



Regional Director Handbook

2012-2013 Competition Season

Copyright © 2012 National Collegiate Table Tennis Association
All rights reserved

Contents

1	How is NCTTA Competition Structured?	3
1.1	How do Regional Directors fit in NCTTA?	4
1.2	Customer (member) focused	4
1.2.1	Professionalism	5
1.3	Virtual Volunteering	5
2	Your Role as Regional Director	5
2.1	Management	6
2.2	Planning	6
2.3	Competition Management	7
2.4	Budgeting	7
2.5	Training	8
2.5.1	Certification	8
2.5.2	Welcome Materials	9
3	Getting Started (Organizing Your Region)	9
3.1	Staying in Touch with Division Directors	9
3.2	Before the Season starts	10
3.2.1	Welcome Letter to Division Directors	10
3.3	Division Director Preseason Webinar	10
3.3.1	Topics to Cover	11
3.4	Region Communication	11
3.5	Recruitment	11
4	Managing Division Directors	12
4.1.1	Division Troubleshooting	13
5	Planning Your Regional Championship	14
5.1	Season Overview	14
5.1.1	Season Timeline	14
5.2	Choosing Dates and Locations	15
5.2.1	Host Site and Facility Selection	15
5.2.2	Date Selection	16
5.3	Tournament Preparation	16
5.3.1	Regional Championship Invitation Process	16
5.3.2	Gathering Equipment	17
5.3.3	Tournament Staff	19
5.4	Promoting Division Events	19

5.5	Financial Support	20
5.5.1	Sponsorship	21
5.5.2	Financial Assistance	21
6	Division Tournament Management	21
6.1	Learn and Know the NCTTA Rules	21
6.2	Regional Championship Format	22
6.2.1	Team Competition Format	22
6.2.2	Singles Competition Format	22
6.3	Competition Management	23
6.3.1	Draws and Schedule	23
6.3.2	Arrival and Setup	23
6.3.3	Pre-Competition Meeting	24
6.3.4	Printing Match Sheets	24
6.3.5	Sending Matches	24
7	Post-Tournament Reporting	25
8	Other Events	26
8.1	USA Table Tennis Events	26
8.2	Cross Division Competition	26
9	Continuous Improvement	27
9.1	Successful Regions	27
9.2	Tools for Continuous Improvement	27
9.3	Performance Feedback	28
9.4	Rewarding Outstanding Performance	28
10	Tips for Being an Effective Regional Director	29
11	Where to go for help	31

I How is NCTTA Competition Structured?

College table tennis competition is largely organized around geography. At the local level, schools are grouped into divisions. Several of these divisions feed into 6 geographic regions, with winners at the regional level advancing to a national championship:

Division → Regional → National Competition

In addition to team competition, singles competition will also be held at the division, regional and national level. A **regional director** oversees each region, the divisions within that region, and also coordinates that region’s regional championship.

1.1 How do Regional Directors fit in NCTTA?

- ▶ NCTTA consists of member clubs at more than 150 colleges and universities, each assigned to a geographic **division**.
- ▶ Each **region** consists of 3-5 divisions and is coordinated by a **regional director**. **Division directors** within a region report to their regional director.
- ▶ Regional directors report to the **League Director Representative**, who serves as a liaison between the division directors, regional directors, and the Executive Board.



- ▶ NCTTA is also supported by a variety of different committees, each focused on a specific area of interest in college table tennis: recruitment, public relations, women’s, eligibility, etc.

1.2 Customer (member) focused

NCTTA is a very customer-oriented organization with division directors serving as the primary contact customers have with the organization.

Who are the customers? NCTTA’s customers consist of anyone involved with an NCTTA member school. This could include: team club presidents/officers, club members (athletes), coaches, and school officials.

1.2.1 Professionalism

As a regional director, your **demeanor** and **behavior** are very important when interacting with our customers. It's critical to act **professionally** at all times, as you are the most visible representative of the organization to the division directors in your region. How people perceive the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association is largely determined by how well you carry out your responsibilities as a regional director.

1.3 Virtual Volunteering

NCTTA is a completely volunteer-based organization; everyone that works for NCTTA does so as a volunteer. These volunteers are distributed all throughout the country. NCTTA uses several tools and technologies to facilitate distributed communication:

- ▶ **Email** (You must check NCTTA email every 24 hours).
- ▶ **Conference Calls/Webinars**
- ▶ **Collaborative Documents** (Google Docs)
- ▶ **Online Project Management Software** (“the Hub”)
A special *Regional Director* section of the hub will be available for regional directors to interact, share ideas, etc.
- ▶ **Instant Messaging and Social Networking**

Frequent communication is essential to the organization and is also critical to your job as regional director. By checking email daily, staying active, and communicating regularly, you'll be able to stay in touch with the division directors in your region. And you'll be keeping NCTTA professional and customer-focused.

