globally in order to qualify for World Championships. Additionally, this should also help to alleviate ranking anomalies that exist today by ranking teams in groups that are more interconnected and statistically relevant to each other.

The first year or two will absolutely be a time of learning, alongside competition. We as a community need to figure out what roller derby looks like in 2023 and 2024 and what we need to do to support it.

Sanctioning

Q: Also will the sanctioning requirement of 30 days still be in effect or will the number of days to submit items be changed? **Answered January 5, 2023**

We will retain the 30 day requirement for submitting charters as we need this time to validate and prepare the charters. The process to submit a new charter is currently being created, so please look out for information soon. If you need to create a charter or sanction a game in January or February, it might not be ready – email your charter to games@wftda.com and please be patient as we are currently doing everything manually!

Q: I understand that in any given game, teams can choose whether a game can count towards regional rankings or GUR. Do both teams need to agree?

Answered January 5, 2023 / Updated February 1, 2023

Teams do not need to agree. What happens depends on whether the teams have established their rank within the GUR. A team's GUR ranking is "established" if they have played 5 games within the two years prior to the sanctioned game in question.

If two teams from the same league play each other, and both have established rankings in the GUR, the game will affect both local and GUR rankings. If either team's GUR ranking is provisional (or doesn't exist), the game will not affect either team's GUR rankings (but it will still affect their local region's rankings.)

Q: Is there a way to see other teams' charters? I ask because we want to be sure (as it was posted) that people do not use "guest skaters" etc and we've had a problem with that in the past. Answered January 5, 2023

We are currently working on retooling our chartering and sanctioning process. This is a feature we would like to have, and we will provide more information in the future on this. In the meantime, you could request to see the official charter as a part of your bout contract, or ask a team to share it with you.

Q: Will they need to be sanctioned in the same way they were in the past? Will the sanctioned games have the same requirements as before? Answered November 4, 2022

We are reviewing all games requirements as a part of this restructure process and are looking to simplify wherever possible. Additionally, we need to review our technology to determine what additional development will be necessary to implement our changes. We may need to phase our implementation of changes and instructions and training will be provided to leagues.

In the meantime, it would be helpful if your member portal league administrators review your league members to ensure that your membership is accurate and that skaters are all assigned the role of Skater. To do this, they should go to the league home page and do this under Manage Organizational Contacts. If you have any questions, please use the league admin user guide posted on the [login page](#), or email Bones at portal@wftda.com.

Q: How much consideration has gone into rethinking the small details of sanctioned games - track requirements, patch requirements, contract timelines, etc. Answered November 4, 2022

We are currently reviewing our requirements across the WFTDA, to match them with the new competitive system. Our goal is to simplify wherever possible. A change like this will echo across every committee and league across the world, so we need to

start here. If you are interested in rethinking any downstream policy, email games@wftda.com to get involved!

Q: Do you need to as a league opt into another region or GUR prior to organizing a game outside of your region in order for it to be sanctioned?

Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

Teams can opt in to the GUR at any time! But, two teams from different regions must both be in the GUR in order to sanction a game. These games help to establish your GUR ranking. Your ranking in the GUR is “established” if you have played five games against teams from other regions within the prior two years. Before that, their GUR ranking is considered “provisional.”

If two teams are both in the GUR and also from the same region, a sanctioned game always counts for that region. But GUR rankings are only affected if both teams’ GUR rankings are “established.”

Finance

Q: One of the challenges coming out of covid was highlighted as financial, and this process focuses all financial burden in a 6 month period in 2024 for teams likely competitive in regional and global champs. How do you anticipate this impacting global champs, given 5 teams dropped out in 2019?

Answered November 4, 2022

We are planning to provide significantly greater forward notice of these events in terms of date and location to enable forward planning. That’s one huge reason for delaying the first “competitive season” (Regional and World Championships) until 2024. Typically some top teams would need to travel intercontinentally 3 times in 6 months (pre pandemic). This is down to once every 2 years, unless the team opts in to GUR.

