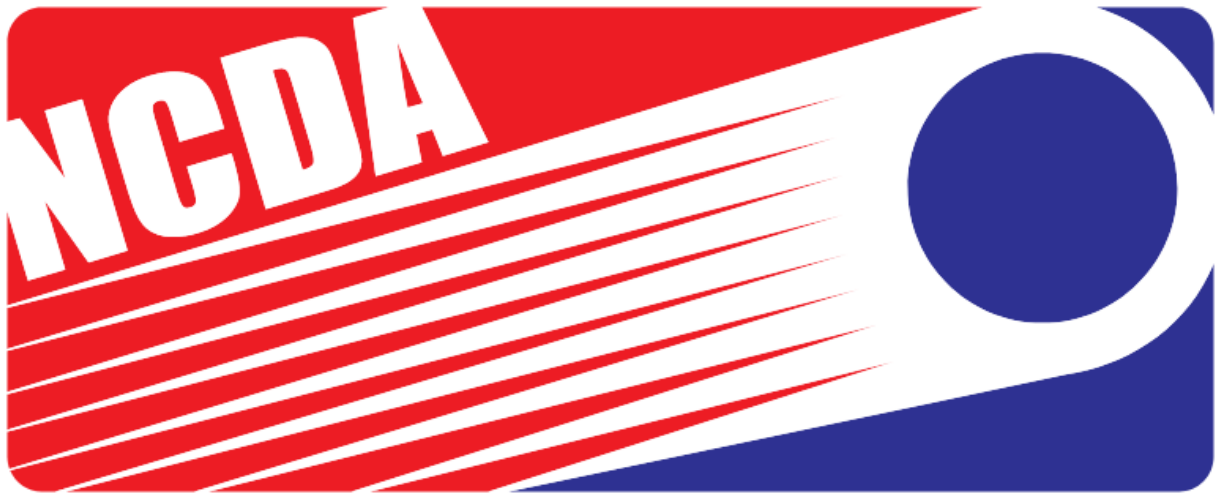


## **Guidelines for Starting a New Club**



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## **Introduction**

First and foremost, thank you for continuing your NCDA career by way of starting a new club. Whether it be as a result of continuing your education at a new university, or as a prospective coach, starting up a new team is an undertaking worth commendation.

To be straightforward, starting a new club is not an easy task, and at times may not be a linear journey. There are a lot of variables that go into starting a new club such as figuring out what your university and club sports departments require for a new club to become approved, completing necessary paperwork, and most importantly, finding actual people to help get the club going. This will be expanded upon later in the document, but the sooner you are able to find one or more committed students to help you start the team, the easier and sooner you will be able to get your club off the ground.

Please use this and other supporting documents as a guideline for the steps involved in getting your club going, but don't feel like you have to follow this to a tee. This document is simply meant to make your life easier and give you some informed direction of what you need to do.

Lastly, as you go through the process of starting your club, please submit anything you do not see included already to the NCDA Executive Board so we can improve upon this for those who wish to start a dodgeball club in the future.

## **Contacting Your Club Sports Department**

First thing's first, you are going to want to contact your university's club sports department. Every university's club sports department has a website and will have contact information listed for you to get a hold of those in charge of the department. If you're struggling to find the website, just Google "University of X Club Sports" and it should pop right up. Whether you wish to set up an in-person meeting, talk over the phone, or send an email to introduce yourself, you'll want to have a list of questions prepared to find out the information you need to get things going. Here's what we recommend:

- 1) What are the requirements for becoming approved as a club sport on campus?
  - a) This one might seem vague and obvious, but this should get you the exact things required to get your club approved. This will include which specific documents you'll need to complete, how many students are required to sign on as founding members, etc.
    - i) Speaking of documents, your club will need a Constitution. In the event your university does not give you a preconstructed template to use, we can provide you with one.
- 2) How many students do I need to start my club?
  - a) This number generally will be 10, but I've seen it be as many as 15-20. Some universities have no requirement, and so it is worth noting that the minimum number of players required to play an official NCDA match is 8.

- b) With that being said, you can just find X number of random students to sign the form and you can never talk to them again if they aren't actually interested. You'll just need them to sign the sheet as a formality. Ideally, all the people you have sign the sheet would be interested in joining the club, but that is way easier said than done.
- 3) What help can you provide with initial club recruiting, and can you give me a booth at the upcoming recruitment fair?
  - a) This is going to make your life infinitely easier as far as recruitment goes if you are able to get a booth at your university's recruitment fair (particularly the one that precedes the start of the fall semester) prior to being recognized as a student organization or club.
    - i) Your university may have two fall recruitment fairs. For example, the University of Cincinnati has a fall registered student organization fair (the big one) and a second, club sports specific, recruitment fair.
      - (1) Wes Peters was able to get a booth at the club sports specific fair when starting the club at UC and it was vital in finding the initial few students who were interested in starting the club.
  - b) Although they are your biggest and best opportunity, recruitment fairs should not be your only source of recruiting when starting a club. We will get into what other options look like later, but asking generally if the university will provide any other assistance in this part of the process is highly recommended.