2 Your Role as Regional Director

Regional directors play an essential role in college table tennis by supervising and managing the 3-5 divisions within a region with a certain amount of autonomy. As a regional director, you will have responsibilities in four key areas: management, planning, competition management, budgeting.

2.1 Management

As a regional director, you will coordinate the division directors in their region and are expected to:

- ▶ Keep in constant communication with your division directors.
- ▶ Conduct webinars to help train your division directors.
- ▶ Work with division directors to schedule competitions, resolve facility issues, meet deadlines, and organize their division.
- ▶ Try to find new and/or replacement division directors, if the need arises.
- ▶ Attend division meets in your region, to the extent possible, to get athlete feedback and stay connected at the local level.
- ▶ Help recruit and retain schools in your region (in coordination with the recruitment committee).
- ▶ Market and promote college table tennis and NCTTA to local communities, including college students and administrators, and local media outlets.

2.2 Planning

As a regional director, you are responsible for coordinating the season schedule for your region and planning the regional championship competition at the end of the regular season, including:

- ▶ Ensuring division directors submit the dates for division competitions in a timely fashion and that conflicts are avoided (with other major table events, major holidays, etc.)
- ▶ Ensuring that the season schedule gets sent to NCTTA headquarters to be posted on the website.
- ▶ Selecting an appropriate date and location for the regional championship, taking into account the following:
 - ▶ Sufficient facility space and hours (for team + singles competition)
 - ▶ Facility location (choosing a central location within the region)
 - ▶ Sufficient number of competition tables
 - ▶ Date must be after end of division competition, within the regional championship window

- ▶ Ensuring the dates and location are well known to division directors and member schools within the region

2.3 Competition Management

As a regional director you are expected to organize and conduct the regional championship in your region including:

- ▶ Coordinating with division directors to get results and eligibility proof submitted to the Eligibility Director for verification.
- ▶ Working with the League Director Representative to invite eligible teams and players to the regional championship after results have been certified by NCTTA headquarters.
- ▶ Verify with NCTTA Board and Finance Committee the final list of registered and paid participants.
- ▶ Either personally, or with the assistance of a referee, create fair draws for the singles and team competitions.
- ▶ Recruit any volunteers needed to assist with organizing and running the competition (reach out to division directors within the region).
- ▶ Advertise the event to attract spectators and seek media coverage.
- ▶ Organize an awards and trophy presentation after conclusion of the regional championship (NCTTA will ship trophies prior to competition).
- ▶ Submit competition results immediately after the competition to facilitate nationals qualification process.

2.4 Budgeting

Regional directors will have access to a budget for use in promoting table tennis in their region and to support competition related expenses. Regional directors can use their budget to finance:

- ▶ Regional championship expenses (venue fees, referee and staff costs, equipment rental, etc.)
- ▶ Travel assistance for teams or event organizers to attend regional championships.
- ▶ Division assistance to support and improve division competitions.

- ▶ Marketing and publicity throughout the region.
- ▶ Recruitment related expenses within the region.
- ▶ Organization of community events promoting youth or grassroots table tennis.
- ▶ Other special requests or initiatives if approved in advance by the NCTTA Finance Committee.

Each regional director will be informed of his or her region's budget prior to the start of the competition season. Budget limits for each region will be based on the size of each region (both in terms of number of schools and distance/geography).

Regions will also be evaluated based on recruiting efforts, athlete and division director satisfaction surveys, and other feedback from the region, which could have an impact on the budget they are allocated. For more specifics regarding budget allocations, expense limits, and the expense approval process please consult the *Regional Director Finance Guide*.

2.5 Training

In order to better acquaint regional directors with their responsibilities and the procedures and process of the position, all regional directors have **mandatory** training sessions twice a year with the League Director Representative and/or other NCTTA board members.

The first session happens in the fall before the start of the competition season; the second in the spring before competition resumes. These training sessions or webinars are conducted online and via conference call.

In addition to the biannual training sessions, all division directors are expected to read this *Regional Director Handbook*, the *Division Director Handbook*, and the *NCTTA Rules and Regulations* in their entirety (available online through the NCTTA website).

2.5.1 Certification

There are two parts to the regional director certification process:

- a) **Division Director Certification Test:** Because of their role in training and coordinating division directors, regional directors must have recent certification as division directors. Any regional

director that has not completed the division director certification test within the past 3 years would need to complete the test before becoming certified as a regional director.

- b) Referee Certification Test:** Regional directors are required to maintain status as USATT Certified Referees. The Certified Referee exam goes beyond table tennis rules, and covers how to create a draw and how to calculate tie-breaks. NCTTA will pay any test fees and provide USATT membership, if necessary. If you are already certified a Certified Referee, you are encouraged to become certified as a higher-level umpire or referee. NCTTA will be happy to cover the test fees for this as well.

Upon successful completion of the regional director certification process, you will be mailed a certificate noting your achievement.

