



# WFTDA Playoffs and Championships Policies and Procedures

Updated January 2026.

## Tournament Structures

There is at least one Playoff per Region to qualify for the WFTDA Championships. Teams will be guaranteed a minimum of two games in their Playoff. Note that a "Regional Championship" is a type of Playoff.

Playoffs take place in the second quarter (from April thru June) of even years, based on the needs and preferences of the region and venue availability. The 2026 Playoffs include:

Three Regional Championships for each of the following rankings Regions:

1. WFTDA European Regional Championships (12 teams)
2. WFTDA Latin America Regional Championships (12 teams)
3. WFTDA Oceania Regional Championships (8 teams)

Four Playoffs for seeding the three North America rankings Regions:

1. WFTDA North America Playoffs - Richmond, CA (12 teams)
2. WFTDA North America Playoffs - Waterloo, ON (12 teams planned)
3. WFTDA North America Playoffs - Columbia, SC (12 teams)
4. WFTDA North America Playoffs - Lansing, MI (12 teams)

WFTDA Championships take place in September, October, or November of even years. The 2026 event is a 16-team, 4-day tournament.

## Invitations and Seeding

### Playoffs

Teams will be assigned to these locations at the [Regional Cutoff Date](#) per the [Seeding Procedures](#) listed below.

### Qualification for Playoffs

To qualify for Playoffs, regardless of rank, a team must play five "close" games within their region (defined in the [WFTDA Rankings Policy and Algorithm](#) document), with the exception of Latin America, who can qualify by playing only one sanctioned game (close or not), or in the case of Brazil, via a National qualifying tournament.

## Calculating the Regional Cutoff Date

The "Cutoff" is the day on which regular-season gameplay can impact Playoffs invitations and seedings. It happens on the first of a month, such that that month's rankings and the team's number of qualifying games define who will and will not be invited.

The Competitive Play panel sets the Rankings Cutoff Date for a Region based on when that Region's Playoff(s) begin.

- If the Playoff(s) include or are after the 15th of the month, the Cutoff will be the first day of the prior month.
- If the tournament ends before the 15th, the Cutoff will be the first day of two months prior.

Example: If a Playoff starts on May 14, the second day is the 15th, so it includes the 15th. The Rankings Cutoff Date will be April 1st.

Example: If a Playoff starts on May 22, which is after the 15th, the Rankings Cutoff month will still be April 1st.

Example: If a Playoff begins on June 5th, then it will not include the 15th of the month, so the Cutoff is two months prior, which is also April 1st.

- The Competitive Play Committee reserves the right to change this policy if absolutely necessary, as it was this year for Latin America (see below).
- Any request for an exemption from the game requirements is due prior to the Rankings Cutoff Date.

For 2026, we will use the following cutoffs for invitations::

- North American Playoffs - April 1, 2026
- European Championships - April 1, 2026
- Oceania Championships - May 1st, 2026
- Latin America Championships: Cutoff is November 1, 2025, with granted extensions occurring through November 25. At that point, live rankings rather than a release date are used to determine invitations.

## Seeding Procedures

Competitive Play will issue invitations to teams and will manage seeding into Playoffs immediately following the Region's Cutoff date for all regions except Latin America, which uses a Qualification Cutoff Date based on Live Rankings on November 25th, and a Seeding Cutoff Date of March 1, 2026.

### Europe and Oceania Invitations and Seeding

For these Regional Championships, at the Rankings Cutoff Date Competitive Play will invite and seed the top teams in the Region into the bracket until the bracket is full. If a team is unable to participate, then the next highest placed team will take their seed and all invited teams will move up a seed. The next eligible team will be invited into the tournament at the lowest seed.

## Latin America Invitations and Seeding

If there are more eligible teams than available spots, Competitive Play will invite teams based on the November 25 rankings, with unranked teams slotted in according to other pre-approved data.

Competitive Play will then drop teams starting at the bottom of this list with the following constraints:

- Only one team per country will be dropped.
- If a country has only one team on the list, that team will not be dropped.

If after dropping one team per country there still are more teams than available spots, then another iteration will follow until the available spots are filled.