Q: For membership, is consideration being made to payment structures? Conversion of £ to \$ has really stung this year making it harder for us in the UK.

Answered November 4, 2022

Thank you for this feedback. The WFTDA will likely review payment structures in light of this new competitive structure and our strategic plan and operational needs. WFTDA will hold renewal in July 2023 and will announce our dues structure prior to this renewal period.

Membership and Open Division

Q: Are any changes to the process of becoming a charter league?

Has the application process for new leagues joining WFTDA changed at all since the pandemic? Answered November 4, 2022

WFTDA is going to look at our membership process in 2023. Currently we are focusing on our competitive structures as this is the most important part of our membership offerings. We want to add more leagues and teams to the system so leagues can have more than one charter team, but we aren't ready to compromise on our code of conduct, so speeding up the process of onboarding leagues and teams needs to be looked at carefully. If this topic interests you, please join the conversation at <https://community.wftda.org>

Q: Is the open division scrapped/on hold? Answered November 4, 2022

We were going to test in 2020 but had to put it on hold with the pandemic. We will look to re-launch this in the future but first must focus on launching our new structure for our current division. If you are interested you can email Bones at opendivision@wftda.com to get updates and on a list for future testing.

Q: Are all teams within a league required to be WFTDA gender compliant, or will any be able to be open gender (and play sanctioned WFTDA games)? I know open gender division was being discussed prior to the pandemic.

Answered November 4, 2022

All teams participating in our competitive structures will need to meet the requirements for WFTDA membership, which include our [Gender Policy](#). When we relaunch our Open Division beta test, or any Open Division, we will announce it broadly.

WFTDA does not have any rule against a skater playing for another team outside of our organization, including MRDA and JRDA teams.

Association Matters

Q: There was an initiative in the past to bring MRDA and Juniors under one umbrella... are we still moving forward to bring them under the WFTDA umbrella to create one derby association. Answered November 4, 2022

This is outside of the scope of this task force, but WFTDA continues to communicate and collaborate with these associations, as well as National Governing Bodies (NGBs). There are no current plans to create one association at this time.

Q: Will the association consider changing the name and dropping the “W” to include gender neutral skaters to feel welcome? Or those who have transitioned or are in transition. Answered November 4, 2022

This is not in scope for this work program, but we are aware a proposal has been made.

Q: What about NGB interactions, European competitions? Answered November 4, 2022

Our task force includes members of several of our European partner organizations and our goal is to align the WFTDA's competitive system and goals with those of our international partners. We will reach out to them officially once we have a plan that we've put together with feedback from you, our members.

Rankings

Q: Why did you choose to use FTS for “rankings” when teams were told 2022 games would not count towards any rankings?

I thought you said initial rankings would be based on Flat Track Stats, but Jan 5th rankings aren't the same. Clarify please? Answered January 5, 2023

Flat Track Stats (FTS) rankings are being used for an initial seed, but will not count toward rankings after the first game is played in the ranking season. All of the other options we explored would require teams to have to play a relatively large number of games to get useful rankings.

We took a snapshot of FTS on December 1, 2022 and converted their data such that the predicted score ratio for any game is the same with the WFTDA algorithm/points as it is with the FTS algorithm/points.

In detail: We set up a virtual team with 1000 FTS points and 2000 WFTDA points. (This choice of numbers is essentially arbitrary - choosing different numbers would have multiplied each team's WFTDA points by the same factor, leaving ratios unchanged.) Then for each actual team we calculated the predicted score

ratio against this virtual team using the FTS algorithm and set their WFTDA points to the same ratio.

Remember: any team that feels that their FTS assigned ranking is off can choose to start unranked. (See our answer below about whether you should start out unranked.) We know that this initial seed is not going to be ideal, but we think it's the best option available that works for the most teams, including B and C teams joining the ranking system. (Note: this will be similar for future seasons - we will use the previous season's WFTDA rankings as your initial seed, which for some teams will not be very accurate due to retirements and transfers.)