2.5.2 Welcome Materials

After completing your certification, you will receive by mail several items that will be useful for you as regional director:

- ▶ Printed copy of the *NCTTA Regional Director Handbook*
- ▶ Printed copy of the *Regional Director Finance Guide*
- ▶ Printed copy of the *NCTTA Division Director Handbook*
- ▶ Printed copy of the *NCTTA Rules and Regulations* (to bring to your regional championship or competitions you visit in your region)
- ▶ Printed copy of the USATT/ITTF *Laws of Table Tennis*
- ▶ NCTTA brochures (for use in recruiting, among other things)
- ▶ An NCTTA polo shirt (to be worn at all NCTTA events)

3 Getting Started (Organizing Your Region)

3.1 Staying in Touch with Division Directors

To be an effective regional director, it's essential that you be able to maintain regular, active communication with all of the division directors in your region. Before the season starts you will be given access to an online document listing the current divisions and division directors in your region.

Be sure to have at least two means of contact (phone, email, etc.) for each division director. If one doesn't work you can try the other.

3.2 Before the Season starts

There are several areas you should touch on with division directors in your region before the season starts. You want to make sure they know their responsibilities as division directors and that they know the NCTTA rules.

This should be done through a combination of a welcome letter to your division directors, in a preseason webinar with them, and in regular follow-up communication.

Try to communicate the same information multiple times in multiple different ways, to make sure it sticks.

3.2.1 Welcome Letter to Division Directors

After reviewing all the names and emails of division directors for the upcoming season, send all your contacts an email introducing yourself as the regional director along with what to expect in the months ahead. Topics for the welcome letter to your division directors might include:

- ▶ Communication (email)
- ▶ Season timelines, including dates for regional championship competitions
- ▶ Introduction of singles play in NCTTA
- ▶ Any important rule or competition format changes

After establishing initial contact, be sure to follow up with emails, Facebook messages, etc. to keep all the directors engaged.

3.3 Division Director Preseason Webinar

Gather all the division directors in your region for online meeting (webinar) prior to the start of the season. The goal of the webinar is to train any new division directors and to review the rules and division director responsibilities.

NCTTA will help with setting up the online meeting space, call-in number, code, etc. and can have someone on the call to help facilitate the meeting or provide support if needed.

3.3.1 Topics to Cover

In the preseason webinar, you want to cover all the things a division director needs to know to do their job. At a minimum this would include:

- ▶ What is NCTTA
- ▶ Role and responsibilities of a division director
- ▶ Division director training and certification process
- ▶ Preseason activities (contacting member schools, team captains webinar, membership process, recruitment)
- ▶ Planning division competition (setting the season schedule, selecting dates and facilities, division singles)
- ▶ Financial assistance guidelines and procedures
- ▶ Running division competitions (registration, rosters, score sheets, competition management)
- ▶ Using the NCTTA competition software/spreadsheets
- ▶ Post-competition reports and results submission

3.4 Region Communication

Communicate with all the division directors in your region early and often. Set the tone for communication in the preseason and maintain frequent communication as the season progresses. Aim for at least one college table tennis-related email every two to three weeks during the season.

Facebook is a great way to keep in touch with division directors, as many have Facebook groups for their divisions. Consider joining these groups to stay in touch.

3.5 Recruitment

As the primary (and often only) local NCTTA official within your region, you are encouraged to act as the recruitment directors within your division. Here are some things you can do to attract new schools to college table tennis:

- ▶ Attend USATT tournaments or other table tennis events in your region and bring along some NCTTA brochures to hand out (included with your welcome materials).
- ▶ Work with the NCTTA Recruiting Committee (send email to recruiting@nctta.org) to identify potential schools in your region that might be interested in college table tennis.
- ▶ Visit potential schools in your region (especially if they're close by). Arrange to meet with a club president, club/recreation sports director, etc. Nothing shows your interest in having them participate more than showing up in person.
- ▶ Get creative! Every region is different and every school is different. What works well in some areas may not work so great in others. Try lots of different approaches to recruiting and see what works best.

4 Managing Division Directors

Working with the division directors in your region to keep the divisions running smoothly is one of your most important jobs as regional director. Since you will be in charge of 3 to 5 different division directors, you'll need to be able to handle different personalities and a variety of different requests.

Here are some suggestions for working with your division directors:

- ▶ Check-in with division directors to make sure they are making progress and completing tasks (one of the first areas you can put this to use on is making sure they complete their division director certification).
- ▶ Help division directors put together a season schedule **before** the start of league competition for submission to the League Director Rep.
- ▶ Organize frequent webinars or individual calls to go over any questions, concerns, or potential prior areas.
- ▶ Contact each division director a few days prior to their scheduled division meet to make sure they feel prepared and confident.
- ▶ Have division directors send you the competition schedule and format before a division meet so that you can make sure it looks reasonable and that NCTTA rules are being followed.

- ▶ Ask division directors to copy you on any results they send in so that you can check for any problems. If you don't receive anything after a scheduled competition, check-in with the division director to see what happened.

