

2019 USAU High School State Eligibility Exceptions

California

At the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator - syc_ca@usultimate.org -, high school teams may formally request to add Free Agents* to their High School State Championship roster given the following conditions:

- Teams are limited in the number of additions:
 - Boys/Open
 - **Div I:** up to 4 Free Agents may be added if properly requested by April 1st, provided that the team is comprised of least 70% Regular Members.‡
 - **Div II:** up to 4 Free Agents may be added if properly requested by April 1st, provided that the team is comprised of least 70% regular members.
 - **Div III “Developmental”:** up to 5 Free Agents may be added if properly requested by April 15th, provided that the team is comprised of least 60% regular members.
 - Girls
 - **Div I:** up to 6 Free Agents may be added if properly requested by April 1st, provided that the team is comprised of least 50% Regular Members.‡
 - **Div II “Developmental”:** up to 7 Free Agents may be added if properly requested by April 8th, provided that the team is comprised of least 40% regular members.
- The Free Agent must:
 - Join a school team with an ultimate program, club, or team within 15 miles of the school he/she attends.
 - Compete in at least two games with the team he/she is joining prior to the State Championship; or must practice with the team for more than two months before making her/his Request.
 - Submit a formal Eligibility Exception Request to the Competition State Youth Coordinator - syc_ca@usultimate.org - by March 1st including:
 - A signed statement (by Player, Coach, and School Administrator) that the Free Agent’s school has not formally acknowledged an ultimate program, club, or team in that school year; or that the Free Agent’s School will not be attending the State Championship. *(This clause to be phased in by 2019.)*
- A Free Agent may only compete with a team for 2 years total starting in 2018.
 - After the first Exception year, he/she (or a parent/guardian/mentor) must get in touch with California Ultimate Association – at learn-to-play@calulti.org – to arrange a Learn to Play Clinic (this is a free service that CUA will either provide directly or via a local disc organization) during the following Fall in an attempt to kickstart an ultimate program at her/his school.
 - Failure to contact the above email address will result in an automatic rejection of future Exception Requests.
 - The Free Agent may reapply for a second year of Eligibility Exception if he/she has contacted CUA and made an effort to start a program but 1) the program has an average attendance of 12 or less players at team events through December 1st; or 2) the Free Agent’s school won’t formally acknowledge the new program, club, or team via organizational support, field space, and/or funding.
- Any team rostering Free Agents for the HS State Championships must be comprised of least 70% “regular members” and eligible homeschoolers, combined.

All Exceptions are at the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator each season and previous season’s decisions will not be considered precedent setting.

*A Free Agent is defined as a player who does not attend the school he/she wishes to play for at States and falls outside of [USA Ultimate’s High School State Championship Eligibility Guidelines](#).

‡Regular Members are students that attend the school from which the team is created plus eligible homeschoolers, combined.

Starting in 2019

Free Agents must have practiced with the team they wish to join for more than two months before making her/his Request; and/or must compete in at least two games (not at the same tournament) with the team they are joining prior to the State Championship.

- Free Agent must join the *closest* formally acknowledged school ultimate program, club, or team team within 15 miles of the player's home or 3 miles of the school they attend.
- Teams taking on Free Agents for States must have a *demonstrated need* for players; or a *demonstrated history* with said player lasting longer than 6 months.
 - "Need" may be declared after December 1st (beginning 12/1/2018) if a team has averaged 14 or less players from their own school and has held 6 or more qualifying team events (practices, league games, tournament games) prior to said date. *Note that Team Administrators and/or Coaches are highly encouraged to keep detailed attendance records; this is important for coaches' liability coverage, parents ease of mind, and State Championship qualifying.*
 - "History" should include tracked attendance, league registration, and/or tournament registration.
- All Roster Eligibility Exceptions must be submitted by April 1st. Decisions will be formally made and communicated by the State Competition Youth Coordinator in advance of the State Championship, no later than April 10th.
- Approval of Eligibility Exception Requests will be dependent on a 2/3 majority vote by the State Championship Committee consisting of the Competition State Youth Coordinator, Boy's SOC, Girl's SOC, and 3 District Coordinators.