Teams that are dropped during this procedure are put on a waiting list and may get invited if another team declines their invitation, does not pay the tournament fee on-time, or drops out for other reasons. In that scenario, the team that withdraws is preferably replaced by a team from the same country.

Competitive Play will create an appropriate 12-team bracket and seeding to best benefit the teams playing the tournament and to establish a winner/placements to go to WFTDA Championships. The bracket will be announced in March, after the Rankings Cutoff Date.

## North America Invitations and Seeding

### **Key Takeaways:**

- "Playoffs" refers to any tournament where a team can qualify for Championships
- North America will have four Playoffs, maybe including teams from multiple regions
- All qualified teams will be invited to a Playoff without mandating that any team crosses the U.S. border
- Seeding and assignments balance competitive integrity with border/access issues
- Process: Preferences → assignments → invitations → seeding

## **TOURNAMENT LOCATIONS**

May 15-17	NA-West, Richmond, CA, USA	Bay Area Roller Derby
May 22-24	NA-South, Columbia, SC, USA	Columbia Roller Derby
May 29-31	NA-Northeast, Lansing, MI, USA	TBD
June 5-7	NA-Northeast, Waterloo, ONT, Canada	Tri-City Roller Derby

## INVITATION PROCESS IN DETAIL

This will occur in four phases:

1. **Preference collection**, starting February 15th
2. **Assignment of Qualified Teams**, April 1st-7th (tentative)
3. **Invitation of Additional Teams**, April 7th-14th
4. **Seeding**, April 15th

### Phase 1: Preference Collection, February 15

The Competitive Play Committee will contact the top 25 teams in all North American regions, to determine if they would be willing to cross the United States border for their Region's Championships.

1. Teams in North America - Northeast, who may not wish to cross the border to Ontario to attend the Northeast Regional Championship
2. Teams in North America - South and West, from Canada or Mexico, who may not wish to cross the border to the United States to attend the South or West Regional Championship

If at this time it becomes apparent that we will be unable to assign or invite enough teams to one of the Playoffs, we may shorten that tournament to a two-day tournament.

### Phase 2: Assignment of Qualified Teams, April 1st-7th

On April 1, the "cutoff" tells us who are the qualified teams who have earned a spot at Regional Championships per our policies.

- First, the top 12 teams from each North American region will be seeded into the Playoff corresponding to their Region, per the grid above.
- Second, for teams that would need to cross a border and do not wish to, those teams will be re-seeded into another tournament, which could be any of the above three or the fourth "contingency" Playoff venue. For example, a Canadian team from NA-West might be re-seeded into the tournament in Ontario.
- Third, using the [Merged North America system](#), other teams may also be moved from their home region's Playoff to another region's Playoff, if this is necessary to maintain the goal of having competitive play and to ensure that every Playoff has at least one slot for WFTDA Championships that is under similar contention as if we did not face border-crossing issues.

**No host leagues will be moved from their home location.**

The above initial seedings will be iterated on in communication with the qualifying teams during this week, until a working plan exists for the teams that have earned a spot.

### **Phase 3: Invitation of Additional Teams**

Once qualified teams are assigned to tournaments, there will be several additional open spots to fill out the 12-team bracket for those tournaments. We hope to begin this phase in the second week of April. Invitations will first be offered using the same Merged North America system to the next-highest-ranked teams in North America. If there remain spots open at one or more tournaments after going far enough down in the Merged North America rank such that additional invitations would not result in competitive play during the tournament, the WFTDA may invite non-WFTDA teams such as diaspora teams to play exhibition games.

**Note: At this point, open slots are far less flexible.** For example, if there is only one spot and it is in Canada, the option would be "Go to Canada or Decline." We will do our best to get everyone to the location they prefer, but some teams who are invited may face a choice between crossing a border or declining the opportunity to compete at Playoffs.

### **Phase 4: Seeding**

Seeding for all four tournaments will be based on the Merged North America math as of April 1st, even if it works out that all teams at a tournament are from the tournament's geographic region, and even if the last invitations aren't sent until May.