4.1.1 Division Troubleshooting

Often when a division director encounters a problem, they'll look to you for help. As a regional director, being able to help resolve problems that come up in a division is essential to keeping that division on track.

Here are some common problems to look out for:

a) Facility problems (difficulty booking a facility, unresponsive facility coordinator):

- ▶ Try calling the facility coordinator by phone. If it's a campus facility try calling campus recreation or club sport officials who may have more direct access to facilities and facility personnel.
- ▶ Organize a Plan B. Find a second alternative location at a different school or at a local city club facility, just in case. With unpredictable weather in the winter months, a backup plan on a different date can be very useful.
- ▶ Encourage getting a signed contract with the facility, this will go a long way toward reducing facility problems.

b) Schools dropping out (perhaps putting the division in jeopardy):

- ▶ Encourage division directors to use every available resource and means of contact to keep schools engaged (email, Twitter, Facebook, phone calls, text messages).
- ▶ Get schools to send team rosters in advance of the competition, which encourages teams to plan in advance who can come.
- ▶ Personally contact any schools you know in advance may be at risk of dropping out (perhaps due lack of communication or past years behavior).
- ▶ Help recruit additional schools (so the division has way above the minimum), that way if a few drop out, it's not as big of a problem.

c) Missing/incomplete paperwork (schools have a tendency to *inadvertently forget* forms and paperwork of all types):

- ▶ Encourage division directors to remind teams multiple times (and multiple ways, email, texts, phone calls, etc.) of the deadlines and paperwork requirements.
- ▶ Request that scanned copies of eligibility forms (or other paperwork) be sent by email prior to division competitions. Remind them to still bring the originals to the competition.
- ▶ Let division directors know that they can send teams home if they have incomplete paperwork.

d) Rules confusion (NCTTA rules must be followed at *all* NCTTA competitions)

- ▶ Encourage division directors to bring a printed copy of the NCTTA Rules and Regulations to each competition.
- ▶ Review any rule changes, and any tricky or confusing rules with division directors before any competitions are held.
- ▶ Remind division directors to look-up any rules or decisions they are uncertain about.
- ▶ In case of ambiguity, contact the League Director or NCTTA President (contact information at end of this handbook). **Do not** make a decision on the spot based on your “gut feeling.”

5 Planning Your Regional Championship

5.1 Season Overview

The NCTTA League Competition Season spans about 6 months, roughly following the academic year. The first five months constitute the regular season, focusing on division play. The season culminates in month six with the regional championships with regional winners advancing to the College Table Tennis National Championships, held each Spring.

5.1.1 Season Timeline

August - September	Gather contact information, send welcome email, captain’s webinar
October 1	Competition season begins, season schedule must be in place

October - December	Fall division tournaments
January - February	Spring division tournaments
February 15	Regular season concludes
March 8	Last date for regional championships
April	National Championships

5.2 Choosing Dates and Locations

Selecting the best date, host school, and facility for your Regional Championship requires significant coordination with all the divisions in your region. When and where a regional championship is held can often be the difference between an outstanding, well-attended event and a mediocre one.

5.2.1 Host Site and Facility Selection

A number of different criteria should be evaluated when deciding where to hold your regional championships. Get input from member schools as to what types of facilities they have at their institution, and then consider the following:

- ▶ **Travel Distance:** A central location that minimizes how far teams from each region have to travel is generally preferable.
- ▶ **Playing Conditions:** How much space is available at the facility? Are the ceilings high enough? What is the lighting like? What kind of flooring surface is at the facility (and how often is it cleaned)? How much spectator seating is available?
- ▶ **Equipment:** How many table tennis tables and nets does the facility have? What kind of condition are they in? The minimum number of tables needed for a regional championship is 8, but 12 or 16 tables is even better. Does the facility have an office table and some chairs that you can borrow for a tournament registration/control desk?

Get confirmation of the facility reservation from the facility manager in writing (or email)

5.2.2 Date Selection

Obviously you want to try and schedule your regional championship for days when teams are best able to attend. Here are some other scheduling considerations:

- ▶ **Regional Championship Deadline:** Regional championships must be completed by *March 8*
- ▶ **Dates to Avoid:** Certain dates you'll want to eliminate right off the bat. This would include any **major holidays** (academic, religious, or otherwise) and **exam periods**.
- ▶ **Tournament Duration:** A minimum of 10-12 hours is required for the regional championship, assuming 16 tables (double this if you have only 8 tables). About half of the time is for the team competition and half for singles. Always try to book the facility for a few extra hours as a buffer, if possible, or hold team and singles competitions on separate days.

Once you've settled on where and when your regional championship is going, notify the divisions in your region and send the season schedule to the League Director Representative to be posted on the NCTTA website.

Dates and locations for regional championships must be published as part of the season schedule by October 1.

