



**FIST 2022 FAQ**  
**Washington Improv Theater's 14th Annual (Redux)**  
**Fighting Improv Smackdown Tournament**

## **Overarching Information**

### **What is FIST?**

The Fighting Improv Smackdown Tournament (FIST) is a bracketed tournament in which teams of improvisers fight their way up the brackets toward championship glory—like college basketball's March Madness, but with MORE MADNESS. Teams advance or are eliminated based on anonymous audience voting. One team will become the FIST Champions, emerging to cheers, validation, and, of course, glory.

### **When is FIST 2022?**

FIST 2022 will run Feb. 24 through March 27. Most shows will take place Thursdays through Sundays. (though some may happen on a Wednesday depending on how many people sign up).

### **Where is FIST 2022?**

FIST will take place in the black box at Source (1835 14th St. NW).

### **What is at stake?**

Did we mention glory? Because the pure, unadulterated glory of victory is at stake. In addition, the winners' names will be permanently etched on the FIST trophy. Some other tasty prizes, but not a mountain of cash. Also: preferential consideration for scheduling in WIT runs for the following year.

### **What if I have never done improv before at WIT? Or what if I have never done improv IN-PERSON? Can I still sign up?**

OF COURSE! FIST is a wonderful chance to play on stage for the first time in front of a warm and inviting audience!

# Teams

## **Who can be a team?**

Almost anyone, as long as they're here to do longform improv. Each team may have **up to four** players, of any experience level. 1-person, 2-person, and 3-person teams are *also* allowed, if that's your thing. **Each player may play on only one team.** There are **no alternates or substitutes.** A musician or other collaborative artist counts as a player. An audience member counts as a player if s/he is brought on stage and performs. Note: if you are competing in FIST, you can not be an audience member brought on stage to perform in a different team's FIST show.

## **Who can NOT be a team?**

A cast that has already competed in FIST together in the same team configuration. No team can contain more than two players performing on the same WIT ensemble. This rule is to help promote player cross-pollination, a main objective of the tournament.

## **What if we formed a team for the 2020 FIST that never was? Can we still compete together again?**

Of course!! You can even use the same name.

## **What if I would like to compete, but don't have a team? Or what if I want to play with people I don't yet even know?**

WIT is once again playing matchmaker. Sign up to be on a team, and Matchmaker Extraordinaire Dan Miller (WIT's external relations director) will help you assemble a team and connect you with other players. From there it is on you to coordinate your submission.

Sign up for the matchmaker [HERE](#) by ~~Jan. 4~~ (SECOND ROUND OPEN NOW, ENDING MONDAY JANUARY 17 AT NOON).

## **What can we name our team?**

Just about anything, but please avoid profanity and trademarks. Also, names that are very long will get chopped up or abbreviated in several uses. We cannot control this, so please aim for short (under 20 characters or so).

# Submission Information

**When will submissions open?**

Now! The sign up form is available [here](#).

**When are submissions due?**

The deadline for submissions will be Wednesday, Jan. 12. **NOTE: EXTENDED TO TUESDAY, JANUARY 18 AT NOON!**

**When will I know my schedule?**

We aim to release the bracket about a week after submissions are due.

**Is there an application fee?**

No.

**Are all teams that submit guaranteed a spot in the tournament?**

Ideally, yes. However, because FIST has a finite number of curtains, WIT reserves the right to cut off submissions before the deadline (which, again, is Wednesday, Jan. 12) in case we exceed capacity. TO ENSURE A SPOT PLEASE SUBMIT EARLY.

**Are there any other rules around performance?**

All FIST performances must be longform improvisation. There may be some devised or planned framing elements, including some connection to short-form game work, but shows that are not majority longform improvisation are not admissible and will be subject to elimination from the tournament. If you have any doubt whether your idea is enough longform improvisation, ask us at [fist@witdc.org](mailto:fist@witdc.org) for a consult before you cement your format. **Prohibited from all performances:** any actual smacking down, glass or any easily breakable/hazardous materials on stage, breaking of bottles, use of fire/smoke or any manner of explosive device, any actions placing players or audience members in grave physical risk. Breaking these rules will result in disqualification of the team in question.

## **COVID-19 issues**

**How does COVID-19 factor in?**

WIT continues to monitor COVID-19, keeping our community's safety as a top concern.

