

B. U. S. MEN'S & WOMEN'S NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

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1. Overview:

The National Championship Team selection playdown system is open to all US citizens and is not geographically based. Teams may sign up to play in any of the qualifier sites. Two Nationals spots will be awarded to each of the two highest US men's teams and two highest US women's teams as of the completion date of the Curl Mesabi Cash spiel on the year to date **Order Of Merit (OOM) found at the World Curling Tour website, :** <http://www.worldcurlingtour.com/oom/oom.php?task=week&oomid=81>

The remaining eight National Championship spots will be determined as set forth in the specific sections for men and women below:

The Men's National Championship finals field will be completed using a two-tiered playdown system (Qualifier and Challenge Rounds). The Women's National Championship finals field will be completed using a single round of play to determine the remaining spots, if more than ten women's teams register. Registered men's teams can earn points to advance to the challenge round by competing in approved WCT and other cashspiels. Last year's men's National Champion/World representative also has additional rights to advance to the Challenge round.

2. Event Eligibility:

Any player who is a citizen of the United States as of the registration deadline may be eligible. Players need not be residents of the United States (refer to Section I wording). Players must also be paid members of the USCA as described in Section I.

3. Entry Process

See Section I for entry details

Entry deadline: Men & Women –November 29, 2010

Entry fee: \$540 per team

4. Playdown Process and Format

Men's Qualifying Round

January 5-9, 2011 Rochester, NY, Bismarck, ND, Medford, WI, Seattle, WA. Start and finish dates subject to change depending on the number of entries (accordion in nature)

Each competing team selects one site at time of registration. At each site, peer seeding will be used to rank the teams at that site. If there are ten or more teams at a qualifying site, a knockout format will be used. The qualifying round at a particular site will be held only if at least five teams sign up for that site. If less than five teams sign up for a site, the site will be cancelled, and the USCA will notify the affected teams, and allow them to promptly (by the end of the next business day after notification of cancellation) choose a different site that did achieve the minimum required number. If a team decides not to select an alternate site, their entry fee will be refunded. Sites chosen by teams that sign up will not be disclosed on the website until after completion of any cancellation and reassignment period. The names of the signed up teams may be posted, but without their site selection. If the number of teams changes after the registration deadline, a panel consisting of the Vice-President of Championships, the USCA Drawmaster, and an AAC representative will meet to determine the appropriate action and re-allocation if it is feasible.

Strength of Field Determination:

Each qualifier site will be ranked for strength of field based on number of teams at the site, Order of Merit (OOM) points achieved for the year to date, past Nationals experience and results, and World experience. Teams that signed up for a site but advance directly to the Nationals based on Order of Merit points will not be considered in strength of field. The strength of field points will be used to determine allocation of National Championship spots and Challenge Round spots.

Sources of points:

1. Each team is automatically awarded one point for being registered;
2. Experience points are totaled up to arrive at an experience ranking, from which points are awarded according to a ranking table. Points available to do the experience ranking are as follows:
 - Order of Merit (OOM) (actual points generated by the team from qualifying cash spiels, provided that $\frac{3}{4}$ players registered for the playdowns also played in the OOM event); (or $\frac{3}{5}$ players if the team registered five players). Points are determined as of the completion date of the Curl Mesabi Cash spiel on the year to date **Order Of Merit (OOM) found at the World Curling Tour website:**
<http://www.worldcurlingtour.com/oom/oom.php?task=week&oomid=81>
 - Past Nationals Participation (going back three years) each player on the team receives 5 points (up to a maximum of 20 points per team) for having played in any of the past three Men's Nationals;
 - Past finish in the top four of the Nationals (going back three years) each player on the team receives 3.75 points for having played on a team that finished in the top four of the Men's Nationals (up to a maximum of 15 points per team);
 - Multiple Nationals experience (going back three years) each player on the team receives 3.75 points for having played in more than one of the last three Men's Nationals (up to a maximum of 15 points per team)
 - Past Men's World Experience (going back three years) each player having played in any of the last three Men's World Championships (or an Olympics held in the preceding three years) receives five points, up to a maximum of 20 points per team

The experience points (not including the point for being registered) are added up for each team to get total experience points for each team. Past experience points are awarded only for up to four players on a team, based on the roster of the team as registered by the registration deadline.

