



2023 MIDWEST 7s SERIES HANDBOOK

The purpose of this document is to detail the regulations and guidelines governing the **MIDWEST 7s SERIES** and outline the responsibilities of event organizers hosting Qualifier Events.

The mission of the Midwest 7s Series is to grow the sport of Rugby 7s in quality, image, and awareness on par with the XV's version of the Rugby Union and to identify the best teams in the Midwest Rugby Union (MWRU) to qualify for the USA Rugby (USAR) National 7s Championship (*if applicable*).

The Midwest 7s Series is an elite competition formed in 2012 through collaboration between the MWRU, the Midwest Rugby Referee Society (MWRRS), and the collective efforts of Rugby 7s events across the Union.

2023 SERIES

The Men's 7s Series will consist of three (3) Qualifier Events. All teams will have the opportunity to attend two (2) Qualifiers. The first weekend will be a Central Region Open Event and the final weekend will be the Midwest Championship. The second round of competition will be split between the East and Western Conferences.

1. Saturday, June 17, 2023 - Bloodfest 7s in Austin, Texas (Central Region Open Event)*
2. Saturday, June 24, 2023 - Gem City 7s in Dayton, Ohio (Eastern Conference)
3. Saturday, June 24, 2023 - Block Party 7s in Iowa City, Iowa (Western Conference)
4. Saturday, July 8, 2023 - Firehouse 7s in Lemont, IL (Central Region Open Event/ Crossover)

The Eastern Conference will be made up of teams from the following Local Area Unions (LAUs): Allegheny, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio; and the Western Conference will be made up of teams from: Chicago Area (CARFU), Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

The Women's Series will consist of the following Qualifier Events regardless of Conference:

1. Saturday, June 17, 2023 - Bloodfest 7s in Austin, Texas (Central Region Open Event)*
2. Saturday, June 24, 2023 - Gem City 7s in Dayton, Ohio
3. Saturday, July 8, 2023 - Firehouse 7s in Lemont, IL (Central Region Open Event)

Central Region Open Events

Both Bloodfest 7s and Firehouse 7s events will be considered "Central Region Open Events". These events are open to teams outside the MWRU and meant to afford MWRU teams additional opportunities to play competition beyond their immediate region. Bloodfest 7s results will not count towards MWRU 7s Series Standings, however teams that are bidding for USA Club Rugby Nationals are strongly encouraged to participate. Results at these events will assist in at-large bidding and seeding for series winners. Firehouse 7s results will count towards the Series Standings for MWRU sides.

Championship Event

The top four (4) Men's teams from both Eastern and Western Conferences and the top eight (8) Women's teams based upon Series Points Earned to that point will compete at the MWRU 7s Championship on Saturday, July 29, 2023 at the Brimelow Rugby Grounds in Cincinnati, OH.

New for 2023, the winner of the Midwest 7s Series will be the overall series winner as determined by the cumulative Series Points earned. This differs from the previous years where the winner of the Championship Event was crowned the winner of the Series.

SERIES REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

New for the 2023 Series, all participating teams must register with and pay the Union to enter in the three (3) Midwest-hosted rounds. Bloodfest 7s is considered a separate expense and registration in the series does not guarantee participating in the Championship Event, this is earned based upon the performance in the first two rounds. There is no additional charge for teams that earn a bid to the Championship Event.

Team registration will open on Monday, May 1, 2023 and remain open until Thursday, June 1, 2023. **The cost of the 2023 Series is \$800.** Payment can be made via PayPal, Venmo, or check. Payment must be received in full from all participating clubs by Saturday, June 10, 2023 in order to be included in the tournaments. Payments made via PayPal or Venmo will be subject to a \$25 processing fee.

The Series is only open to one (1) side per Club unless that Club intends on registering an additional side for the series and that side operates independent from the primary side for the duration of the series. Additional sides may enter single Tournament Events based upon availability by paying \$325 directly to the Tournament Host. All additional sides **MUST** register with a tournament at least two (2) weeks prior to the Event and rosters must be kept independent from a Club's primary team.