Q: Do the initial seeding points get discarded once a sanctioned game has been played, so they do not contribute to the weighted average once play has started?

Answered January 5, 2023 / Updated April 7, 2023

Yes. Once a team has played at least one sanctioned game, their rankings point average will be calculated from this game/these games only and the seeding will not be taken into account.

Note however that if a team plays more sanctioned games in the same month as the first one, the game points for all these games will be calculated using the seeding, as no new average will have been computed by then.

Q: Nobody will play our team! Everyone thinks we are under-ranked so they don't want to take the chance! What should we do?

Answered March 20, 2023

If your team has not yet played any sanctioned games, you can drop your "seed" and play a "seeding game." This is similar to how Strength Factor Challenges used to work. You would find a team to play, and play a seeding game. The seeding game will not affect your opponent's ranking (which is good for them), and the resulting score will become your new rank.

That way, your new rank will be trustworthy (because it is based on gameplay) and your opponent will not run a risk of losing rank! As an added bonus, if the game is close, it still counts towards your requirement of "five close games" to qualify you for Regional Championships!

When choosing a team to play for a "seeding game," choose a team that is similar in skill to your own team. How close do you think the game will be? If you think the final score will be a 2:1 ratio (like, a final score of 100 to 200) or closer, that is perfect, but even if the ratio is as big as 4:1 (like 50 to 200, or 100 to 400) you will end up with an accurate rank.

If your team has already played some sanctioned games so that your rank is based on real gameplay, the only way out is through. Playing more sanctioned games is the best way to correct things. This is how teams that improve in skill have to work to improve their rank. If that doesn't work, it all clears out again next season, when you can once again choose to play a seeding game.

Q: I don't think my team's initial seeding ranks us correctly. Should we become unranked? Answered January 5, 2023

That depends on how far your seed is off. Find a place in the overall list where you think your team belongs. Then, take the seeding points of one of the teams that's right there and your own seeding points. Divide the larger of those values by the smaller one.

- If the result is higher than about 4 then there is a significant chance that one game will not be enough to correct your ranking and it is probably better to drop the seed.
- Below that a single game should be enough to adjust your ranking either way and other factors become important.

For example, talk to the team you want to play first in the upcoming season. If your opponent would rather not have the game affect their rankings, you can go unranked, and this "seeding game" will set your rank correctly. (But it won't count towards minimums for your opponent.) Or, if your opponent is comfortable with your current rank, you should keep it and let the game solve the problem for you. Obviously, the closer your seeding is to where it should be, the less of a problem this should be.

For most teams it will be better to start with the FTS initial seed, even if the seed doesn't perfectly represent your team due to different game situations during the last few years. If you're still unsure which of the two options is best for your team, please reach out.

Q: What happened with seeding when teams didn't (or really, couldn't) play games in 2022? Answered January 5, 2023

We decided that this was the "least bad option," knowing that not every team got to play and not every team was correctly ranked in Flat Track Stats. This seeding drops off after the first game is played, and there is the option to drop the seeding if you think it is best. Please feel free to reach out to us if you need any support.

Q: Where are these Jan 5 rankings located? Answered January 5, 2023

These are posted on the community at:

<https://community.wftda.org/discussion/setting-up-our-2023-competitive-season-what-to-expect> and on the [WFTDA Member Reference Sheet to 2023 Competition](#).

We will release updates to this at the start of every month until May 1, 2023. After that date, any teams who haven't accepted their FTS seed will no longer have the option to do so. They will instead need to play a Seeding Game to get a seed.

Q: Does the one game to remain ranked need to qualify as “close”?

Answered January 5, 2023, updated March 19, 2023

No - any sanctioned game will suffice to keep your team ranked for the competitive cycle. Close games are only required to qualify for Regional Championships. However, if you expect the game to be a blowout (4:1 ratio or worse), you should consider playing a seeding game instead, against a team with a closer rank.

Q: How many in-region sanctioned games is a team required to play per year to continue to be eligible for rankings and playoffs? Answered January 5, 2023, updated March 19, 2023

Eligibility for rankings requires one sanctioned game per season (2 years). Eligibility for Regional Championships (which are similar to “playoffs” in prior seasons) requires 5 *close* games per season.