## **WFTDA Championships Invitations and Seeding**

### **(Detailed Information on the Calibration Committee and Process To Be Added)**

The Rankings Calibration Subcommittee of Competitive Play is responsible for reviewing rankings and game footage to issue bids, or invitations to the tournament to each rankings Region and for seeding the tournaments.

Rankings Calibration will announce the tournament structure and number of bids per Playoff for Championships before the first Playoff. In addition to assigning the number of available tournament slots to the top finishing team or teams in each Playoff, the Committee will create a waitlist that prioritizes the next best Playoff finishers in the case where an invited finisher is unable to attend.

Every ranking Region will retain at least one invitation to Championships, even if the original qualifying team is unable to attend.

Teams will be granted seeds in the bracket at WFTDA Champs that may not correspond directly to their finishing place at their Playoff. For example, West finisher 3rd place could be seeded as seed 3, 5, 13, or any other spot of the 16 seeds in the Championships bracket. This seed will be taken into account for assigning the Home Team as described [below](#).

## Withdrawals (from Playoffs or WFTDA Championships)

Once a team accepts an invitation and pays the deposit, withdrawal from the tournament will be considered a forfeit. Forfeits will be handled as per the [WFTDA Cancellation and Forfeit Policy](#), that deposit is subject to the host league's cancellation policy.

If a team drops out prior to the tournament:

- If it is possible to replace them, Competitive Play will invite the next-ranked and eligible team (except as noted for Latin American Regional Championships, above).
- If it is not possible to replace them, if at all possible, Competitive Play will re-work the tournament bracket with that team removed to try and ensure at least two games for every participating team.

If a team forfeits a game during the tournament, the team will be determined to have lost the game (e.g., placed in the Consolation bracket).

The Games Tournament Oversight Officer (GTO) will prepare the IGRF and any accompanying documentation.

Forfeiting teams at a Playoff may not proceed to WFTDA Championships or win a medal at a tournament.

## Scheduling Requirements

1. Any team scheduled to play two times in one day will be provided at least two games of rest time between games, unless agreed upon by all invited teams prior to the beginning of the tournament.
2. WFTDA will determine game start times in coordination with the tournament host league and Broadcast.
  - a. Game start times will be spaced by at least two hours to account for warm-up time, half time, and any stoppages in play.
  - b. The host league will be afforded game times that support ticket sales to the extent possible (e.g., Friday night to sell an evening game ticket to fans, or a start time conducive to traveling spectators from a nearby participating league).
  - c. Game times will remain fixed to the start times to the extent possible. Schedule adjustments to prevent overruns will be communicated to team captains and head officials by the host league or GTO.
  - d. The WFTDA Championships schedule will also consider:
    - i. Local time of day and time zones for participating teams on the first day.
    - ii. Broadcast times for viewership.
3. Each team will be allotted a minimum of 10-minutes dedicated warm-up time on the competition track immediately prior to the start of the game.
  - a. The lower-seeded team has the first warm up and the higher-seeded team, the

second.

- b. If there is additional time available between games, open skate time will be available to both teams after dedicated warm-ups are completed.
- c. The Outer Officiating Lane will be left clear so Officials will be allowed to use the lane for warm-ups.
- d. The track will close in the minutes prior to game start time for track maintenance.

- 4. Halftime will be 15 minutes and the track is available to teams competing in the next game for the first 10 minutes, unless otherwise communicated.
- 5. Unless otherwise discussed between Captains, Head Officials, and the GTO(s), Captains' meetings will take place as follows: for the first game of each day, Captains' meetings will occur before warmups; Captains' meetings for all other games will start at the end of halftime for the previous game.
- 6. The WFTDA will work with the host league to create a master schedule that will include all information such as registration, opening/closing ceremonies, warm-up times, meetings, locker room assignments, and merchandise table assignments.
  - a. Entertainment will be scheduled in such a way as to minimize any interference with the above schedule requirements. Any special entertainment that delays a game start will be approved by WFTDA and accounted for in the schedule.
  - b. WFTDA will post the tournament schedule in the tournament communications channel for participating teams and Officials.
    - i. The host league and GTO will update the schedule throughout the weekend.
    - ii. The GTO will ensure that the above Games requirements are maintained.

