



Introducing the Ninja Carolina League

The Ninja Carolina League (NCL) is a league for Beginning and Advanced Ninja Warrior athletes of all ages in the Carolinas. Season 2 will run from September to mid-April with finals sometime in the first three weeks of May to determine its champions.

Anyone who would like to compete in the NCL may do so, as long as they agree to follow our rules of conduct, but the intent is to focus on athletes from North Carolina and South Carolina. We realize athletes from surrounding states that don't have a local league may wish to participate, and we certainly invite them. We also invite "visiting ninjas" to participate.

Each competition will follow an updated version of the Athlete Warrior Games scoring system (see below).

All participating gyms may host two competitions (on days/times that do not collide with any other participating gyms competition that are located within 3 hours). [Current schedule is here](#)

NOTE: A gym may choose to have a competition that does not host all divisions. For example, "Beginners only", "Advanced only", "7U-13U only", "13U-40+ only", though we encourage gyms to offer as wide a range as possible given their facility size and obstacle level as well as time constraints.

The NCL will seek to be in association with USA Ninja (<http://ninjausa.org>) and will have male and female, beginner and advanced levels in the following classes (based on age as of January 1 of the year the season ends):

- 7U
- 9U
- 11U
- 13U
- 15U
- Adult (16-39)
- Masters (40+)

Competitors in each division (gender/level/class) will be awarded points based on the standard [league standing scoring system](#).

Beginner & Advanced Levels in each class

At the beginning of each season, athletes will decide which level and class they will compete in and must compete in that division for the entire season. *(NOTE: Should we make an exception for people to change after their first event? I'm inclined to say no without some sort of appeal process, as their first competition may not be an indicator of their competition in later events... and the appeal process may be burdensome).*

General guidelines are that most athletes competing in their first full season will be “beginners” and most athletes that have been competing consistently for more than 1 year will be “advanced”. Athletes who have qualified and competed in either the NNL National Finals or UNAA World Finals *must* compete in the “advanced” level. After Season 1, any “beginners” who finished in the top 10 percent in the previous season *must* compete in an “advanced” division the following season.

The goal of having two levels is to invite beginners into the sport without having to feel they have to compete with more experienced athletes.

Each participant will also identify their “home gym” (see Team Awards below)

Slightly Modified Athlete Warrior Games rules

The former Athlete Warrior Games rules provide “touch points” as athletes progress through obstacles in a way that challenges both beginners and advanced ninjas to do their best. We’ve adopted this rule set with only one modification... what the official final time is. (See Point Scoring System below).

A course will contain 7-12 obstacles and must include at minimum the following: three balance/lower body obstacles and three upper body dominant obstacles. The remaining obstacles are left up to the course designer’s discretion; a maximum time limit must be determined prior to start of the competition. A “soft time limit” is used, meaning that an athlete who starts an obstacle before the time limit will be allowed to complete that obstacle, but will not be allowed to continue to the next obstacle if time has been exceeded.

Obstacles will not be adjusted for any specific individual athlete to accommodate them. The course designer/judge may provide optional platforms for those who are “vertically challenged” to mount the beginning of an obstacle at the sole discretion of the course designer at the beginning of the course for a specific age group. Courses should be designed differently for Youth and Adult Division age groups. For example, the youngest age groups (7U, 9U, and 11U) should not be able to complete an American Ninja Warrior (ANW) Stage III Las Vegas type obstacle course. Older youth age groups (13U and 15U) should have a different course design than the younger age groups and may be the same or similar than adult courses. The course designer and judge may make as many changes between divisions as they see fit to provide the best experience for that age group, but the course should be identical for each athlete in a

division.

Courses may be the same or different for Beginner or Advanced level participants, but Beginner level participants must run before Advanced level participants if they are running on the same course so they will not be unfairly comparing themselves to those more experienced than themselves. Awards should be given to Beginners before running Advanced competitors.

It is up to individual gyms how to design their courses to be age and level appropriate... here are some suggestions:

Course Difficulty	Primary Target Divisions	Suggested Additional Divisions
Simplest course	7U Beginner	
	7U Advanced	9U Beginner
	9U Advanced	11U Beginner
	11U Advanced	13U Beginner, 15U Beginner, 40+ Beginner, 16-39 Beginner
	13U Advanced	40+ Advanced Female
	15U Advanced	16-39 Advanced Female, 40+ Advanced Male
Most Difficult Course	16-39 Advanced Male	

Gym Personnel (owners, and employees) can compete in NCL competitions at their own gym. Any gym personnel competing in their own gym MUST run FIRST in their own competition AND must not test or be involved in design of course.