Q: Wondering if sanctioning minimums will be flexible in 2023 for remaining WFTDA? Is there a minimum number of sanctioned games that must be played in order to maintain ranking? What if you don't meet the minimum?

Answered January 5, 2023

The minimum to maintain ranking is 1 game per 2-year season. If this is not met, the team becomes unranked and has to play a seeding game before they can play regular sanctioned games again. The number of sanctioned games played does not affect membership status.

Q: What are the qualifying standards for regionals? Is this simply a seeding game + at least 4 games? Does 5 close games per 2 year season include playoff/champs games? Answered January 5, 2023

Yes it can be as little as one seeding game and four sanctioned games as long as all five of them meet the “close” requirement as specified in the document.

Games at Regional Championships necessarily happen after the cutoff for the respective season and before the next season starts. So they cannot count towards the minimum for either. However, World Championships happen after the following season has started and thus if two teams from the same region play each other there, the game can count towards minimums and rankings for that season.

Q: Will teams maintain their ranking point averages for a month as in the previous system or are ranking points updates "instant?" Answered January 5, 2023

Rankings will be updated monthly as in the old system. Only seeding games go into effect immediately (like SFC games did in the old system).

Q: Why are the sanctioned games for the first 6 months weighted at 0.5, and everything after that is weighted as 1? Answered January 5, 2023

As we approach Regional Championships, we want the most recent games to count more as they are most representative of the ability of the teams. We wanted to not discount earlier games totally, as people have different scheduling needs. This also means that a really bad game won't stick with you all the way to Championships if you keep playing games.

Q: How did you test this new method (for example, did you run prior seasons game data through the new algorithm), and what were the results?

Answered January 5, 2023

Members of the taskforce spent hours running different algorithms with previous data and assessing their accuracy. We think that this system and the caps will help us humanize the sport a bit and make games make more sense for teams.

Q: Will Strength Factor Challenges (SFC) still exist in the new structure?

Answered January 5, 2023

Seeding games fulfill a similar purpose to that which SFC games did. Right now they are only available for unranked teams that want to enter the ranking but that may change in the future.

Q: How does this new competitive structure help lower-ranked leagues when teams who are able to support multiple teams can do so? Answered January 5, 2023

It offers these lower-ranked leagues more potential opponents for sanctioned games as an "additional teams" (a "B team") from local larger leagues may fall into just the

right strength bracket. Plus, with the cap on the algorithm, it makes more teams available to play because a blowout won't hurt the higher-ranked team. The regional focus means there isn't a requirement to travel to make one's game requirements. Additionally, by adding B teams, more skaters will be able to play. So, everyone has a better chance of being able to play the derby that they want to play.

Q: What if your team has signed up for competitive ranking but no longer wants to play competitively in 2023? Answered January 5, 2023

Sanctioned games are not required. They can just not sanction any games. Please contact us if you need to be removed from the rankings entirely.

Q: I've been trying to find a calculation tool to figure out the scoring? For those of us that do not have degrees in mathematics haha it would be very helpful to have an easy way to calculate games and scoring needs. =) Answered January 5, 2023

We will put in a request to have someone build a tool for us to help you with this! However, the algorithm is public – so if anyone is interested in building this tool for us, please contact games@wftda.com!

Q: Will state/provincial teams be eligible for ranking under either of the new systems? Answered January 5, 2023

For at least the 2023-2024 season, only teams registered by a member league and consisting of their members can be added to the ranking. So a state/provincial team could be "hosted" by a member league, to become eligible. A few such teams have already been registered.

We will look into our membership requirements and will see how we can broaden our ability to accommodate other types of teams, such as state/provincial teams, diaspora teams, ad-hoc "mixed-league" or "superleague" teams, and more.

Q: What will be the minimum number of games played to be ranked? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated January 5, 2023

The minimum number of games to be ranked is one game. However, there is a requirement to play five "close" games per season, as explained in the rankings document, in order to qualify for Regional Championships.

