

# NEW ITSF WORLD CHAMPIONS LEAGUE (WCL)

Ex: European Champions League (ECL)

## ITSF WORLD CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RULEBOOK

Version 2025

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## WHAT CHANGED:

Starting **January 2025**, the European Champions League (ECL) will be rebranded as the **World Champions League (WCL)**, opening its doors to players, clubs, and countries across the globe.

The competition will adopt an annual calendar, running from **January 1st to December 31st**. The WCL Finals will take place during the first quarter of 2026.

*Please note that no finals will be held in 2025, as this period will be dedicated to qualification matches.*

A significant enhancement to the format is the inclusion of **Junior** teams, broadening opportunities for young players to compete on an international stage.

Teams can qualify through their **National Leagues**, as well as through additional opportunities offered via **tournaments and rankings**.

The **World Series** events will now serve as direct **qualification competitions** for the WCL.

These events are designed to provide valuable international experience for players who may otherwise have limited opportunities to compete during the year.

## World Champions League Registration Guidelines

### For National Federations:

National federations can register their **National League**, the highest-level division qualifying for the **World Champions League (WCL)** and request official certification from the **ITSF Sport Commission**. Upon approval, this certification grants qualifying spots for clubs within the league.

*Only one league per country is eligible for registration.*

## **For Players and Clubs:**

- Existing club membership: Players can join an already registered club in their country.
- Creating a new club: Players can establish their own club through the ITSF CORAL platform, which is as simple as registering for a tournament.

## **Approval process:**

- In countries with a federation and league structure: Players and clubs must follow the rules of their federation and obtain the necessary approval.
- In countries with a federation but no league structure: Clubs will be validated directly by the ITSF Sport Commission or through the federation, depending on its organization.
- In countries without a federation: Players can request individual ITSF membership online and create their club. Both the player and the club will be validated by the ITSF Sport Commission.

## **Club and Team Regulations:**

- Clubs may have an unlimited number of teams across categories; however, only one team per category can qualify for the WCL Finals. This rule may also apply at the National League level, depending on federation regulations.
- Players may only register with one club in CORAL and must possess a valid ITSF membership. All team members must hold ITSF memberships as well.

## **Club Naming Guidelines:**

A club's name should reflect its country, city, and specific designation (e.g., Club Name / City / Country).

## Player Registration and Transfers:

- Players can register at any point during the season.
- Transfers between clubs are only permitted at the start of the new season (January 1st).

## World Champions League Qualification

### How to qualify:

#### Through Approved National Leagues:

- Matches can be played on any type of table, whether ITSF official or otherwise.
- Leagues may use a single table type or adopt a multitable format.
- The format of play, including the number of players and points system, is flexible.
- Rules must be publicly published in advance of the competition.
- Leagues must receive approval from the ITSF Sport Commission to obtain quotas.

#### Winning the World Champions League Finals

- Teams that win the WCL Finals will automatically qualify for the next season.
- Winners of the European Champions League (ECL) 2024 will also qualify.  
*Note: There will be no ECL in 2025.*

#### World Series WCL Qualifiers (2025)

- Clubs may register an unlimited number of teams for these qualifiers.
- Qualification quotas are as follows:
  - One team qualifies if the category has 32 or fewer teams.
  - Two teams qualify if the category has 33–63 teams.
  - Three teams qualify if the category has 64 or more teams.

If a category has fewer than three teams, they will join the Men/Open category and play single-knockout (SKO) matches in their original category.

## ITSF World Club Rankings

Rankings are determined by points earned through:

- Participation in the World Champions League Finals (including ECL 2024).
- Performance in National Leagues, factoring in size, divisions, and regional reach.
- Results in ITSF Tour tournaments (World Series, and events classified as 250, 500, 750, or World Series, based on participant numbers and tournament level).
- Only the best result from a club's teams will count if multiple teams from the same club compete in the same competition.

## Automatic Qualifications

- The Top 3 clubs in the ITSF World Ranking and the Top 1 club in each Continental Ranking will qualify automatically.

## Spot Substitution Rules

- If a qualified team cannot participate, the spot will be allocated to the next eligible club in the World Rankings, except for teams originally qualifying through National Leagues.

## FORMAT OF PLAY:

**This format of play applies to the ITSF World Tour and ITSF World Champions League Final:**

*The format can be modified under special circumstances but needs to be communicated to teams in advance*

## During Qualifier tournament (250, 500, 750, World Series):

A match is a race to **20 points** (with 2 points difference, with no limit) with a chain of four **5 goals** steps (that is 4 **elements**), played only on one table model.