Teams can register here: <https://forms.gle/Kf2EuNyRqQHnpDKX6>.

REGULATIONS & ELIGIBILITY

All Qualifier Matches will be held in accordance to the Laws of the Game, as specified by World Rugby (WR), as well as any applicable guidelines set forth by USAR and/or the MWRU including USAR Eligibility Requirements as described at the following link: <https://d26phqdbpt0w91.cloudfront.net/NonVideo/6d6fdfff-8820-4a40-b10e-43e1ce1c8e4a.pdf>.

All Qualifying Teams must be recognized by USAR and the MWRU. Teams from outside the MWRU (non-members) may participate in the Midwest 7s Series by receiving expressed written consent from the MWRU and paying a Team Summer Registration Fee of \$150.

Each Team must bring a printed (or electronic where applicable) registration roster to the Qualifying Event which names their thirteen (13) person roster for the event. A fourteenth player may be listed as an injury substitute. The substitute may join the active roster without the need to confer with tournament officials. This roster should be submitted to the Host Organization/ Tournament Director prior to the team's first match of the day. Only players named on the roster may compete for a Qualifying Team for the duration of the Qualifying Event. If a Club has entered two (2) sides in a Qualifier Event, the rosters must be kept independent for the entire Series and therefore Event.

COMPETITION DETAILS

Each Qualifying Event must be held within the geographic boundaries of the MWRU and during the months of June and July. The Host Organization must organize an Elite/ Qualifying bracket in which the Men and/or Women's teams will compete for a chance to represent the MWRU in a National Championship (if applicable). The Qualifying Bracket will exhibit the following characteristics:

- The competition will be organized into three (3) rounds of play: Seeding, Playoff, and Championship.
- Qualifying Teams, in general, are guaranteed four (4) matches; however, the top eight (8) teams should be guaranteed five (5) matches barring unforeseen circumstances such as forfeits or a lack of an appropriate number of teams participating in the event.
- Men's teams not eligible for the Midwest or National Championship (due to residing outside the MWFU or playing ineligible players) are prohibited from any Qualifier Bracket without the expressed written consent of the MWRU. This restriction does not apply to Women's Qualifier Brackets.
- All teams must register for the entire Series prior to June 1, 2023. Additional side registration for all Qualifier Events will remain open until two (2) weeks prior to the event. After that time, registration may be closed at the discretion of the host organization.
- All teams must be given at least forty (40) minutes between any matches, barring extenuating circumstances that cause significant delays such as lightning or significant injury.
- Host organizers are free to begin the Qualifying Event at their discretion, however once the matches begin, all matches should be completed in seven (7) hours barring extenuating circumstances that cause significant delays such as significant injury or adverse weather.

Qualifier Event Seeding

Pooling of teams in the Seeding Round will be determined in advance by the MWRU. For the first tournament of the season, the pools will be randomly drawn. For subsequent tournaments, the MWRU will use the current Series Standings to assign the first team to each pool with the first pool containing the first-seeded team, the second pool containing the second-seeded team and so on. Once a team has been assigned to a pool, the remaining teams will be assigned to a pool through random draw. In the event there are multiple Teams from the same Club entered into the Qualifying Event, they will be placed back into the selecting pool if randomly drawn into a pool that contains a Team from their Club. This will be done to avoid two Teams from the same Club being placed in the same pool.

Ideally, the drawing will occur the weekend prior to the Qualifying Event, but shall not occur later than the Wednesday immediately preceding the Qualifying Event.

In the event the number of teams entered into the Qualifying Bracket does not allow for four (4) team pools, the MWRU will randomly assign teams into pools using templates approved by the MWRU prior to the start of the Series. The MWRU has templates for six (6), ten (10), twelve (12) and fourteen (14) team events.

Match Specifications

All matches in the Seeding Round will consist of two (2) seven-minute halves and a two-minute halftime. Tie-breakers will not be played for any draws and forfeits will automatically be scored at 28 - 0 (four converted tries) for the non-forfeiting side.