Moving Forward

Over the next several years, we hope that youth programs in California schools blossom at an exponential rate; as such we endeavor to implement the following evolving guidelines:

- **Boys/Open Div I or Div II** teams rostering Free Agents for the HS State Championships must be comprised of:
 - **2017/2018/2019**: At least 70% regular members.
 - **2019/2020**: At least 75% regular members.
 - **2020/2021**: At least 80% regular members.
 - **2021/2022**: At least 85% regular members.
 - **2022/2023**: At least 90% regular members.
- **Boys/Open Div III** teams rostering Free Agents for the HS State Championships must be comprised of:
 - **2017/2018/2019**: At least 60% regular members.
 - **2019/2020**: At least 60% regular members.
 - **2020/2021**: At least 60% regular members.
 - **2021/2022**: At least 65% regular members.
 - **2022/2023**: At least 65% regular members.
- **Girls Div I** teams rostering Free Agents for the HS State Championships must be comprised of:
 - **2017/2018/2019**: At least 50% regular members.
 - **2019/2020**: At least 50% regular members.
 - **2020/2021**: At least 60% regular members.
 - **2021/2022**: At least 60% regular members.
 - **2022/2023**: At least 70% regular members.
- **Girls Div II** teams rostering Free Agents for the HS State Championships must be comprised of:
 - **2017/2018/2019**: At least 40% regular members.
 - **2019/2020**: At least 40% regular members.
 - **2020/2021**: At least 50% regular members.
 - **2021/2022**: At least 50% regular members.
 - **2022/2023**: At least 60% regular members.

It is also worth noting that starting in 2020 we will be looking to host a larger State Championship event that brings together the Elementary School (open), Middle School (open), and High School (girls & open) divisions. We suspect this may affect some players' decision regarding which division to play in; we would like to hear from coaches and players that this may affect to better understand how we can ease this transition and hopefully make the event work for all. Our intention is never to reduce playing opportunities, but rather to promote growth (in terms of number of school teams *and* number of players) equally across age and gender divisions while providing a more communal event where players and teams can learn from, cheer for, and be inspired by other students.

Colorado

The Colorado USAU HS State Championships and Altitude Youth Ultimate follow the eligibility guidelines as [outlined by USAU Ultimate](#). In short, any player competing for a High School team must be a full time student at the school they are representing.

If a player does not meet these criteria, they must seek an Eligibility Exception. Eligibility Exceptions are approved on a case by case basis by ⅔ majority vote through the Championship Committee. The Championship Committee is comprised of the Championship SYC, Girls SYC, District Coordinators (4), and an AYU Board Member.

The Championship Committee follows these basic guidelines when deciding on whether to approve an exception:

**** Free Agent means "does not attend school of HS Ultimate team"**

- A Free Agent must NOT have the opportunity to play at the school they currently attend (No Ultimate program in place).
- A Free Agent should join the closest school with an Ultimate program near the school that they attend.
- Teams taking on Free Agents should ideally have a need for players (recommended 12 or less players).
- A Free Agent should seek an exception as soon as they decide they would like to join a team and should NOT begin competing with a team until their eligibility is approved.
- A Free Agent should actively take steps to start a program at the school they attend. Free agents must seek approval each season and give updates on efforts to start a program at the school they attend each season.

It should be noted that these guidelines are just that - guidelines. A player or team does not need to meet these guidelines exactly, however it will help if they do. The Championship Committee rules on exceptions under these general principles:

1. Providing playing opportunities to the most kids possible
2. Maintaining fair play for ALL teams
3. Fostering the growth of new programs and the sport in Colorado

To seek an exception, please email Justin Salvia (justin.salvia@gmail.com)

Please include in your email the name(s) of the player(s) seeking an exception and one paragraph explaining their situation. Be sure to highlight anything that meets the guidelines above!

The Deadline to Submit an exception for Spring 2019 is: Friday April 12th

Connecticut

In the event that a player wishes to participate on a youth team of school which he/she is not a member, the following requirements must be met.

1. The student-athlete does not have a functioning Ultimate program at his/her school
 - a. If student is home schooled, the district that he/she would attend does not have an Ultimate program
2. The student-athlete(s) has made a verifiable effort to start a program within the last 12 months at their current school district.

Evidence of outreach to admin, organizing students or staff, written letters of request of Board of Education, etc. are acceptable demonstrations.

In the event that aforementioned requirements have been satisfied, student agrees to play for the closest regional school program that will allow outside participants.