### **University Required Documents & Bank Account**

As mentioned in the previous section, you will need to complete some documents and paperwork prior to and directly after starting your organization. Here are a few common ones.

- 1) A Constitution and Bylaws.
  - a) Your university will likely provide you with a template to use specific to the university. In the event that one is not available, we have a template handy that you can utilize.
- 2) Risk Management Plan
  - a) A risk management plan is not as certain to be required as a constitution and bylaws for your club, but a fair number of universities do require it. They will almost certainly provide you a template for this due to the specificity of the requirements therein, so be sure they send you one.
- 3) Club Bank Account
  - a) You will not only need to open a bank account specifically for the club, but you will want to do so as well. When you incur any reimbursable expenses, the university will send the money to your club bank account. Further, any monies raised will need to be deposited somewhere, and that should not be your personal account.
  - b) We recommend that you open an account with a bank that does not give you any sort of fees for using or not using money in your account, so personally PNC is a

great choice for this reason, and also because they are just about everywhere so withdrawing cash is easy.

### **Finding Interested Students (Recruiting)**

So, you'll of course need some teammates to play on the team with/for you. On top of that, you'll need some students who are willing to take on leadership roles within the club. If you're able to get 3-4 students who are able to take on those key positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary/Other) you will have a great foundation for your club for the long haul.

Be sure to point out the benefits of taking on a leadership role within the club, as freshmen generally don't consider these sorts of things. For one thing, it will look great on your resume holding a leadership role as you apply for co-ops, internships, and full-time positions. A former captain of Michigan State's Dodgeball team directly credits having dodgeball on his resume for why he was offered his first full-time role after college.

Everything we've discussed so far is all well and good right? Paperwork is tedious but not difficult, and getting a handle on the requirements your university requires is pretty straight forward. At the end of the day though, you're going to need to find your teammates somewhere. The following are some great examples of ways to recruit for your club.

- 1) Fall Recruitment Fair.
  - a) We've discussed this already, be sure to ask club sports if you can get a booth prior to being a club, and then don't forget to sign up every year thereafter.
  - b) Be sure to bring fliers (see below) to handout, and bring a laptop with an excel spreadsheet open for interested students to write their contact info down. You don't want to only rely on them to contact you, you'll want to be proactive in reaching out, giving them more info about the club, the game, practice times, etc.
- 2) Table in the Middle of Campus
  - a) You should be able to contact your university's "student center", rec center, or another busy area/building that gets a lot of foot traffic on campus and get approved to set up a table (they will provide the table unless you want to do it outside on your own). From there, you can flag people down as they walk by and pitch the dodgeball club to them.
- 3) Hang Fliers Throughout Campus
  - a) We have a very colorful, editable template for fliers to utilize. Please don't hesitate to ask!
  - b) Be sure to include relevant information such as your contact info, practice times (once approved), etc.
  - c) Reach out to your university's "university housing" department, they may be willing and able to distribute fliers on your behalf in the dorms.
  - d) Target the dorms first and foremost, particularly freshman dorms. Also go to your university's "student center", dining halls, the rec center, and other busy parts of campus.
- 4) Reach out to the NCDA Executive Board

- a) You've hopefully been in contact already with the Director of League Expansion, so utilize them as a resource for a means to recruit as well.
- b) They can connect you, or reach out to leadership of universities with clubs closest to yours and see if there are any students who have family/friends that go to your school who may be interested in dodgeball.

### **Approval Process**

If you've gotten to this point in the process, congratulations! You're one step away from becoming approved. All that is left is to turn in all your required documents and likely attend a meeting with Club Sports to be reviewed and seek approval. Once you're approved, the real fun begins!

### **You're Approved! Hurray! ..What Now?**

Well, you're approved and officially a registered student organization and a club sport on your university's campus. You've also got some teammates who are ready to start practicing and figuring out the game of dodgeball. What comes next? Well, a lot actually. The approval process was only the beginning. Now you'll need to start building your club for the long term, and there's a lot that comes with that. Luckily you have an executive board to help. So let's dig into some of these next steps.

### **Common Pitfalls for Starting a New Club**

1. Trying to do it all yourself
- 2.

### **Questions to Ask Club Sports Later**

- 1) What kind of funding would be available to us once we are approved, and what is the process for securing said funding?
  - a) You're going to have some expenses in starting a club (equipment, possibly court rental fees, travel expenses for tournaments, etc.) and you'll want to know if the university is able and willing to provide you funding, especially in the club's formative stages of existence.
    - i) It's entirely possible that your university will not give you any funding your first year as an organization because they want to make sure you will stick around and not sink money away immediately. While understandable, it can make things more difficult financially.
    - ii) On the other hand, some club sports departments seemingly have a wad of cash burning a hole in their pockets, and may give you funding immediately if you know to ask for it.

- b) University funding can come from multiple sources. While your club sports department will likely provide funding, you can look for other sources within the university as well such as student government.
- 2) Reserving Court Space