The teams are then ranked by their experience points, up to a total of 12 ranked teams if 12 teams have experience points. Points are then awarded to each site based on the rank, according to the following table:

1	12 points
2	11 points
3	10 points
4	9 points
5	8 points
6	7 points
7	6 points
8	5 points
9	4 points
10	3 points
11	2 points
12	1 point

Total rank points available for the entire field: 78

If fewer than twelve teams have points, points will be awarded from the top down, with the top team receiving 12 points. If teams are tied in rank, the tied teams are awarded points equal to the average points available to the tied teams.

3. Total the points for experience rank for each site based on the teams who chose that site, add the single point for each team that registered, to arrive at strength of field points for each site. Then apply the proportional algorithm to award qualifier spots. Subtract team points for the number of qualifier spots awarded to the site, and re-run the algorithm to allocate the challenge spots.

Five teams will qualify for the Championship final round out of the regional qualifiers, using a proportional distribution algorithm for allotment of the number of qualifying teams based on the number of strength of field points at each site. Each qualified site receives at least one qualifier spot. The official running of the program and allocation of teams to sites will be done by the USCA Drawmaster upon completion of the signup period including any reassignment, and the determination of the strength of field at each site.

Qualification from each site will be based on order of finish. The following rules apply to determination of the teams that qualify for the finals and the challenge:

Format: If there are ten or more teams at a site, a knockout format will be used. Otherwise, a single round robin will be used.

Double knockout requirement: No team can be eliminated from qualifying unless they have at least two losses. Teams having less than two losses at the end of the knockout or round robin must play each other to eliminate teams down to the

assigned number of qualifiers. For example, if at the end of the round robin, the standings are 5-0 and 4-1 for the top two teams, and only one can qualify, they play each other until one of them has two losses (two games if the 4-1 team wins the first round)

Ties: No elimination without a game: If teams are tied at the end of round robin play, head to head record and DSC may **not** be used to determine whether a team is eliminated from the championship round or is eliminated from the challenge round. Such ties may only be broken by a tie break game or games. However head to head and DSC may be used to rank the teams for purposes of determining which teams play each other in the tie break games.

At the completion of each Qualifier, each team that earns a spot in the Challenge Round must inform the Chief Umpire of the Qualifier whether or not they will compete in the Challenge Round.

Men's Challenge Round

January 19-23, 2011 – Waupaca, WI Start and finish dates subject to change depending on the number of entries (accordion in nature)

a) Up to ten (10) teams will qualify for the Challenge Round as follows: Up to eight (8) teams will advance from the regional Qualifying Round based on order of finish, and up to two additional teams taken from the returning National Champion and top OOM teams if not already qualified for the Finals or the Challenge, taken in order from among the top ten (10) US OOM points teams that have not already qualified for the Finals or Challenge round, filling the Challenge Round to a maximum of 10 teams

b) To be eligible for the Challenge Round, the returning National Champion and OOM points teams must have played in the qualifying round, and the OOM teams must be in the top ten of US Men's teams having OOM points. If after the completion of the qualifying round the returning National Champion has not qualified for the Finals or the Challenge round, and chooses to play in the Challenge Round, then the remaining berth in the Challenge Round will be awarded to the highest OOM Points team that is not already qualified for the Finals or the Challenge. If the returning National Champion does not choose a challenge spot under the above special qualification, then the two highest OOM points teams that have not already qualified will receive berths in the Challenge Round. In order to be eligible as the returning National Champion the team must have on its 2011 National Championship Roster 4 of its 5 players who registered for the 2010 National Championship (or 3 of 4 in the case of a team that won the Championship with only four registered players).

c) Challenge teams, up to a maximum of eight (8) teams, will advance from the Qualifying Round as follows: After completion of registration, the Drawmaster will allocate eight (8) Challenge Round spots proportionally among the regional Qualifying Round sites based on the number of SOF points at each site, after subtracting points attributable to the number of qualifiers at the site, using the proportional distribution algorithm.. For each qualifier spot awarded to a site, strength of field points attributable to the highest ranked team will be subtracted from the site. (i.e. if a site is awarded two qualifier spots, the strength of field points for the top two teams at that site will be subtracted before running the challenge allocation.) Each site will be notified of the number of Challenge Round spots allocated to that site.