Additionally, any program accepting student-athletes outside of their program cannot take more than 3 students, and should not be playing more than 2 outside participants on the line at the same time. This is to prevent any program from having nearly 50% of their playing line being from schools outside their own district.

Georgia

Exceptions to USAU Youth Competition Guidelines will occur at the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator each season and previous season decisions will not be considered precedent setting.

Illinois

At the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator, roster exceptions can be made to include players from schools that cannot roster a full 10 player team to participate. This is after these players and/or partial teams have demonstrated a full effort to recruit players and form a team from within their own school. This all will occur at the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator each season and previous season decisions will not be considered precedent setting. All roster exceptions will formally be communicated by Competition State Youth Coordinator in advance of the competition.

Indiana

Girls: Combo teams will be allowed with the approval of the Competition State Youth Coordinator.

Iowa

At the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator, roster exceptions can be made to allow players from schools that cannot roster a full 10 player team to participate.

This all will occur each season and previous season decisions will not be considered precedent setting. All roster exceptions will formally be communicated by the Competition State Youth Coordinator in advance of the competition. As a youth committee, we will work to focus team expansion efforts to schools that have 3-5 players on other teams.

Students who are not yet in 9th grade can compete with a high school team as long as they are deemed physically capable to compete at that level by their guardians and coaches, and pending approval from the team's school and/or club.

Massachusetts

1) Players who are

- homeschooled
 - using distance learning
 - attending an alternative school (vocational, independent, etc) **which doesn't offer an Ultimate team**
- are able to compete with a team in the **school district of their current residency**

2) Players who reside in a school district **without** a team

- are able to compete on a team in a school district **nearby* to them** for a **maximum of 2 years**
- must demonstrate effort toward starting a program at their own school
- must alert the **MA HS League Director** of their existence and team allegiance

*"Nearby" is defined to be the next two towns/cities in any direction which borders their school district.

Note: Receiving teams have the right of refusal and final say on their roster decisions. An exemption eligibility in no way guarantees a roster placement.

Disclaimer: Exceptions may be granted and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Maryland

Combo team – a combo team is defined as any team that does not consist solely of regular members of the same high school AND the combining schools cannot reach tournament roster minimums on their own. Combo teams may be eligible for States with the following stipulations:

- Combo teams must accept all players who wish to play from all the combining schools.
- The combined roster must not exceed 20 players.
- Combo team requests for participation solely in the State tournament will be handled on a case by case basis and combos that provide a competitive advantage will not be considered.

Any team (not combo teams) may pick up to one player on their roster (total) from another school which does not offer an Ultimate program. These players may pick-up with the team for up to two years. These players must attempt to start a team at their school. After two years, the players will be required to compete with their hometown school. Exceptions will be examined case by case by the state coordinator.

Michigan

Exceptions to USAU Youth Competition Guidelines will occur at the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator each season and previous season decisions will not be considered precedent setting.

New Hampshire

At the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator, students may petition to register as a Free Agent for the high school state championship. All roster exceptions will formally be communicated by the Competition State Youth Coordinator in advance of the competition.

- A Free Agent must NOT have the opportunity to play at the school they currently attend (school cannot roster a full 10 player team).
 - A Free Agent must compete in at least two games with the team they are joining prior to the State Championship.
 - The Free Agent must show proof of effort to build and support a team at their own institution. In addition, an individual player may only compete as a Free Agent for a maximum of 2 years.
 - Free Agents will be apportioned at the discretion of the Competition State Youth Coordinator each season and previous season decisions will not be considered precedent setting. In general, Free Agents will be apportioned to increase the number of teams that can meet the roster minimums to participate in the championship and also on the basis of geography.
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New Jersey

Definitions

New Jersey Regular Season (“Regular Season”) - the period each spring from March 1 through Memorial Day Weekend

New Jersey High School State Ultimate Tournament (“States”) - typically held Memorial Day Weekend with the state final match taking place the following Thursday

Eligible Players (“Players”) - any boy or girl currently residing in the state of New Jersey and attending a New Jersey high school during the periods of the Regular Season and States. There is no out of state eligibility under any circumstances. Exceptions will be made for home schooling but documentation from a player’s guardian must be provided.

New Jersey Rules

These rules have been developed to maintain the integrity of programs at the high school level. Teams with Players who are found to have violated any of the rules below may be disqualified from States and suspended from future competitions.

