



StarCraft II: World Championship Series

2019

North America and Europe Challenger Rules



Welcome!

Congratulations and welcome to WCS Challenger!

We are very excited for the season of WCS play ahead of us and would like to use this opportunity to thank you for your continuous passion and support for esports.

To start, please familiarize yourself with the general WCS Circuit rules, found [here](#). These general rules cover the WCS as a whole, and apply to all events.

The Event-specific rule set, detailed below, will provide you with specific guidelines on how WCS Challenger will be run, and how you will need to prepare for your matches.

We will strive to provide a very fair and transparent environment for you to compete in, so that you can feel comfortable and give your best performance. Please feel free to ask our tournament administration team if you need any help!

GL & HF!

Blizzard Entertainment



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World Championship Series Challenger Events



Welcome to the WCS! StarCraft II World Championship Series (WCS) Challenger seasons are online events in which players compete to win prizes and points in the StarCraft II WCS Global standings, as well as one of several seeds to WCS Circuit events where players can earn additional points and prizes. These points are used to determine standings in the WCS Circuit, and at the end of the year top players may earn an invite to the WCS Global Finals at BlizzCon!

In 2019, the planned WCS Circuit Events are WCS Spring, WCS Summer, and WCS Fall. Each of these Circuit events has an associated Challenger season for each region. The top 4 players from the North America region and the top 4 players from the Europe region in each Challenger season will win flights and lodging to the associated Circuit Event.

This document will help players understand the rules and tournament format used in WCS Challenger seasons in 2019 for North America and Europe.

1. Tournament Eligibility, Information, and Prizing

1.1 WCS Challenger Season Eligibility

Players must meet all eligibility requirements as defined in the [official WCS Rules](#).

1.2 Challenger Qualifiers:

16 players will qualify for each region's Challenger season as follows:

- **8 players qualify** from two days of online Open Qualifiers
 - Each day is a standalone tournament with open signups
 - Players are seeded into a double-elimination bracket. Seeding is based on WCS ranking
 - The top 4 players from each day advance – 2 from winners bracket, 2 from losers
- **4 players qualify** from previous major tournament finishes
 - These qualifications will be drawn, at Blizzard's discretion, from a combination of the previous Challenger season, selected regional tournaments and/or WCS rankings.
 - For Season 1 of WCS Challenger, four players will qualify based on 2019 WCS rankings, calculated at the conclusion of WCS Winter Round of 8
 - For WCS Challenger Seasons 2 and 3:
 - Two players will always be drawn from the players placing 1st and 2nd place in the previous Challenger season – Previous regional winners and runners-up will have a chance to “defend their crowns”.
 - Two additional players will be drawn from the 3rd and 4th place finishers of the previous Challenger season. Alternately, prior to the applicable



Challenger season, Blizzard may announce that up to two spots in Challenger will be granted to players based on finishes at selected regional tournaments.

- **4 players qualify** from ladder rankings
 - Ladder dates will be specified in the announcement for the applicable Challenger season

1.3 Open Qualifiers Format:

Players will qualify for each Challenger season from Open Qualifiers tournaments that are held prior to the beginning of the Challenger season. Each region's Challenger will have two such Open Qualifiers, and 4 players will qualify from each, for a total of 8 players per region.

- Each Open Qualifier tournament will have open signups which will be posted on <https://wcs.starcraft2.com>
- Each Open Qualifier will be double-elimination bracket format
- Players will be seeded according to current season WCS standings, found at blizz.ly/WCSStandings. In the event of a tie, players will be seeded randomly
- Each match will be best-of-three

1.4 Challenger Round of 16 Group Stage Format

The group stage will consist of the 16 players who qualified for Challenger through the above methods. These players will be seeded into four groups of four players each.

Each group will be seeded according to the player's current ranking in the WCS Global standings, found at blizz.ly/WCSStandings. In the event of a tie, players will be seeded randomly.

Each match will be best-of-three, and will follow the double-elimination dual tournament format, with two players advancing from each group.

1.5 Challenger Round of 8 Bracket Stage Format

The bracket stage will consist of the 8 players who advanced from the group stage. These players will be re-seeded into an 8-player bracket. Unlike the group stage, bracket play will be single-elimination, and each match will be best-of-five, except for the Finals, which will be best-of-seven.