No one (Beginner or Advanced) should be allowed to test or touch the obstacles before running the course. Blatant disregard for these rules will result in disqualification.

Point Scoring System

Obstacles will have at least 1 and up to 5 points of scoring on a course obstacle. Points will be awarded from easiest to hardest on any given obstacle. A point total and course time will be determined prior to the first run of the competition. An athlete's point total on the course will determine their placement order in the final standings of the competition. In the case of several athletes earning the same number of points, final placement will then be determined by time of their final point. Athletes will be able to continue on the course whether they receive any points on an obstacle or not until the time limit for the course that is determined by the course judge.

If you touch on or past a point on the course with your hands or feet (as appropriate) before touching the ground, your point will be earned. If someone skips a touchpoint but successfully touches the next or final course point on the course, then the last point touched by an athlete will be scored. We feel with a touch- based system it's far easier to control and determine if a point has been achieved. If the course designers determine an obstacle will be completed by using hands only, feet only or combo of both then that is what will be followed on that obstacle. The course designer will determine what type of touch is acceptable on a course obstacle. Course designers and judges are not permitted to force/tell an athlete to do an obstacle a certain way. Simply what is allowed to use/touch with hands, feet, or both, and what is not allowed to use/touch with hands, feet, or both. Athletes must engage an obstacle in order to achieve points and are not allowed to jump from starting platform to ending platform. As soon as an athlete touches the first course point on an obstacle, they will not be allowed to restart that obstacle.

Defined dismounts will have to be successful to achieve the final point. A dismount is not always required to achieve a final point on an obstacle. A course judge has the final ruling if a dismount or point has been achieved successfully on a course run.

Course Judges

Every gym hosting an NCL competition will have a head judge and one or more assistant judges. Course Judges will determine if an athlete has or has not completed a course obstacle and the number of points a ninja earns on the obstacle.

Ninja Master software will be used for each contestant's run and will be the official record of an athlete's run. The course judge is responsible for having an accurate record of each athlete's run in the Ninja Master system. If video backups are not available, an event host may use additional backup system (stop watches and note pads, or other scoring system) that keeps track of points earned and times at the completion of each obstacle, so they can correct any mistakes recorded in the Ninja Master system.

The Head Course Judge or Course Designer will conduct the course run walk through prior to that wave of competition where they will fully explain each obstacle on the course to the competing ninjas. Obstacles will have a definite beginning and completion point; this must be explained in detail to all competing ninjas during the course walk through to avoid any confusion. Clearly marked starting and dismount platforms are required, except in the case of linking obstacles without touching the ground or a final buzzer. Ultimately, the Head Course Judge will define these points with the hosting gym's course designer.

Judges should use a consistent start method (e.g. "3, 2, 1, GO" "boop, boop, boop, BOOP" "ready, BOOP") for every age division, and ideally the entire competition.

Video Course Reviews

If a course run was filmed by an athlete's designated video person, then upon the completion of that age group a run can be reviewed to determine the correct points of an athlete's run. The Judges have the final ruling on obstacle completion and accumulated points following the review. If video evidence is inconclusive, the initial call during the run will stand. A formal video request should be submitted by the athlete, athlete's parent/guardian, or coach. At no point may any coach, parent or athlete ask for another competitor's video be reviewed due to any judges error. No points will be added or changed after the completion of awards at each competition. However, the judge may ask for a video review if they believe they may have made a mistake.

Rules of Conduct - Safety and Good Sportsmanship

NCL strives to provide athletes with a safe, fun, honest & competitive sporting event at every competition.

We know Judges are human and mistakes will be made. Judges are not perfect. They are people and should always be treated respectfully as they deal with their responsibilities on the course. If an athlete, coach, parent or gym owner displays conduct that is argumentative, or disruptive in any way to the competition that athlete will be subject to disqualification at the sole discretion of the Judge.

As all physical activities come with the possibility of injury, we cannot guarantee that no injuries will occur. However, we want to make sure every reasonable safety precaution is taken. We invite parents or participants to identify safety concerns during course walk throughs or before an individual run and expect those running the competition to respond with an appropriate level of concern. If a participant (or parent/guardian of a participant) does not feel a course is safe to their personal level of satisfaction, they may refrain from participation and ask and receive a refund for their participant fees.

All participating gyms agree to hold its coaches, staff, and administrators above reproach with respect to child abuse in any form. This may include child sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, non-consensual sexual conduct, sexual harassment, intimate relations involving an imbalance of power, or any form of emotional/physical misconduct such as bullying or hazing.