## Gameplay Policies

All tournament games will be sanctioned and subject to all rules, policies and requirements listed in the [WFTDA Sanctioning Policy](#). Additionally they are subject to the policies herein.

## Track Requirements

- 1. The track setup will conform to the guidelines in the [WFTDA Tournament Track Setup Requirements](#).

## High Seed/Home Team Identification

- 1. The higher-seed team will be considered the Home Team and the lower-seed team, the Visiting Team on the IGRF and StatsBook, even if the Host League is playing.

## Additional Uniform Requirements and Selection

- 1. Each team must have at least one uniform with a white base color and one uniform of a color other than, and highly contrasting to, white.
- 2. Each team must have a set of white helmet covers for use with the white uniform.
- 3. The higher-seed team selects their uniform color at the time of game roster submission.
  - a. The GTO will communicate their color selection to their opponent.

- b. The lower-seed team must choose a uniform color in high contrast to, and a different color than, the higher-seed team's uniform choice. For example, if the higher-seed team chooses navy blue, the lower-seed team cannot choose light blue; another high-contrast color would be acceptable.

4. The GTO and the Head Officials will review the uniform choices at the captains' meeting to ensure proper contrast in the venue lighting and between teams.

- a. All makes, styles, types, and shades of a team's uniform must be the same obvious color in the venue lighting and must all be of high contrast to their opponents'.
- b. If the Head Referee determines that the uniforms are not high contrast, they may require the low seed to switch colors.
- c. If the Head Referee determines that a team's uniforms are a different color in the venue lighting, they may at their discretion determine the color that will be used for officiating purposes including penalty calls. For example, vermillion may appear red in some venues and orange in others.

## Game Rosters

- 1. Teams must submit game rosters to the GTO at least two hours prior to the published start time of the game. GTOs will make every effort to find the team to get the roster, but if they cannot, the game will be set up with the roster from the last game the team played, or, in the case of the first game of the weekend, the first 15 skaters on the charter.
  - a. Teams may make changes after this deadline, but must notify the GTO and THNSO. The GTO may opt to not allow a change that comes so late that adjusting to it would delay the start of the game.
  - b. Teams may use the same roster for more than one game as long as this is communicated to the GTO.
  - c. Rosters may be submitted using [rosters@wftda.com](mailto:rosters@wftda.com).
  - d. Please make sure that all skaters are clearly written. The best method to submit a roster is to use the approved charter roster and cross out any skater(s) not participating in the game.

## Bench Selection

- 1. The higher-seed team will be given the choice of bench for the first half.
- 2. Teams will switch benches at half time.

## Support Staff

- 1. Each team will be allowed to station four bench staff on their team bench.
  - a. The team will be asked to provide the number of staff on the bench in the pre-game captain's meeting.
  - b. The team will be asked to identify both the Captain and the Alternate for the game in the pre-game captains' meeting.
- 2. Each team will be allowed to station one person at a time in the "coach box" trackside for their game.
  - a. The box in Turn 2 will be assigned to a coach from the team occupying the designated team area closest to the Jammer Line.
  - b. The box in Turn 3 will be assigned to a coach from the team occupying the designated team area closest to the Pivot Line.
  - c. The "coach box" person may also be listed as one of the four "bench staff." If they are not, they may not enter the Team Bench Area.

# Revision History

## January 2026

Updated tournament seeding and invitation process for 2026 events.

Clarified timing of captains' meetings.

Updated coach box requirements to clarify who may or may not approach the bench area.

## September 2025

Added tournament structure, seeding and invitation information.

Moved withdrawal requirements.

Removed ability to shorten game spacing for tournaments with a warmup track due to historical overruns.

Reorganized and labeled items in the Gameplay Policies section for clarity.

## October 2024

Removed line about third-base coaches being spectators as that is a part of the WFTDA Sanctioning Policy (edited 8/24).

Clarified process for determining the high seed in a Global Championships game.

Removed requirement for halftime warm-ups.

## March 2024

Integrated the WFTDA Tournament Skater Uniform Policy

Moved any tournament-specific information from the Forfeit Policy to this document

Updated for regional system

## April 2018:

Split Games policies and procedures into a separate document.