1.6 Bracket Seeding

For the bracket stage, players will be pooled into two initial columns:

- Pool 1 (those who finished first in their group in the group stage)
- Pool 2 (those who finished second in their group in the group stage)



Players will then be ranked by WCS standing within these pools. The top two players by rank in Pool 1 will be placed in Group 1A. The bottom two players by rank in Pool 1 will be placed in Group 1B. The same is done for the pool of players who finished second in their group, with the top two players being placed in Group 2A and the bottom two being placed into Group 2B. Once this is done:

- Each player from Group 1A is matched **randomly** against a player from Group 2B
 - **Exception:** Players will not be matched against opponents from their Round of 16 group in the Round of 8 bracket
- Each player from Group 1B is matched **randomly** against a player from Group 2A
 - **Exception:** Players will not be matched against opponents from their Round of 16 group in the Round of 8 bracket
- The overall bracket is then arranged based on seeding for players in Pool 1

1.7 Prizes

Players who participate in WCS Challenger seasons compete to earn the following prizes in USD. The top finishers of each WCS Challenger season will also earn automatic invites to the associated WCS Circuit Event that takes place after each Challenger season concludes. More information about the WCS can be found [here](#).

In addition, players will earn the WCS Circuit points indicated in the chart below:

WCS Challenger – NA and EU			
1st Place	200 points	Invite to WCS Circuit Event Stage 3	\$1,600
2nd Place	140 points	Invite to WCS Circuit Event Stage 3	\$1,200
3rd - 4th Places	90 points	Invite to WCS Circuit Event Stage 3	\$800
5th - 8th Places	60 points		\$600
9th - 16th Places	30 points		\$400

Points earned will contribute toward player standings in the 2019 WCS Circuit and may be tracked at <https://wcs.starcraft2.com/en-us/standings/>. Players who finish near the top of the standings may earn an invite to the WCS Global Finals at BlizzCon at the end of the WCS season.



1.8 Prize Claiming

Upon qualifying for Challenger, players must provide Blizzard with full contact information to ensure that prize claims may be made.

2. General Tournament Rules and Operations

2.1 Map Pool

All maps used in both Open Qualifiers and Challenger seasons will be the Blizzard Ladder Map official versions, and will use the maps available on ladder at the start of the event. Click [here](#) for the latest on maps and other StarCraft II news.

2.2 Map Selection Procedure

In all matches, a map veto (removal and pick) procedure is used. The higher seeded player must choose to act as Player A or Player B.

In the Open Qualifiers for Challenger as well as the Challenger Round of 16 Group stage, the higher seeded player will be determined by their placements in the current year's WCS Standings. In the event of a tie, the higher seed will be determined randomly.

In the bracket portion of the Challenger tournament (Round of 8), the player who placed first in their group in the Group stage (Round of 16) will have a higher seed over their opponent, who will have placed second based on the seeding rules outlined in section **2.6**. In the Round of 4 and the Finals, seeds with regards to maps will be determined randomly.

Best-of-3

For all Best-of-3 games matches, the following process will be used:

- Player A bans one map
- Player B bans one map
- Player A picks one map to play first
- Player B picks one map to play second
- Player A bans one map
- Player B bans one map



- The final map that was neither picked nor banned is played as the third map

The vetoed maps will not be played in the match.

Best-of-5

For all Best-of-5 games matches, the following process will be used:

- Player A picks one map to play first
- Player B picks one map to play second
- Player A bans one map
- Player B bans one map
- Player A picks one map to play third
- Player B picks one map to play fourth
- The final map that was neither picked nor banned is played last

Best-of-7

For all Best-of-7 games matches, there will be no vetoes. Players must alternate choosing each game's map, starting with Player A choosing the game 1 map.

2.3 Settings

Game Settings apply to both Open Qualifiers and Challenger.