- Players are expected and only eligible to play for their “Home Team”, which is defined by the order below, for the duration of the Regular Season and States. (There will be no “free agents”.)

What constitutes a player’s Home Team?

- First, the player’s high school he or she attends (their school’s varsity or club team). If none exists, then
 - Second, the player’s town program (if their town runs a dedicated high school club team). If none exists, then
 - Third, the closest team geographically from the player’s residential address willing to accept him or her on their roster; if the closest team chooses not to accept said player, the player must then attempt to play for the next closest team and so on. Documentation must be provided by the player to the NJ Youth Coordinator clearly showing his or her attempts to follow this rule.
- To be eligible to play at States, all players must have played at least two Regular Season games with their Home Team and are expected to have attended regular practices with that team prior to playing at States. Injuries are an exception, although for safety reasons all Players should have practiced regularly before returning to competitive play. Such circumstance are up to the discretion of the NJ State Youth Coordinator. The spirit of this rule is to avoid Players signing onto a team just for the purpose of playing at States.
 - Players are not eligible to play on a team other than their defined Home Team either during the Regular Season or at States, and may not switch teams for any reason after March 1 and once they have joined their Home Team. This stipulation remains in effect regardless of whether a player’s Home Team attends States. In other words, no player may join a different team at States simply because their Home Team chooses not to compete at States.
 - These rules are applied for both the Boys and Girls Divisions. However, girls are eligible to play for a team in the Boys’ Division provided they do not have a true local girls Home Team on which to play (first two criteria under “What constitutes a player’s Home Team?”). In such instances, girls may choose to find the nearest geographical girls’ or boys’ team to join.
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North Carolina

The North Carolina High School State tournament is a school based, High School event. Teams should make every effort to meet roster minimums with players who attend their school. However, if a team is struggling to meet roster minimums, they may be able to pick up otherwise ineligible players by utilizing an exception as detailed below. If you will be participating in States under any of the following State eligibility exceptions, please email syc_nc@usultimate.org with your team name, the players name(s), and the exception you are utilizing. Thanks!

PLAYERS

If you are a player who wishes to play in the North Carolina High School State tournament, but are not eligible to participate under the Player Eligibility criteria set forth in the USA Ultimate Youth Competition Guidelines ([USAU Guidelines](#)), you may qualify to participate under the following Statewide exceptions. We have attempted to cover as many scenarios as possible, but please email (syc_nc@usultimate.org) if your situation is not specifically mentioned. **For teams with coaches, no eligibility exceptions will be considered without the coaches’ prior approval.**

1. Any student who does not have a team at the High School where he or she is a regular member or who is homeschooled, may seek permission to play with the nearest school to his or her primary residence that has an Ultimate program and is accepting players. If there is a local High School League in the area, the league organizer will determine the eligible school and team placement and may consider other factors in addition to which school

is closest. Teams that have been declared fully eligible by the local organizer to participate in **ALL** league events will be automatically eligible for States. Please email if you need help finding teams in your area.

2. If there is no school based program in an area, a team composed of local high school aged players may be allowed to participate at the discretion of the Tournament Director and State Youth Competition Coordinator. To be considered, the student(s) must not have graduated from High School or earned a GED and must not have turned age 20 by January 1 of the year of the competition. The student(s) may compete with this team for a maximum of two years. At that point the student(s) must compete with the school he or she attends as a "regular member" or show that they are making a good faith effort to start a team at his or her own school each year.
3. Teams comprised solely of Home Schooled players that are not official USA Ultimate home school cooperatives may also be considered for participation at the discretion of the Tournament Director and State Youth Competition Coordinator.
4. Middle School students - may be considered for eligibility **ONLY** if they are requesting to participate with the High School team for which they would normally play and that High School team *requires* additional players in order to meet tournament roster minimums.

TEAMS

If you are the Team Manager or Coach of a team at a High School, but there are not enough eligible players to meet roster minimums, a "combo" team may be allowed.