Chalk, Tape, and Gloves

Climbing chalk may be provided by the gym hosting the competition. Outside/personal chalk will be allowed during a course run, if approved by the hosting gym prior to the start of that day's competition. Tape is permitted for use as long as it does not give the competing ninja an advantage over the other competing ninjas. Tape must be approved by the Head Course Judge prior to the start of that day's competition. Gloves of any kind are NOT permitted for use by athletes competing in an NCL competition.

Athlete Injuries

If an athlete is injured during a course run, the course clock will NOT stop. It is at the discretion of the athlete whether or not they wish to continue their course run. The athlete will not be given a re-run.

Obstacle Malfunction & resets

If a course obstacle malfunctions (malfunction: not working as designed, built or manufactured by the course builder) or brakes during an athlete's course run, the athlete shall be granted a course rerun after a 15 minute break. During the break the comp shall continue to operate. If an athlete gets to an obstacle and it has not been reset by course officials, the athlete will be given a 15 minute break and chance to rerun the course, during the break the comp shall continue to operate.

NCL Individual Standings

Athletes may compete in as many season competitions as they desire. Their three best performances will determine their standings in their division (gender/level/class group) of the league. At each NCL competition, a league point total is awarded based on how the ninja places overall at the end of the competition in their division. The most league points will be received for 1st place overall in each division, the least amount of league points will be awarded to the last place finisher in all overall division. Find a more detailed explanation see the [league standing scoring system](#) which is used by all leagues under USA Ninja.

In order to qualify for Finals an athlete will need at least 160 league points.

Prize money awarded at the finals should not jeopardize an athlete's amateur status as it is not expected to be higher than what they paid to participate in total throughout the season.

NCL Team Standings

Since each Athlete will be associated with a "home gym", there MAY be some sort of award for the top team(s). This is still to be determined.

Governing Board and Financial Considerations

The NCL will operate as an LLC with a pure volunteer organization with a board of three members serving as President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each member gym will contribute \$100/year to cover operational expenses. There will be a separate, dedicated bank account visible to all board members.

Member gyms will get a banner and access to a logo to use in its merchandise and promotional materials.

The initial 3 board members will serve 1-3 year terms. Each board member thereafter will serve three year terms. Initial board members are:

- Ken Auer, Rock Solid Warrior (Secretary - not Treasurer due to conflict of interest w/ Ninja Master)
- Matt Kalanz, Warrior Tech (President, Treasurer)
- Seth Reimer, Sumter Ninja Warrior (Member-at-Large)

For Season 2, we've added:

- David Gordon, USA Ninja Challenge Durham (Member-at-Large)

We hope to add another board member before starting Season 3 and then start having others roll off and seats change.

The league will use Ninja Master Software's [League Scoring and Registration](#) system to facilitate its record keeping and database of athletes as recommended (required?) by USA Ninja. Each participating gym will set their own price for participants in sanctioned events which they host. In addition to its standard fees, Ninja Master will extract \$10 of "league fees" from each registered participant ticket to go into a league bank account. The participating gym will keep the rest of the registration fees. After covering League expenses, the remainder of the money will be allocated to prize money/awards for finals in each division. (NOTE: Money collected from each division will be the total prize money for each division).

Location for finals will be determined on a yearly basis by the following criteria:

- Any gym can bid to host the finals on or before December 1, offering to pay the annual Ninja Master League Fee (currently \$599) for the season if they are awarded the event.
- The majority of participating gyms must agree that the facility is capable of providing a suitable space for the finals.
- Approved gyms will then be chosen at random... a gym may NOT host the finals more than once every three years unless there are no other approved gyms that have applied

Sponsors

We will accept any corporate or local sponsors that we deem to NOT be in conflict with our general values.

Other Decisions

Generally speaking, the board exists to serve the best interest of:

1st) The participants in the league and the sport in general

2nd) The gyms who host the events

They should be trusted to make the decisions they have to in order to run a successful league and grow the sport in the Carolinas.

Any changes that would be made between seasons (e.g. Splitting into regions in some form, changes to rules, etc.) should be communicated to hosting gyms at least two months before the start of the season (barring unforeseen circumstances). Input will be listened to, but the authority to make the final changes are with the board and the decision for a gym to participate is with the gym.

If the league board is not operating in a way that serves the gyms well, the league will suffer as gyms exit. There seems to be some level of built in checks and balances.

Selection of board members should be done in cooperation with the gyms. As it is not a paid position, many won't want it. I think it is too early to put term limits on it. As long as all is transparent, it doesn't appear that there will be a lot of political battles brewing. If others feel differently, speak up.