5.3 Tournament Preparation

5.3.1 Regional Championship Invitation Process

A few things need to happen between the end of the competition and the regional championship. Here's how the invitation process will work:

- 1) Division directors will send in electronic results from their spring competitions (singles and teams).
- 2) Division directors will send in eligibility forms to the NCTTA Eligibility Director.
- 3) The League Director Representative and Eligibility Director will verify the results and player eligibility.

- 4) Teams or singles participants that qualified by winning their division directly will be invited to the regional championship (with the regional director cc'd).
- 5) Results will be processed for individual and team ratings.
- 6) Once all the divisions have reported their results, teams and singles participants in the region will be ranked from top to bottom based on team and individual ratings.
- 7) Team (coed and women's) and singles participants (men and women) receiving wildcards will be invited to the regional championship (with the regional director cc'd).
- 8) In the event some teams decide not to attend, replacement teams may be invited on a wildcard basis.

Once the qualifying teams and players in your region have been invited, you'll want to stay in close contact with them as the regional championships approach:

- ▶ Remind them of the deadlines to register and pay for the regional championship. (If they miss the deadline they are out of luck and their spot goes to someone else).
- ▶ Ask them to confirm that they will be attending and to send you team rosters for the tournament a week in advance.
- ▶ Give teams a time to show up for the event, but make sure the time you advertise is at least 1 hour before you're planning on starting the competition. So if you'd like the first match to start at 9 am, tell teams that the tournament will start at 8:00 am and that they'll want to get there a little before then to warm-up. That way when teams show up a little late (as they invariably do), you can still start on-time.
- ▶ Ask them to send you their confirmed travel plans, so that you know when to expect them to arrive.

5.3.2 Gathering Equipment

There are several important pieces of equipment you'll need for your division tournament. Some of this may already be available at the

competition facility (confirm with the facility manager), some you'll have to bring with you. Here's a checklist to help you make sure you have everything you need:

- table tennis tables** (at facility)
- nets** (may have to bring some with you, depending on quality)
- balls** (half gross -- 72 balls will be mailed to each regional director for use in regional championship)
- barriers** (how many are needed depends on the facility)
- net height measurer** (to check the nets before the tournament starts)
- table numbers** (print large numbers on full size sheets of paper, from 1 through however many tables you have; two per table is best so you can tape one to each side of the table)
- scoreboards** (at least two for key matches, semifinals and finals)
- clipboards** (one for each table, labeled to correspond to a table number)
- pens or pencils** (to record match scores; unless these are attached to the clipboards, they have a way of disappearing, so bring at least 2 times the number of tables you have)
- table and chairs for control desk** (most facilities will have these, you'll just have to check to make sure you can use them)
- laptop computer** (to run the competition)
- printer** (to print out match sheets)
- paper and extra ink** (so you don't run out in the middle of the competition)
- whiteboard or corkboard/bulletin board** (some facilities have boards on wheels that you can roll into the gym, or you may be able to bring a whiteboard with you; while not essential, this can be very useful for writing up/posting match schedules and results and can make the event much more organized)
- digital still or video camera** (if you have one or can borrow one, photos and videos of the event are great to have)
- tape** (scotch tape, duct tape, etc. useful for many things so it's always good to have some around, just in case)
- towels** (one or two to wipe off the tables or floor, if necessary)
- rulebook** (printed copy of the NCTTA Rules and Regulations and the USATT Laws of Table Tennis)

5.3.3 Tournament Staff

As the regional director, you are considered the tournament director for the regional championship. You are responsible for overseeing the tournament and following NCTTA rules.

Consider recruiting another referee or other umpires and volunteers to help you run the competition.

NCTTA can help with finding another USATT certified referee in your area to help out. Also consider recruiting division directors, who are certified umpires to help out. Having another person will help keep the tournament running smoothly, especially if you have to step out for a few minutes.

5.4 Promoting Division Events

The more people that know about college table tennis events happening in your area, the better. After you've put in the effort to plan a great event, it's a little disappointing if nobody knows about it. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when promoting your division's events:

- ▶ Use a variety of different media and techniques to get the word out:
 - ▶ post flyers around the facility or campus (the host club can do this)
 - ▶ contact school and local media outlets, including both the school newspaper, radio, and television stations and any local newspapers (daily or weekly), radio, or television stations in your city
 - ▶ get the event posted to an (online) campus calendar or club sports/recreation website
 - ▶ use word of mouth, tell your friends and family, get members of all the clubs participating to tell their friends and family, use Facebook
 - ▶ ask your division directors to help get the word out as well
- ▶ Publicize the event to all the member schools participating (including their school newspaper and club sports director). Schools often like to know if a team representing the school competes (and does well).
- ▶ Enlist the help of the club officers and members of the host club to promote the event and reach out to local contacts.
- ▶ Take advantage of press releases sent out before and after the event; these can be helpful in contacting various media outlets. Be sure to

follow up with local media that have been sent press releases and you think might cover the event. Phone calls are often the most effective, be persistent.

