



## USSF POLICY LETTER 06

DATE: May 2021

### USSF CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENTS

#### PURPOSE

To provide the USSF Board of Trustees with a protocol for scheduling and hosting Championship Tournaments (i.e. the U.S. National Championships and the North American Sumo Championships)

The USSF has an obligation to its athletes to provide an objective and consistent standard of qualification for the Sumo World Championships, World Games, and other World-level sumo tournaments.

#### AUTHORITY

USSF By-Laws, Article IV, Section 4.C.

This Policy Letter supersedes all previously dated information on the same subject.

#### POLICY

##### **Section 1. Scheduling of Tournaments**

- A. The USSF will host a U.S. National Championship (USNC) and North American Sumo Championship (NASC) tournament each year.
  - a. Whenever possible, USSF Championship Tournaments will be scheduled at least three months after the previous USSF Championship Tournament or World-level Tournament and at least three months prior to the next USSF Championship Tournament or World-level Tournament.
  - b. The USNC will be held between January 1 and May 31.
  - c. The NASC, when it is held as a separate event, will be held after that year's USNC and, if possible, after any World-level events that year.
- B. **When the NASC is not a qualifier** for a major international tournament (e.g., the World Games):
  - a. The NASC will be held on-site at the USNC.
    - i. **If there are no non-U.S. competitors** in a given division, the USNC results will be recognized as that year's NASC results, and a separate tournament will not be held.
    - ii. **If there are non-U.S. competitors** in a given division, the NASC will take place immediately following the USNC.
  - b. Each active NF recognized by the IFS within North America will be invited to send a maximum of four competitors per division to compete in the NASC.
    - i. The four U.S. competitors will be the top four USNC finishers in each division.
- C. **When the NASC is a qualifier** for a major international tournament (e.g., in the year immediately prior to the World Games):
  - a. The NASC will be held as a separate event, preferably subsequent to that year's USNC.
  - b. Each active NF recognized by the IFS within North America will be invited to send ALL athletes to compete in the NASC.

##### **Section 2. Participation**

- A. To participate in the USNC, a competitor must be a United States citizen and must be a USSF Member. (Competitors who were not previously USSF Members may submit a membership application and dues at the time of registration.)
- B. To participate in the NASC, a competitor must be a citizen of a North American country with an IFS-recognized National Federation and a member of his/her country's National Federation.

### Section 3. Equipment

- A. All USSF Championship tournaments must use a standard international style portable dohyō (the green and white portable dohyō sold by Sanpuku, or its successor if the international standard is updated in the future).

### Section 4. Brackets

- A. Competitive Structure
  - a. All brackets should be structured to select the best athletes to represent the country/continent at World-level events. To this end, efforts should be made to mitigate the effects of luck by using double-elimination brackets.
    - i. All brackets with **four or more** competitors will follow a double-elimination format.
    - ii. All brackets with **three or fewer** competitors will follow a double round robin format (i.e., two consecutive round robins). In the event of a three-way tie, additional round robins should be held until there is a clear winner or a two-way tie. Two-way ties should be decided by a one-bout playoff between the tied competitors.

- B. Seeding

- a. Athletes in all qualifying divisions of all Championship Tournaments will be seeded in the following order:
  - i. First, seed division place finishers #1-4 from the most recent equivalent\* Championship Tournament in which said division was held.
  - ii. Second, seed ALL other #1-4 place finishers from the most recent and second most recent equivalent\* Championship Tournaments (regardless of whether the division being seeded was held) with the open division finishers seeded first and the finishers of all other divisions seeded in descending order from heaviest division to lightest. An example is provided below:

Most recent open division finishers #1-4  
 Most recent heaviest division finishers #1-4  
 ...  
 Most recent lightest division finishers #1-4  
 2nd most recent open division finishers #1-4  
 2nd most recent heaviest division finishers #1-4  
 ...  
 2nd most recent lightest division finishers #1-4

\*All Championship Tournaments shall be regarded as equivalent if the most recent NASC featured no non-U.S. competitors. If the most recent NASC featured any non-U.S. competitors in any division, then only NASC results will be used to seed the NASC and only USNC results will be used to seed the USNC.

- C. Creation and Distribution

- a. All brackets will be created with oversight from available members of the Board of Trustees and/or Board-approved monitors, using the following protocol:

- i. Enter seeded competitors.
  - ii. Use randomization software, bracketing software, or a random draw to enter all unseeded competitors.
  - iii. Review the bracket for first-round matchups between members of the same club. (Do not use discretion. Close friends or training partners should not be separated unless they are members of the same club.) Use randomization software or a random draw to decide which competitor to move and where to move said competitor.
- b. All brackets should include bout numbers to facilitate a smooth tournament and to make it easier for athletes to prepare.
  - c. All brackets should be distributed to the Board of Trustees the night before the Championship Tournament for review.
  - d. Approved digital brackets should be distributed to all athletes by the start of the Championship Tournament.

## Section 5. Tournament Management

- A. It is the sole responsibility of the Tournament Director to:
  - Ensure that all qualifying divisions are fully completed prior to any other divisions (e.g., team, masters, novice, etc.) taking place.
  - a. Provide completed brackets and a list of the top four place winners in each qualifying division to the USSF President immediately upon the conclusion of the tournament.
    - i. If the USSF President is unable to obtain these documents, it is his/her responsibility to notify the Board of Trustees immediately.
- B. As our sport grows, the timing of Championship Tournaments may prove challenging. Tournament Directors must be mindful of this when scheduling each division. After bracketing is complete, all Tournament Directors should be aware of the following:
  - a. The total number of bouts expected
    - i. The maximum number of bouts in a double-elimination bracket can be calculated using this formula: **(Total number of bouts) = (Total number of competitors X 2) - 1**
  - b. The anticipated amount of time per bout
    - i. Use recent tournaments as a point of reference
  - c. The planned start time and duration of each qualifying division
- C. If the Tournament Director identifies any scheduling challenges which could jeopardize the tournament's ability to determine winners in all qualifying divisions in accordance with the above protocols, he/she must notify the Board of Trustees immediately. With approval by the Board of Trustees, some of the following emergency changes *may* be implemented:
  - a. A tournament with multiple dohyō
  - b. A modified pre-match ritual with no chiri-chozu
  - c. The use of *double-elimination repechage* brackets for larger divisions (which must be set up properly to allow athletes with a single loss an opportunity to win gold)
  - d. A tournament spread across multiple days (with several months of advanced notice to all competitors)

This Policy Letter was originally drafted by Ed Suczewski and adopted by the Board of Trustees: Helen Delpopolo, Andrew Freund, Mariah Holmes, Justin Kizzart, and Ed Suczewski in May 2021.