The results of the Seeding Round will be used to rank the teams for the Playoff Round. The top eight (8) teams with the best records will advance to the Playoff Round. The top four (4) teams will compete in the Cup Division and the remaining teams (5 - 8) will compete in the Plate Division.

In the event of a tie when ranking the two (2) or more teams for the Playoff Round, the following tie-breakers will be applied in sequence until the tie(s) are broken for all teams involved in the tie(s):

1. Record
2. Head-to-head results
3. Tries scored
4. Points scored
5. Try differential
6. Point differential
7. Penalty kicks
8. Coin toss

Teams that do not advance to the Playoff Round will play a single Consolation Match based upon their performance during the Seeding Round. Teams will play against their next immediate ranked team; therefore, the ninth-ranked team will play the tenth-ranked team, the eleventh-ranked team will play the twelve-ranked team and so on.

Teams are required to play consolation matches, if offered, unless a medical or inclement weather waiver is granted by the MWRU or Host Organization/ Tournament Director. Failure to participate in consolation matches without a waiver will result in the following sanctions:

- First Time Offense: subtraction of all Qualifier Points for the respective event.
- Second Time Offense: suspension from Qualifier participation.

Host Organizations/ Tournament Directors should notate any forfeiting teams in their Qualifier Report.

All matches in the Playoff and Championship Rounds will consist of two (2) seven-minute halves and a two-minute halftime. In the Cup Division, the first -ranked team will play the fourth-ranked team and the second-ranked team will play the third-ranked team. In the Plate Division, the fifth-ranked team will play the eighth-ranked team and the sixth-ranked team will play the seventh-ranked team.

In case of a drawn match at the conclusion of full-time during the Playoff or Championship Rounds, the teams will compete in a “sudden death” overtime to determine the winner. Sudden death periods in the Playoff Round will be five-minutes in duration with a two-minute break between periods. These periods will continue until one team breaks the tie.

In the Championship Round, the Playoff Round winners in the Cup Division will compete for the Cup Championship and Runner-up (first and second place). The Playoff Round losers in the Cup Division will play a consolation match to determine third and fourth place. Similarly, the Playoff Round winners in the Plate Division will compete for fifth and sixth place and the Playoff Round losers in the Plate Division will compete for seventh and eighth place.

At the conclusion of each Qualifying Event, teams will be assigned Qualifier Points based upon how they finish. Qualifier Points will be awarded as follows:

- First Place - 12 points
- Second Place - 11 points
- Third Place - 10 points
- Fourth Place - 9 points
- Fifth Place - 8 points
- Sixth Place - 7 points
- Seventh Place - 6 points
- Eighth Place - 5 points
- Ninth Place or below - 2 points

**Forfeits by a team in any round will result in a two-point penalty for each forfeited match.*

Championship Event Seeding

As stated previously, the top eight (8) women's teams and the top four (4) men's teams from both Eastern and Western Conferences will compete at the MWRU 7s Championship on Saturday, July 29th in Cincinnati, OH (Cin City 7s). In the event of a tie when ranking two (2) or more teams for the MWRU Championship, the tie(s) will be broken by applying the following tie-breakers in sequence until the tie(s) are broken:

1. Overall Series Record
2. Head-to-head results
3. Series tries scored
4. Series points scored
5. Series try differential
6. Series point differential
7. Series penalty kicks
8. Coin toss

HOST ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITY

Host Organizations will be paid \$250 from the MWRU for each participating Qualifier Side that registers for the series. Any additional sides (if applicable) may be charged \$325 for entry with that entire amount being paid to the Host Organization.

A Qualifier Event may be held in conjunction with another USAR-sanctioned tournament; however, during the course of play for the Qualifier Event, the Host Organization must designate and reserve a minimum of two (2) pitches to be used exclusively for the Qualifier Event. No other competitive play shall take place on those designated pitches until the conclusion of the Qualifier Event.