- ▶ Try a cross-promotional effort with local businesses (again, local contacts are key for this). Make a local company a sponsor of the event, give them recognition in all flyers, emails, etc. about the event and promote them at the event itself. In exchange the company might give financial or value-in-kind support (see Section 4.5.1) but would also promote the event to its customers. For example, imagine an event flyer distributed with every delivery of pizza or Chinese take-out from a local establishment.
- ▶ Contact the NCTTA Media Relations Committee (via email at publicrelations@nctta.org) if you need help or guidance in promoting your event.

5.5 Financial Support

5.5.1 Fundraising

There are variety of opportunities out there to raise funds for the growth and success of your region. This should be an ongoing activity for all regional directors throughout the season.

Consider approaching some of the following types of companies for support:

Large corporations: typically have a streamlined application for their charitable donations. Complete these applications throughout the season. Note that many organizations have deadlines that are 4-6 weeks before an event (regionals in your case). NCTTA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and can accept charitable donations reserved for such groups.

Small local businesses: can be approached for small donations or “in-kind” donations (i.e. providing their own products/services as a donation, such as a restaurant giving food). See Section 5.5.2 Sponsorships for more detail.

College-focused marketing firms: these companies are hired to promote particular brands to college students. You can find their reps handing out fliers around college campuses and can often work out arrangements with

these groups to have a booth at your regional championships in exchange for a donation.

Here are some tips for approaching organizations for contributions:

- ▶ Apply to organizations interested in supporting sports groups like NCTTA (pro sports teams, local government sports bureaus, etc.).
- ▶ Write a sincere and persuasive cover letter and refine it before turning it in for each application.
- ▶ Emphasize how NCTTA promotes “healthy living” and an “active lifestyle.”
- ▶ Emphasize how NCTTA promotes a sport that can serve as a deterrent against student involvement in gang-related violence or crime.

5.5.2 Sponsorship

Consider approaching local companies to sponsor your regional championship. NCTTA has an exclusive sponsorship for table tennis equipment, so table tennis companies are pretty much off limits, but almost any other kind of sponsor is fair game. While securing financial support from sponsors can be difficult, often in-kind sponsorships (such as gift certificates, merchandise, etc.) are easier to come by as the cost of such contributions to the sponsor is much less. For example, if you were in need of office supplies for your event you might approach a local copy or office supply store. Locally owned companies are often best, the easier it is to reach an owner, manager, or key decision-maker the better.

5.5.3 Financial Assistance

For details regarding financial assistance for regional championships, please consult the *Regional Director Finance Guide*.

6 Division Tournament Management

6.1 Learn and Know the NCTTA Rules

You will receive a printed copy of the *NCTTA Rules and Regulations* in your welcome materials and they can also be accessed online through the

Documents section of the NCTTA website. Read the NCTTA rules carefully and make sure you understand them fully.

Bring a printed copy of the *NCTTA Rules and Regulations* with you to all NCTTA competitions you attend.

6.2 Regional Championship Format

Regional championship competition will consist of both team and singles competition. The team and competition could be held on the same day (if you have enough tables for it) or on two consecutive days.

6.2.1 Team Competition Format

- ▶ 8 men's/coed and 8 women teams
- ▶ Teams will be split into round robin groups of 4 teams.
- ▶ Participating teams will be ranked based on their team rating and placed in a round-robin group using the snake system.
- ▶ Teams from the same division will be placed in separate round-robin groups (if a division qualifies 3 or more teams, only the top 2 from that division will be separated).
- ▶ Top 2 teams from each group advance to crossover single elimination.
- ▶ Teams that lose in the semifinals will play for third place.

6.2.2 Singles Competition Format

- ▶ 24 men's singles players and 8-16 women (depending on division size)
- ▶ Players will be split into round robin groups of four.
- ▶ Players will be ranked based on NCTTA ratings and placed into round robin groups using the snake system.
- ▶ Players from the same school or the same division will be placed in separate round robin groups to the extent possible.
- ▶ The top 2 players from each round robin group will advance to a single elimination bracket. Byes will be assigned to the winners of the top round robin groups.
- ▶ The losing semifinalists will play for third place.

6.3 Competition Management

6.3.1 Draws and Schedule

At least a day or two prior to the tournament, you'll want to put together draws and a preliminary schedule for the event. Some guidelines to follow when creating a tournament draws and schedule:

- a) Teams are ranked by their team rating, which is computed from their team roster, using the formula: $1.5 * (A + B) + C + D$
- b) Enter the participating teams and players in the NCTTA competition spreadsheet once you've assigned them to round robin groups. The spreadsheets will provide the order of match play.
- c) Usually it's best to schedule a team contest on two tables at a time (e.g. Michigan vs. Ohio State on Tables 3 and 4). Figure a team contest allotted two tables will last about an hour. For singles matches allot 25-30 minutes.
- d) Incorporate a lunch break into the schedule if you plan on having one (and have the time to spare). Otherwise be sure to tell the teams that no lunch break is built-in so they should bring some food with them.