Q: How will an opt in to global ranking work if regions have different season structures/off seasons? Wouldn't some regions potentially have to forfeit this? If a region was to have a slightly later off season (for example extreme heat in

August in Southern Europe) wouldn't they then be at a disadvantage? Which region gets priority? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

The GUR does not have an off season. You can sanction games in the GUR during your Region's off-season, but if your opponent is from the same region, it will not count towards your home region's rankings if it occurs during the off-season.

Q: It was mentioned about being more inclusive game play for a leagues lower ranking team (B, C). Will we be doing rankings for B and C level teams as well?

Answered November 4, 2022

Any team that meets the games requirements for a region and wants to be ranked, can and will be ranked.

Q: How is WFTDA planning to prevent a new "gamify" of regional rankings? ex: How will you handle leagues in regions refusing to play or schedule against those they think will negatively affect their rankings?

Can you clarify how WFTDS will monitor/ensure teams are getting scheduled regional games if leagues in their region perceive that they may lose to your team and then refuse to schedule with them.

Answered November 4, 2022

The plan is to have a system where there is no reason to reject a game based on expected outcome, plus having a high enough games requirement that a league's true skill will shine through.

Q: Is there an option for having a rankings rep per league? Answered November 4, 2022

We are looking into a variety of rankings systems and will definitely consider this.

Q: When new rankings are considered, are we using historical game data or will it be based on games starting in '23? i.e. is everyone starting at 0?

Answered November 4, 2022

This will depend on the algorithm used. But most likely we will have to use historical data to have some initial calibration to make sense of the first few games that get sanctioned, but then games played in 2023 will quickly become dominant.

Q: Can a league/team opt to be both part of a region and the GUR and essentially have 2 different rankings? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

Yes, the GUR is “in addition to” the Regional rankings, and the rankings will be calculated separately.

Q: Will regional games ever count for GUR rankings too (if both teams are in the GUR and the region), or are those rankings totally separate?

Can one game be entered into both a specific region *and* GUR rankings, if both teams are within both regions - or would you need to choose, or would it automatically be GUR? Answered November 4, 2022 / Updated February 1, 2023

Teams need to “establish” their ranking in the GUR by playing teams from other regions. A team’s ranking is “established” if they have played five such games within the prior two years. Until then, the GUR ranking is “provisional” and cannot be used for rankings.

When your team plays another team that is in both the GUR and your own geographic region, the game will always affect your home region. If both teams have an “established” GUR ranking, it will also affect the GUR ranking. These games can count towards the “game minimums” to qualify for Regional Championships, but they never count towards “establishing” a ranking in the GUR.

Q: Why not remove ranking and allow for true playoffs by region?

Answered November 4, 2022

At this time it is not logistically or financially feasible to treat roller derby in the way that professional sports are treated. It is beyond the means both of teams and the WFTDA to require teams to travel many times to be able to play certain specific opponents.

Tournaments

Q: How will non-championship tournaments feed towards rankings? Will this mean the end to international (non-regional) tournaments that are not related to champs? Answered November 4, 2022

Many international tournaments are already largely within a region. These may form part of GUR or regional play, or possibly both in some cases (see above)!

Q: How many teams will be invited to the regionals? Will it encompass those that were going to Cup tournaments as well or just the top 20ish teams?

Answered December 15, 2022

Invitations to Regional Championships will need to be based on ranking so that the best-ranked teams are invited. We will work with Regions to help them set up the best Regional Championships tournament for them. That could mean many things so we can't yet say "how many" will be invited.

Q: How will the regional play impact tournaments folks are planning for the 2023 season? Should leagues only admit certain teams in their region?

Answered November 4, 2022

It shouldn't have any effect. The teams playing in that tournament between regions would count for GUR. If some of the games are between teams in a given region, those would count towards regional qualification.