- The "Busy" setting in Battle.net is required to be active
- Players must turn off notifications
- Players must disable the "Only allow friends to send me messages" setting must be disabled to allow admins to communicate with them
- Every player must use full screen or windowed full screen
- The "Save all replays" setting should always be active
- Each game must be played in Faster mode
- Players must join a special Tournament channel given by the admin team
- No streams are permitted to be running in the background
- **Players must use default unit "skins" during the Open Qualifiers** - any extra unit "skins" are to



be disabled

- Should a player be determined to be using a non-default unit skin mid-match, the match should be paused immediately and a tournament administrator notified. The match will then be restarted, **UNLESS** the non-offending player does not wish to replay the game, in which case the game shall continue as normal
- Players must pause the game and notify an administrator within 3 minutes of a non-default unit skin first visibly appearing in-game in order to request a re-game. Tournament admins will use their discretion to determine whether a player had a reasonable window to notice and report a disallowed skin.
- The non-offending player **must** make the decision whether or not to replay the game at the time of the initial pause. If the non-offending player elects to have the game continue, they forfeit their right to later declare a re-game
- The offending player shall be issued a Warning, **whether or not the game was restarted**
- If a player accumulates multiple Warnings, they may be issued a Game Loss, then a Match Loss, then Disqualification from the tournament, at the Administrator's discretion
 - Players may also be fined for repeat offenses, at the Administrator's discretion

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2.4 Match Rules

The following rules apply to both Open Qualifiers and WCS Challenger events:

- Players are required to be ready and check in with admin team 1 hour before the match starts in a channel that will be given to players prior to the event start date. Once prepared to play, the player must notify the tournament administrator
 - For the Open Qualifiers, check-in time will be 30 minutes before match start and must be done through the Battlefy tournament page
- All matches will be played on the Battle.net server determined by the tournament organizer
- Players may request a blind pick where each player will communicate their race to the tournament administration team before each match starts
- Players may not switch races after each game of a match
- During the game, players may not use chat except for a greeting, closing, and request for pause
- Players may not pause a game unnecessarily and should it be required, the player must inform their opponent and/or the tournament administration team immediately by typing "PP" in the in-game chat
- Any pauses or stops during the game caused by player negligence is liable to the player and may



be subject to a warning, fine, or disqualification

- Players who intentionally quit a game before it has ended without a tournament organizer's permission will concede the game
- In the case of a technical issue, the tournament organizer may restart the game from the beginning at their discretion
- If any player is disconnected from a game, they are required to wait for a tournament administrator to verify the situation and make one of the following decisions depending on the nature of the disconnect:
 - Restart of the game from the beginning
 - Use "Recover game" option to start from an administrator designated point in time
 - Declare a winner or a forfeit
- In order to dispute any game issue, players must notify a referee immediately. Once the next game has started, players may not protest results. The tournament administration may investigate past results at their discretion
- Players may not watch any replays in the middle of a match. If there are any games that remain in the match, players must rejoin the designated tournament administrator group within 1 minute
- Replays may be reviewed during down time in-between matches if available, as long as this does not cause any delay in the tournament
- In case of the situation where both players are unable to win the game, tournament organizer may declare a draw and the game will be replayed

The following rules apply only to WCS Challenger events:

- Between games, players may ask the administrator for permission to break; if granted, the break may not last longer than 2 minutes
- Tournament administrators will assign colors to the players for each match
- Tournament administrators will host and start the matches

2.5 Match Offenses

- If a player does not follow any of the rules listed above, the player may receive a warning at Blizzard's discretion
- If a player causes a delay beyond the designated exceptions, the player will receive a warning
- Player misconduct as defined in the player responsibilities will receive a warning at the discretion of the organizer
- The first misconduct warning will carry over throughout the current season



- In a single competition day, if a player receives
 - two (2) warnings will forfeit the next game
 - three (3) warnings will forfeit the next match
 - four (4) warnings will cause a disqualification from the event
- Players may request the status of their total warnings from Blizzard
- Players may, at the discretion of Blizzard, be levied a fine for repeated offences, to be taken from that season's winnings

2.6 Additional Rules

- In addition to the official rules listed herein, the Administration team may, at their discretion, provide additional rules to players concerning individual events
- All event-specific rules provided by the tournament Administrator must be followed in the same manner as the this rule set
- In the event of rules conflict, contact your tournament Administrator for clarity



3. Closing Note

Blizzard Entertainment wants every player to have a fun and memorable event. At the same time, please remember that this is a professional competition and we would like to ask that you conduct yourself in a respectful manner at all times during the entire tournament series.

We hope you will enjoy our tournament and wish you a good luck for your matches.

GL HF!