6.3.2 Arrival and Setup

Try to arrive at the competition facility as early as you can – ***at least 1 hour before you've scheduled the first match to start***, even earlier depending on how much setup you need to do and how much setup help you'll have.

Do everything in your power to start the first matches of the day on time.

A late start and you'll end up running late for the rest of the day and may not be able to finish all of the matches.

You'll need to make sure all the tables are setup and well spaced, with barriers placed where appropriate. Check the heights of the nets adjusting as necessary. You may want to wipe off the tables with a towel if they're dirty or dusty. And of course you'll need to ready your control desk area.

6.3.3 Pre-Competition Meeting

At least 30 minutes before you start the first matches, gather together all the team captains (at least one representative from each school). Give a quick welcome and introduction to the event, mentioning the following:

- 1) Who you are, your name and position (let them know that you are in charge and running things).
- 2) Tournament format/schedule including: order of play, match procedures, and generally how things will flow.
- 3) Review of key NCTTA competition rules, lineup order, etc.
- 4) Thank them for attending. Make it clear you value their participation and hope they have the best possible experience at the event.

6.3.4 Printing Match Sheets

The NCTTA competition spreadsheets should be used to print the scoresheets for both the team and singles competition. Extensive documentation, including screenshots, and a frequently asked questions section is included with the spreadsheet.

A laptop computer and printer will be needed on-site throughout the regional championship competition. Be sure to bring these with you and be sure you have enough ink and paper to last the day.

6.3.5 Sending Matches

Ok, it's finally time to start playing some matches! Here's the basic process for calling matches:

- 1) When a team contest is ready to be played, put the score sheet on the clipboard corresponding to the table(s) the match should be played on. (Remember the clipboards should be numbered to correspond to the table numbers).
- 2) Have players write down the scores of each game on the score sheet and **circle the winner** of each match and the winner of the overall contest. **Record every score of every match.**

- 3) **A captain for each team must sign the score sheet once the match is complete.** Look over each score sheet as it is turned in to make sure that all the scores have been recorded correctly and make sense. Sign the score sheet to indicate you've checked it over.

Double-check all score sheets as they come in to make sure they are filled out correctly and signed by team captains.

7 Post-Tournament Reporting

After a tournament has finished, there are still a few tasks to be completed to make sure all the tournament results are recorded and properly reported to NCTTA:

- 1) Email the NCTTA competition spreadsheets (both the team and singles competition results) to results@nctta.org within 2 days of finishing the competition.
- 2) After submitting the scores electronically, hang on to the original match score sheets until at least after the national championships.
- 3) Write a two- or three-paragraph summary about the regional championship and submit it to the NCTTA Media Relations Committee (publicrelations@nctta.org). Try to include any interesting tournament storylines and highlight the most dynamic players, teams, or matches. Tournament write-ups will be used for press releases and for the NCTTA newsletter.
- 4) Send an email to all the participating schools and players to thank them for participating. You can let them know where to find the results for the tournament and updated ratings (both posted online). Also let teams know when the next event will be.
- 5) Collect any pictures taken at the event and post them online through Facebook, or Flickr, or another photo sharing site. Send around a link to the photos to the member schools in the division and let the Media Relations Committee know about them.

8 Other Events

Outside of intra-club practices and events, NCTTA League competition is the primary activity college table tennis teams participate in. But it's certainly not the only table tennis opportunity. As a regional director we encourage you to:

- a) Stay informed about upcoming table tennis events in your region.
- b) Notify your member schools of any events that you think they might be interested in and encourage them to participate.
- c) Attend such events yourself, if possible, and consider volunteering your time and expertise to help make the events better.

8.1 USA Table Tennis Events

USA Table Tennis (USATT) is the governing body of table tennis in the United States and sanctions several hundred tournaments all around the country each year. You can see a list of all the sanctioned tournaments coming up through the USATT website (www.usatt.org) and pass along information about any tournaments you learn about.

USATT membership is discounted for college students (only \$25), so encourage students in your division to join. They'll receive a copy of the bi-monthly USATT magazine (which often includes a college table tennis article) and also gain entry to USATT-sanctioned tournaments.

8.2 Cross Division Competition

Consider scheduling some matches between teams from different divisions to provide more competition opportunities. This will allow teams to experience a wider variety of competition. Such competitions could be organized at either the varsity or junior varsity level.

If there are some interesting events beyond regular league competitions happening in your region, be sure to let your League Director Representative (leaguerep@nctta.org) or the NCTTA Media Relations Committee (publicrelations@nctta.org) know about them so that we can share these great ideas with other regions.

9 Continuous Improvement

NCTTA is committed to helping regional directors improve their performance. We want to see each region grow and thrive and we want you to learn new things and develop into the best regional director you can be.