Q: Have the impacts to previously annual tournaments hosted by leagues been considered with the two-year cycle? Would the expectation be that these would take the year of regional and global champs off, and only run during qualification periods? Answered November 4, 2022

There's no requirement for any changes. There will be a "cutoff day" for 2024 Regional Championships, and the next day, pending any offseason(s), games could count towards the next cycle's game minimums and ultimately 2026 Regional Championships (depending on when a region chooses their off-season to be).

Officiating

Q: How are officials being consulted on this system and what can they expect to see change about staffing as a result of this? Answered January 5, 2023

Several Officials were included in our task force and are a fundamental part of the sport and the WFTDA. We have also started talks with our Officiating Pillar on the support needed for officials as our sport recovers.

We hope that by increasing regional play, officials will have more officiating opportunities closer to home, while the GUR will still allow global participation and skill development, like it does for players. We don't anticipate the rankings algorithm changes will change anything for officials. Officials will not be "tied" to a region in any way (so, an official from North America West would record a game they officiate between North America South teams the same as a game for their local region). Many officials have long set Playoffs and Cups as a personal "goal" which Regional Championships and World Championships should also fulfill.

Of course, as we are building the future of our sport together, we would love your feedback and help to make this work well for officials and players alike. This needs to be an effort by not just officials, but our entire community, as we are already seeing staffing shortages in certain regions who have started up play.

Q: You mention that more sanctioned games as a benefit; but retention over the hiatus has been pretty bad -- is this just a recipe for increased burnout of the remaining officials as they become even more overworked than they were before with dubious concerted efforts to promote sustainable practices w/r/t officiating and rebuilding and keeping official recruitment and engagement high? Answered January 5, 2023

This is absolutely a problem and was a problem even before the pandemic. We want to make sure that WFTDA can help leagues find more learning opportunities for officials. We started discussions about statistics, adding team staff on benches so non-officials can support team stats, flexible staffing for leagues and officials who want to try different things. We have to have serious discussions about how to manage our scheduling with officiating in mind because we have a habit of booking game after game after game without having a sustainable program. Our ART Project team had some ideas about supporting officiating via education, certification and even exchange programs. We need leagues to listen to their officials and provide the support they need for retention, recruitment, and development. We can't leave it to the officials alone.

Q: I've seen a lot of leagues come back with no training for officials, and it's made the games as we come back pretty unsafe and not uniform. Answered November 4, 2022

Minimum Skills were revamped to the This is Roller Derby curriculum. That curriculum provides support for officiating as well. In addition, WFTDA has opened up all certification officiating lessons except for the advanced level courses and tests. These courses are a great resource for training your officials.

Officials recruiting and retention has been an issue for many years and admittedly we still don't have a grasp on how many officials will be returning to our sport and competitions. It is imperative that our leagues and the WFTDA work together to build a program that officials want to be a part of.

Q: Will officials need to be certified in order to apply for region competition games? Answered November 4, 2022

WFTDA Certification is not prepared to support a requirement in time for the 2024 Regional or World Championship cycle. Beyond that, this will be up to the WFTDA Tournament Officials Selection Panel (TOSP).

Miscellaneous

Q: Will there be a 2023 WFTDA Recognized Tournaments program? If not, will something similar replace them and/or the Back on Track broadcast initiative? Where should tournaments interested in partnership with WFTDA for promotion and broadcast look to for expectations, requirements, and points of contact?

Answered January 5, 2023

We are going to bring the program back but want to take a look at what requirements we have, what promotion we promise and can execute, how this program can work with our officiating and competitive play goals and how we can work with Broadcast. Broadcast is still running the Remote Studio program so that is available to anyone interested and you don't need much equipment to join. We will look to restart this program once we have the main system running.

Q: How will the Fair Play Principle mentioned in the document be enforced? I am thinking especially about gaming the system by being picky about opponents and sanctioning. Answered January 5, 2023

From the algorithm point of view, we decided we needed something that is clear and accurate and could not cover every case. However some of the unfortunate situations that occurred in the past were due to the past algorithm. We do think that the cap system will help with this mathematically so teams will play more teams.