The host of each Qualifier Event agrees to:

- Collect and maintain a record of participating team rosters, match scores and statistics and discipline infractions. These should be sent to the MWRU within twenty-four (24) hours of the conclusion of the match and maintained by the host for a period of one (1) year.
- Accommodate the MWRRS referees and the MWRRS Coordinator who will assign referees for all matches in the Qualifier Bracket.
- Report the scores and tries of each Qualifier Match in real time on-site.

Field & Playing Surface

All fields and playing surfaces should conform to the following specifications:

- Pitch Size: All pitches for Qualifying Matches must be between 60-meters and 70-meters wide and 90-meters to 100-meters long. In-goal areas should be between 10-meters and 22-meters.
- Sturdy goal posts must be present with the following minimum dimensions:
 - 5.6-meters wide;
 - Crossbar 3-meters high;
 - Total height of at least 3.4-meters.
- World Rugby-standard goal post pads or equivalent.
- Clearly lined field markings in paint or chalk.
- Flags marking all main lines.
- Ropes and/or spectator barriers along the sidelines from goal line to goal line that are 5 meters from touch.
- Technical zones for the competing teams.

Medical & Safety Requirements

The following safety measures must implement the following safety measures to mitigate the risk of serious injury:

- A dedicated, covered Medical Area with a medical table and at least one (1) trainer per two (2) fields. This should be at a centralized location or provided at each field as appropriate for the size of the event. Trainers must be available one (1) hour prior to the first match and one (1) half-hour after the final match has concluded. Each participating team is strongly encouraged to provide a trainer for initial medical evaluation and treatment during matches.
- A dedicated, on-call ambulance with a maximum response time of no more than ten (10) minutes. The direct telephone number for the ambulance service must be provided in advance to all participant teams unless the ambulance is maintained on-site throughout the entire event.
- Tape and ice must be available at the Medical Area at all times.
- All tournaments must follow any and all Regional Health Mandates in place at the time of the tournament.
- Host Organizations should ensure that spectators and participating Clubs are separated as much as possible. The MWRU recommends physical barriers such as ropes be strategically placed throughout the event to separate spectators from the field of play and from where clubs are congregated. Clubs should be encouraged to not commingle and separate restroom amenities are also recommended for players and spectators.

Concessions & Vendors

Water must be available to purchase throughout the event. If Regional Health Mandates permit, the Host Organization may sell food if they are able to do so in a safe way. The MWRU also recommends that host organizations coordinate vendors to be on-site. Ice and water must be made available without cost to all Qualifier Event referees. The Host Organization should do their best to limit congregation points for players, referees, and spectators. Concessions, vendor, and restroom amenities should all be considered.

The MWRU reserves the right to promote the Qualifier Series at each Qualifier Event using a tent/ booth, flyers, apparel, and other promotional materials. Host Organizations/ Tournament Directors and the MWRU will work together to avoid conflicts of interest in regard to free or commercial promotional items.

Referees

Referees for all matches in the Qualifier Series will be provided by the MWRRS. **The Host Organization is responsible for the payment of match fees to the referee. Referees will be paid at the following rates for Qualifying Matches:**

- \$25 per match for referee
- \$10 per match for an assistant referee
- \$5 per match for end goal judges

The MWRRS will send a match assignor to each event to assign referees as follows:

- One (1) referee for each match in the Seeding Round
- One (1) referee for each match in the Playoff Round
- One (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees for each match in the Championship Round.
- Two (2) end goal judges may also be assigned at the discretion of the assignor.

Host Organizations are not responsible for travel costs or assigned “warm-up” matches for Qualifier Match referees in other tournament brackets outside of the Elite/ Qualifier bracket, however are free to do so at their discretion.

QUALIFYING SERIES CONTACTS

The following individuals are responsible for the coordination and management of the Midwest 7s Series:

Midwest Administrator: Bill Marnell - admin@midwest.rugby

Women’s Coordinator: Dawn McKenzie - dawnmckenzie01@gmail.com

Men’s Coordinator: Matt Borchardt - mjborchardt14@gmail.com