## Number of players:

These 4 **elements** are played **S1, D1, S2, D2** by **3 to 6** players.

- **3 players** minimum for all Men, Women, Senior and Junior during Qualifier tournament (ITSF Tour & World Series), to a maximum of **9 players**
- Each player can play **once** or **twice**
- The same player cannot play both Singles elements

## During World Champions League Finals:

A match is a race to **40 points** (with 2 points difference, with no limit) with a chain of four **10 goals** steps (that is 4 **elements**), played in multitable format.

## Number of players:

These 4 **elements** are played **S1, D1, S2, D2**.

- **6 players** minimum for all Men teams to a maximum of **9 players**
- **3 players** minimum for all Women, Senior and Junior to a maximum of **9 players**

## How to play:

- o **180 seconds** between the elements to prepare the tables and to practice
- o **2 time-outs** of **30 seconds** per team per element that **cannot** be saved for a following element.
- o In case of multi table: **1 ball** is played on the first table, then players play **2 balls alternately** on each table until the end of the match

## Substitutions:

The team captain may make **one substitution**, which costs **one time out**.

- **During Qualification tournaments** (250, 500, 750, World Series) substitutions can be made only **after** the 2 elements have been played.
- **During World Champions League Finals** a player can be substituted only after an element has reached 5 points:

### Example:

- **S1** can be substituted once one formation has reached **5 points**
- One or both players from **D1** can be substituted once one formation has reached **15 points**
- **S2** can be substituted once one formation has reached **25 points**
- One or both players from **D2** can be substituted once one formation has reached **35 points**

## Coin-flips:

During Qualifier tournaments

- **One coin-flip** shall precede the start of the match.
- The team that wins the first flip has the **choice** of the **side of the tables** for all elements of that team or **first serve**. The team that **loses** the second flip has the **remaining option**.

During World Champions League Finals:

- **Two coin-flips** shall precede the start of the match.
- The team that wins the first flip has the **choice** of the **table to start the match on**
- The team that wins the second flip has the **choice** of the **side of the table for the entire match** or gets the **first serve**. The team that **loses** the second flip has the **remaining option**.

Same format for Men, Women, Senior and Junior teams.

### **Forfeits:**

In case a player is unable to play, the first element **S1** is forfeited with a score of 4-10 (in World Champions League Finals)

In case of Qualifier tournaments: forfeits are not available.

### **3 + 6 substitutes players**

(maximum 9 players to make up a team)

### **Format used National League:**

A National League can have their own play format.

## **Approved National League - Qualification Quotas for the World Champions League**

### **League participation and Quotas:**

Each ITSF Regular Member Federation is eligible to send teams to participate in the World Champions League. The number of qualifying teams is based on the total participation across all levels of the federation's league structure, including Division 1, regional leagues, and other divisions, if applicable.

- The ITSF Sport Commission oversees and evaluates the league participation to allocate quotas.
- Quotas are determined and communicated at the start of the season (January 1st - December 31st).
- Federations must submit the names of qualified clubs to the ITSF Sport Commission no later than the second week of January each year.



## Quota Allocation by Category

### 1. Men's Category

- 1 Qualified Team: A league with at least **16 teams** from **8 different clubs**.
- 2 Qualified Teams: A league with at least **32 teams** from **16 different clubs**.
- 3 Qualified Teams: A league with at least **64 teams** from **32 different clubs**.

### 2. Women, Seniors, and Juniors Categories

- 1 Qualified Team: A league with at least **8 teams** from **4 different clubs**.
  - 2 Qualified Teams: A league with at least **16 teams** from **8 different clubs**.
  - 3 Qualified Teams: A league with at least **32 teams** from **16 different clubs**.
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## Point Ranking System

The ranking system is designed to ensure fairness and competitiveness, and will be reviewed after the first season for adjustments.

Only the top 7 results of a team will count toward its ranking.

### 1. World Champions League Results

- Rankings follow the same rules as the World Championships for individual players.

### 2. ITSF Tour

- Includes events from World Series to ITSF 250.
- Points are awarded similarly to individual rankings, including bonus points.
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### 3. National Leagues

- Points range from 750 to 250, depending on the number of quota spots (3 to 1) allocated by the ITSF Sport Commission.

### 4. National, Regional, and Recreational Tournaments

- Points are under development and will be specified in future updates.

### 5. Continental Rankings

- To qualify, a minimum of 7 events must be played on the continent.

- Quota allocations for Continental Rankings:
  - Top 2 teams in each category if at least 32 clubs are ranked.
  - Top 3 teams in each category if at least 64 clubs are ranked.