Our goal is to educate and consult with leagues about how to use this system and to try and encourage teams to get games in and make roller derby happen. We are discussing using the Games Review Panel for issues that need more scrutiny as they were the ones who managed any issues under our games policies.

We wanted to create a system where more teams can play more roller derby. We think this system will allow teams at all levels to play more games without a hit on their rankings. This way we can have ways for leagues to meet their goals, even if they are different from goals of other leagues. We think this will work, we are going to keep making adjustments to make it even better. Your feedback is really important to us as we start this process and build our systems, staff and resources back up again. We want sustainable programs and programs that make our member leagues successful so we can be successful.

Q: Will a longer competition cycle have any ramifications for the cadence of rules votes and updates? Will there be an official “no more annual rules changes”?

Answered November 4, 2022

This decision is up to the WFTDA Rules Committee.

Q: I'm unclear if this system accommodates the range of commitment to the game, from people who just want to roll without worrying about rankings, all the way to people who want to devote themselves to going all the way to the world championships. Answered November 4, 2022

Yes, this is desired to support more roller derby, at every level, and for every game to count in the way each team would like. Not every team in a league needs to enter into the ranking system. But having a competitive pathway closer to home should be appealing to many teams, and many teams may want to know where they stand with respect to other leagues in their region, even if they do not aspire to Regional Championships.

Q: How do we navigate back to play at a competitive level and promote skater & league retention? Answered November 4, 2022

We are hoping that organizations will think more critically about the needs of their local population and create a program where the athletes, volunteers and others feel invested and energized. We want to support leagues creating a system where more participants can play derby and we hope by tweaking our algorithm, supporting regional play and growth and allowing more teams into our system we create an environment where leagues can do this. These are great questions and this is where WFTDA can also provide some support by bringing member leagues together to share ideas and successes, much like we did with the incubator sessions we held in the past.

Concerns, not questions?

Genuinely feel you're going to drive a lot of people out of the sport without competitive tournaments or champs to aim for in the near future.

I am concerned about competitive teams seeing massive dropping out of players if they do not make regional champs, since they will have to wait two years to have that opportunity again. Answered November 4, 2022

We want to look into ways of supporting regional gameplay as more than just “rankings plus Champs” in the future. But we had to focus on what we can get in

place for 2023 first. Given the state of many leagues today, they are not ready to “hit the ground running” on January 1, 2023. Some may be, but too many leagues are not operating at full steam so it would not be fair to formally host a competitive season in 2023.

The WFTDA also does not have the administrative capacity to plan and host a tournament cycle with under one year’s notice. We used to announce playoff locations at the prior year’s Championships tournament, which would be last week (Sunday, November 6), so we cannot provide teams the advance notice they need to be able to travel to a Regional or World Championship tournament. We haven’t even put out a call for hosts, and can’t, until we know what hosts we will need.

We also note that World Championships 2024 is already less than two years away, and Regional Championships 2024 is less than eighteen months from today. We would expect World Championships to happen at “old Champs time” at the very latest, which was last week.

Even still, we are not preventing any team or league from hosting a rankings-based invitational tournament for their Region or for the GUR to take place in October or November 2023, representing the “biggest deal tournament of 2023” (or for 2025, or any off-cycle year!) But, the WFTDA is logistically unable to coordinate and host such an event in 2023.

In terms of future cycles being two years long, we believe that most skaters who choose to retire choose to stay “until championships” or choose to retire immediately after championships (before the next season starts). A longer cycle may actually extend some skaters’ careers as the prize is a bit further off. But this is a double-edged sword, as we want to respect skaters who have made the decision to move on from our sport, and not try to keep them playing to “wait for champs” if their heart is no longer in it.

Finally, we want to acknowledge that burnout is real, and that many leagues and skaters simply cannot afford to travel to World Championships every year, and others do not enjoy the amount of time or energy needed to maintain a competitive team for an annual cycle. There are serious tradeoffs to be made here and this concern is valid. We will be watching this carefully.