Combo Teams - A combo team is defined as any team that does not consist solely of regular members of the same high school **AND** the combining schools cannot reach tournament roster minimums on their own. Combo teams may be eligible for States with the following stipulations:

- Combo teams must accept all players who wish to play from all of the combining schools
- The combined roster must not exceed 20 players.
- If there is a High School league in the area and the combo team has been declared fully eligible by the local organizer to participate in all league events as a combo team, the 20 player roster stipulation may be waived and the team will be automatically eligible for States.
- Combo team requests for participation *solely* in the State tournament will be handled on a case by case basis. Combos that provide a competitive advantage or that have been declared ineligible for local High School league events will not be considered.

GENERAL

For teams that have participated in a local High School League, changes to a league approved roster typically will not be allowed for the State tournament. Teams that require additional players in order to meet tournament roster minimums and do not qualify for any of the above exceptions, may request to pick up individual players who are otherwise ineligible (i.e. they are not the nearest High School). These requests will be handled on a case by case basis, and the team must be able to show an effort to meet the tournament roster minimum with players who would be eligible under established USA Ultimate Youth Competition Guidelines or existing North Carolina State Eligibility Exceptions. Player pick ups of otherwise ineligible players that would provide a distinct competitive advantage may not be considered.

Ohio

All players on a team must attend the school that the team represents (even in the case that a team isn't affiliated with their school officially). Exceptions include the following and must be sent to the SYC each year.

1. New Teams

- a. New teams (**formed in or after the 2018 Spring season**) - new teams may include players from different schools within the same district for 2 years, after which both schools are expect to have their own team or those players can't compete as a combined school.
- b. If 2 groups of players (2.b.) from outside of the same district, and whose schools do not have teams, would not be able to form teams at their schools, those teams may form a team under 1.a. These players are expected to form separate teams after 2 seasons or will not be able to compete as a combined school.
- c. Teams that are currently (going into the 2018 Spring season) operating under joint status have 2 years to form separate teams before being potentially barred from competition.

2. Player Exceptions

- a. Single Players with no school team -Any student who does not have a team at his or her school may seek permission to play with the nearest (geographically) traditional school to his or her primary residence that has an Ultimate program. **Each school may have no more than two such players.** Approval will be conditioned on the student making a good faith effort to start a team at his or her own school each year.
- b. Groups of Players from the same school - If a group of players, defined as less than 7, is unable to form a team at their school, that group may apply to join with the nearest geographic team to them. This exception is subject to strict review by the SYC. **This group is responsible for forming a team at their school no later than 2 full seasons after applying for the exception, or they will not be allowed to compete.** The applying group may be asked to join with a team that is not geographically the closest in order to ensure fair play.

3. Non-Traditional Schools

Players from non-traditional schools (read as home school, vocational school and other types of programs) are eligible to play on the team that is associated with the school/district in which they live, OR with a USAU approved Home School Consortium/Cooperative team, which must apply for such a status every 2 years and whose status is subject to review at any time by USAU. Players who live in the attendance area of a school/district that has no team may apply for a Single Player Exception via clause 2.a.

Pennsylvania

For **Pennsylvania**, the **2019 Eligibility Exceptions** are:

- 1) Players who are
 - homeschooled
 - using distance learning
 - attending an alternative school (vocational, independent, etc) **which doesn't offer an Ultimate team**

are able to compete with a team in the **school district of their current residency.**

- 2) Players who reside in a school district **without** a team
 - are able to compete on a team in a school district **nearby* to them** for a **maximum of 2 years**
 - must demonstrate effort toward starting a program at their own school
 - must alert the **local HS league director** of their existence and team allegiance

*"**Nearby**" is defined to be the next two towns/cities in any direction which borders their school district.

Note: Receiving teams have the right of refusal and final say on their roster decisions. An eligibility exemption in no way guarantees a roster placement.

Exceptions may be granted and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Tennessee

Girls:

- If your team competed in states last year, you may have up to 5 players from another school, but may not draw players from more than 3 schools.
- If your team did not compete in states last year, you may have a combo team. All players just need to be age eligible and be a full time student.

Boys:

- If your team did not compete in the state tournament last year, may have up to 5 players from other schools, but may not draw players from more than 3 schools.
 - If your team competed in the state tournament last year, all players must be from the same school.
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Vermont

Player eligibility is maintained by the Vermont Principals' Association as a Varsity Interscholastic Sport and will be defined in the same way every other sport in the state is determined.

Policies, including eligibility, can be found here: <https://vpaonline.org/athletics/vpa-activities-athletic-policies/>