Ergo, everyone who walks through our doors (performers, students, patrons, volunteers, staff) must follow WIT's [COVID-19 policy](#):

\*All performers, teachers, students, audience members, staff and volunteers must provide proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Full vaccination at WIT

includes having a booster shot.

\*We also are requiring everyone inside the building to wear medical-grade masks (cloth masks are not allowed unless being used to double mask). Our performers are allowed to remove their masks while on stage and more than six feet away from audience members. Performers are asked to continue to wear masks while in common areas of the building.

\*We are encouraging our performers to take a rapid test before performing on stage maskless.

**So just to confirm, to compete, I must provide proof that I am fully vaccinated – including my booster shot?**

Yes.

## **Scheduling**

**What are the dates again?**

FIST begins on Thursday, Feb. 24 and ends with the Championship Match and subsequent victory celebration on Sunday, March 27. Matches will **primarily** be on THU, FRI, SAT and SUN nights between 7pm and 11pm, as well as SAT and SUN afternoons between 12pm and 6pm.

Depending on how wide the field of teams is, we may need to schedule matches on other nights and times. All possible dates/times (including Mondays and Wednesdays, and weekend afternoons) will be included in the sign-up query.

**I thought I saw online that the dates for FIST were March 3 - April 3. What happened?**

Good eye, gumshoe! Yes, between announcing FIST and this point in time, we needed to shift our schedule up one week.

**I noted there are no 7 or 7:30 p.m. shows during the third and fourth weekends of FIST. What is the deal?**

You are very observant!! During those seven nights, WIT will be presenting Your Town, a show that got postponed from January due to the Omicron surge.

## **The Bracket & Comeback Bracket**

**How does the bracket work?**

While the final bracket and schedule cannot be completed until all teams are

submitted, this is what we expect: Teams in beginning rounds 1-2 will get 12 minutes each to perform for the audience. Beginning in round 3 (the Sweet Sixteen), teams will get 15 minutes each. Some rounds will likely include Grand Slam matches, where 4 or more teams compete and 2 advance. At some point, the matches will shift to two-team matches where one team is eliminated. Some matches may also be double-doubles, in which 2 2-team matches are held subsequently, with the audience voting on a winner from each pairing.

We try to avoid “play-in” matches or “byes” in FIST, but if the number of teams makes it impossible to field all teams in a Round One match, the most experienced teams *may* get a bye into Round Two.

While we are still figuring out this year’s bracket (and it also depends on the number of submissions), this is how the bracket has worked in years past:

\*Round 1 takes place over weekends 1 and 2

\*Round 2 takes place over weekend 3

\*Round 3 (the Sweet Sixteen) is weekend 4

\*Rounds 4 - 6 (Elite 8, Semi Finals and Finals) all take place in weekend 5

### **I understand in prior years teams are “seeded.” What does that mean?**

Your “seed” for the tournament is based on your self-reported years of performance experience in your submission form, and a subjective review. We do our best to spread the seeds evenly to balance out the brackets. Schedule considerations also play a part in which bracket quartile you are placed in.

### **What is the Comeback Bracket? And how does that impact the final?**

The Comeback Bracket, which launched in 2018, allows losing teams from the quarter-finals and semi-finals to compete for a spot in the FIST final. Here is the current plan for the Comeback Bracket, subject to change:

Four teams will compete in The Comeback Brawl:

- the two losing teams of the semi-finals
- some of the losing teams of the quarter-finals (sometimes called the Elite Eight, when there are 8 teams in the quarter-finals). All losing teams in the quarter-finals must compete for their spot in The Comeback Brawl in two special “Comeback Bracket” matches that will take place during the semi-finals.

Both semi-final shows will contain two separate matches—the semi-finals themselves and the comeback bracket matches. For these shows the audience will select their favorite team from each match.

Teams eliminated in the semi-final round will advance to the Comeback Bracket,

which will culminate in the Comeback Brawl! Held on Saturday, March 26, The Comeback Brawl is a four-way match whose winner will advance to a three-way FIST final! Voting for The Comeback Brawl will be ranked (or “instant runoff”)—audience members will rank the teams in order of preference and the first team to get to 50 percent of the audience favor will advance.

The finals will be a three way final, and voting will be ranked. The Comeback Bracket will be finalized prior to the start of the competition.

**I read everything above, but I still have more questions. What do I do?**

Please reach out to [fist@witdc.org](mailto:fist@witdc.org).