The algorithm is designed to achieve the best possible proportional distribution of spots subject to the following requirement that each Qualifying Round site receives at least one spot for the Challenge Round.

- Determination of Challenge Round teams will be based on order of finish in the regional Qualifying Round. If any team that is eligible for a Challenge Round berth based on finish elects not to participate in the Challenge Round, that spot will be filled from the highest-ranking team on the OOM year to date points list as of the completion of the Curl Mesabi Cash Spiel that has not already qualified for the Challenge Round or the Finals, regardless of the Qualifying Round site at which the WCT points team competed.

- For fill purposes there will be no minimum number of points required. If there is no team with WCT points available to fill a vacated spot, then the spot will not be filled.

- The Challenge Round will be a peer seeded single round robin event.

- Three (3) teams will qualify from the Challenge Round into the Championship final round based on order of finish. Upon the completion of the round robin, the requirement of double knockout and breaking of ties apply as in the qualifier round. Fourth and Fifth place teams will be identified, through tie-breaker games if necessary.

Women's Challenge Round

January 19-23, 2011 – Grand Forks, ND. Start and finish dates subject to change depending on the number of entries (accordion in nature)

There are no women's qualifying rounds this season. If more than ten teams register, then the top two teams on the WCT Order of Merit shall qualify to the Nationals, and all other teams will compete in the Challenge round for the remaining Nationals spots.

- The Challenge Round format will follow the format policy in I.6. USCA Format Policy. Upon the completion of the round robin, the requirement of double knockout and breaking of ties applies.

Eight (8) teams will qualify from the Challenge Round into the Finals based on order of finish.

If there are ten or less teams signed up for qualifiers, then all teams advance to the National Championship and the Challenge Round will be cancelled.

Men's and Women's National Championship Finals Format

The Finals will be a peer seeded single round robin event; provided, that if there are only six or fewer teams participating in the Women's finals, the women will play a double round robin. Peer seeding will be required to be used only for the first three rounds. Thereafter the round robin may be set up in a way that allows marquee matches in prime viewing time, as long as the draw master determines that the round robin schedule remains fair in terms of time of play and sheet repetition.

The top four teams as determined by round robin or tie-breaker games will advance to playoffs as follows:

A page playoff will be used when the final round robin standings result in one of the following:

- One team is in 1st place.
- Two teams are tied for 1st place.
- Three teams are tied for 1st place and DSC is not required for ranking (one team defeated the other two teams in the round robin). The team that defeated the other two teams is ranked #1, and the winner of the head-to-head game between the other two teams is ranked #2.

A single elimination playoff will be used when the final round robin standings result in one of the following:

- Three teams are tied for 1st place and DSC is required for ranking (none of the teams defeated both of the other teams in the round robin).
- Four or more teams are tied for 1st place.

Tie-breakers will be played under the Rules set forth in Section III (O). The relative ranking of the advancing teams will be determined by the Chief Umpire according to Section III (P). In a page playoff, head to head and record among the tied teams may be used to advance a team to the 1-2 game. See "Tie breakers for 2nd place, page playoff" examples on pages 48-49.

Where a single elimination playoff is used, the top four teams will advance to the playoffs consisting of semifinals and finals. Team #1 will play Team #4 and Team #2 will play Team #3 with the winners advancing to the gold medal game. The loser of the gold medal game wins the silver medal. The semifinal losers play for the bronze medal.

Where a page playoff is used, Team #1 plays Team #2 with the winner advancing to the final game. Team #3 plays Team #4 with the loser eliminated. The winner of #3 vs. #4 game will play the loser of the #1 vs. #2 game with the winner advancing to the final and the loser receiving the bronze medal.

The winning teams will represent the United States at the 2011 World Women's Curling Championship, March 19-27, 2011 in Esbjerg, Denmark, and the 2011 World Men's World Championship, April 2-10, 2011 in Regina, Canada. The winning teams are required to participate in all training activities leading to Worlds as outlined by the Elite Programs Committee.