9.1 Successful Regions

So what constitutes a successful region? There are a variety of areas that contribute to regional success, but the most important are:

- a) Quality of division and regional events
- b) Athlete satisfaction
- c) Division director performance
- d) Growth and retention of member schools in the region
- e) Promotion and exposure of college table tennis in the region

Note that regional success is not generally linked to regional spending. Various factors affect the financial needs and spending within a region and some successful regions will spend more or less than others. What's most important is that a region's budget helps lead to a successful season and the growth of college table tennis.

9.2 Tools for Continuous Improvement

Since a regional director's role touches on many different areas, there are a variety of different tools that are useful for understanding how things are going in a region; to see what's working well and what could perhaps be improved:

- ▶ **Self-assessments:** Each regional director will be asked to fill out and turn in a self-assessment questionnaire at the end of the season.
- ▶ **Division director surveys:** Division directors will be asked to fill out a survey about their region and regional director at the end of the season.
- ▶ **Athlete surveys:** Athlete surveys will be collected after both fall and spring competitions. These surveys give a window into how athletes

feel about their division and can help you identify division directors that might need some additional support.

▶ **Objective Data:**

- ▶ **Year-to-year growth** in terms of number of schools, number of athletes participating in NCTTA events in the region. Both retention and new recruiting can contribute to year-to-year growth.
- ▶ **Spring default rates** in terms of number of schools in the region that participated in the fall but drop out in the spring.
- ▶ **Reporting and media exposure** including event reports, write-ups, photos, videos and press coverage of events in the region.
- ▶ **On-site observation:** Schedule permitting, NCTTA board members may attend select division or regional competitions to offer guidance and feedback.

9.3 Performance Feedback

Regional directors will be given and guidance and feedback throughout the season, including at the following times:

- ▶ Mid-season feedback from the NCTTA League Director. This will mostly be informal discussions of how things are going and will give you a chance to bring up any issues you are experiencing or questions you may have before the season is over.
- ▶ End of the season feedback report, with input from the NCTTA League Director, Human Resources Coordinator, and Finance Committee. The report will include an a summary and analysis of the various surveys mentioned in Section 9.1, highlights of successful regional director initiatives, and tips for future improvement.
- ▶ A short webinar post-season webinar to discuss the feedback report and more generally how the season went and how NCTTA can better help you achieve your goals.

9.4 Rewarding Outstanding Performance

In order to recognize and reward great performance, outstanding regional directors may be eligible for:

- ▶ **Regional Director of the Year** award. Award consists of a plaque, gift certificate, as well as formal recognition in the NCTTA Newsletter and on the NCTTA website.
- ▶ **Conference/PR events.** Outstanding regional directors may be nominated to attend sports event conferences or other educational and PR events.

While NCTTA is committed to supporting regional directors, *repeated* problems over the course of a season without any signs of performance improvement may result in reduction of a regional director's budget or a decision not to reinstate the regional director for another season. In some cases a different role in the organization may turn out to be a better fit.

10 Tips for Being an Effective Regional Director

Here are some final tips and reminders for being an effective regional director:

- ▶ Remember that NCTTA is a volunteer-based organization, so everybody is offering their time to promote college table tennis. Be mindful of your tone, whether communicating with subordinates or superiors.

Example: Suppose a division director is having trouble setting up a round-robin schedule ...

- ✗ “What is this nonsense? How about you Google round-robin schedule and create another one.”
- ✓ “It seems like you might be having some trouble setting up that round-robin, would you like me to setup a webinar to show you how I might do it?”

- ▶ When assigning tasks to division directors, be sure to allow them enough time to complete the task. Give a precise deadline for completion and request confirmation. Follow-up with division directors individually if you don't receive confirmation.

Example: Suppose you'd like your division directors to remind teams of the uniform requirements ...

✘ “Please forward this email regarding uniform requirements to team captains.”

✓ “Please contact all team captains by Friday to remind them of the uniform requirements and CC me on your emails.”

- ▶ Get to know your division directors, have a quick chat over instant messenger, phone, Facebook, etc. Send a quick reply to requests when you don't have time for a full response.

Example:

✘ ... (two days of silence) ...

✓ “Hi Bob, I got your email. I'll get back to you tomorrow regarding ...”

II Where to go for help

If you have a question that isn't covered by this handbook, please contact one of the people listed below as they should be able to help you. We are available to assist you 24/7 with any problems, concerns, or chaos you may or may not encounter. Contact us anytime as we are EAGER to help you do the best possible job as regional director.

First Point of Contact:

Chris Wang
League Director Representative
leaguerep@nctta.org
(602) 652-2689

Secondary Contact:

Willy Leparulo
NCTTA President
president@nctta.org
(800) 581-6770 ext. 101
(850) 445-0780 cell
(800) 581-6770 fax

Additional Contacts:

Contact information for various key people in NCTTA such as board members, committee chairs, division directors, etc. can be found on the NCTTA website (*www.nctta.org*).

Mailing Address:

NCTTA
154 Mill Run Lane
Saint Peters, MO 63376-7106

Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's much better to check with an NCTTA representative when in doubt, rather than make a mistake that could jeopardize your region.