

ACHA 2020-21 Season Modifications per Division Recommendations Due to Pandemic

As of Monday, October 26, 2020

Due to the pandemic situation and the uncertainty it continues to present, below are the season modifications that each Division is recommending for implementation for the 2020-21 season upon Board approval.

These recommendations come as a result of most ACHA members not being able to compete this fall but with hopes to begin in January per respective institution approval.

The ACHA has already extended the regular season 3-weeks by pushing back the dates for the National Tournament from March 25-30 until April 15-20, 2021.

In addition, the ACHA recently postponed hosting the National Tournament in Boston at the New England Sports Center until 2023 at which time, we hope to leverage the opportunity of having all 72 teams compete not only at one location but also under roof with the facilities 8 NHL standard rinks.

Dave Kurtz and I are currently working with ACHA Divisional Commissioners to identify opportunities and locations to host their individual Division National Tournament in a central location to their membership where anywhere from 10-20 teams can compete safely within the constraints of any state and local COVID-19 restrictions. We hope to have recommendations on these locations soon.

Here is a breakdown per Division to the ***Season Modifications*** developed by our Divisional Commissioners with committee and membership input. They have been submitted to the Executive Director for review and will be presented to the ACHA Board as recommendations per our ACHA Bylaws.

MEN'S DIVISION 1:

Few modifications to their season with the exception of the location of National Tournament which is being finalized. M1 will invite 20 teams to the Tournament as usual however no AQ's will be handed out. Instead one team from every M1 conference will be guaranteed a bid to Nationals as determined by their conference. Also 1 independent team will also be guaranteed a spot bringing that total to 10 teams and a full representation of M1 membership. The final 10 teams to get to 20, will be determined by the M1 computer ranking system.

The M1 Tournament will continue to be single elimination with the same format as in previous years. Teams ranked from #13 to #20 will compete in a play-in round on Day One to advance to the next round of the Tournament joining the Top 12 on Day Two. There will be 19 total games played over 6 days from ***April 15-20, 2021***.

MEN'S DIVISION 2:

The minimum amount of games needed to qualify for the National Tournament will be 12 vs. the normal 16 and at least 10 of the 12 games must be against M2 teams. Computer Rankings will not be utilized this season due to fewer cross-conference games and travel restrictions throughout the country as well as some institutional guidelines. Instead a human ranking committee will be utilized per Region with 7 to 9 members (coaches and administrators). There will be 4 ranking periods and for those teams permitted to play in the Fall, those games will count toward rankings. The last day for Rankings will now be March 14, 2021.

Regional Tournaments will continue to be planned with 12 teams invited per region. This can be modified by Division Commissioner if need be due to pandemic complications. 4 teams from each of the 4 Regions will earn a bid to Nationals. M2 will continue to have 16 teams playing a Tournament Pool format with a total of 27 games over 5 days from **April 16-20, 2021**.

MEN'S DIVISION 3:

The minimum amount of games to qualify for the National Tournament will go from the usual 16 games to 8 games against either M2 or M3 teams. However, only games versus M3 teams will count toward rankings.

The Top 16 teams to earn a spot at Nationals will be determined by a National Ranking committee comprised of members (2-Atlantic region, 2-North region, 2-Pacific region, 1-Independent and 1-Commissioner appointee). Rankings will take place every-other-week beginning on Feb. 3, 2021. Teams must complete 3 games to be included in the rankings and any games that take place in the fall will also count for rankings.

There will be no change to the National Tournament format where pool play will take place and the top team from each of the 4 pools will advance to the semi-final round. M3 will complete 27 games over 6 days from **April 15-20, 2021** with a day off between the quarter-final and semi-final rounds.

WOMEN'S DIVISION 1:

The minimum amount of games to qualify for the National Tournament will be 9 games against 4 unique opponents for the 2020-21 season. Only games played after January 1 will count toward the rankings which will move away from a computer ranking and be a coaches committee due to the anticipated travel restrictions this year and less cross conference games played.

New this season and for future years as voted on by membership at annual Breakout session (virtual), is the National Tournament will have 10 Teams qualifying and competing. Every team competing on day one is guaranteed two games. The 1 and 2 seeds are the only teams that could potentially be in a one and done situation.

The new format is as follows - Day One: Bottom 8 teams will play to decide next steps. Winners advance to Day Three. Losing teams play on Day Two for remaining spots in the tournament. Day Three: 1 and 2 seeds get automatic bye to this round. The 4 games on this day are decided by seeding, ex: 1v lowest seed. Day Four: semi-final games. Day Five: championship game. W1 will complete 13 games over 5 days from **April 15 – 19, 2021**.

WOMEN'S DIVISION 2:

The minimum games for W2 to qualify for the National Tournament will also be 9 games against 4 unique opponents and only W2 games completed after January 1 will count toward the rankings. W2 will also utilize a coaches ranking committee in which all coaches will be encouraged to participate during 4 ranking periods beginning in February. The final day for games to count in rankings will be March 28, 2021.

The National Tournament will continue to be 12 teams competing in a Pool play format comprising of 3 teams in 4 pools. The top team from each pool will advance to single elimination semi-final round. 21 games will be played over 5 days from **April 16-20, 2021**.