

UK National Championships – Regionals

New for 2010 we have introduced a Regionals qualification round into the *UKU* National Championships – Open Division. There are two main reasons:

1. We want National Championships Series to be a competition that any and all Ultimate teams in the UK are able to enter
2. We want to promote the idea of running smaller, locally-based Ultimate competitions

The Regions

In the long run we want to have a relatively large number of small regions. With this in mind, we have decided to work on the basis of using the following 12 (yes, twelve) regions. Note that – for the time being at least – this does NOT mean we will actually have 12 regional tournaments.

Home nations:

Scotland (Sc), Northern Ireland (NI), Wales (Wa)

England divided into nine further regions broadly in-line with the Regional Development Agencies, and a definition used by Sport England to group their County Sports Partnerships.

North-East England (NE)

North-West England (NW)

Yorkshire & Humberside (Y&H)

East of England (EE)

East Midlands (EM):

West Midlands (WM)

Greater London (GL):

South East (SE)

South West (SW)

See the Regional Map at the end of this document for details – the bold boundary lines mark the edges of our regions. If in doubt please contact us.

For the foreseeable future we will tend to combine some of these regions into a larger Regional Qualifiers. This will be done on an ad-hoc basis, to some extent driven by the number of people/clubs that want to run Regionals events, the number of teams in each region, and the number of bids (places at Nationals) being awarded to each region. But we are keen to make the tournaments available to players and teams that are not able, or do not want, to travel long distances – and that means small regions are attractive.

We hope Regionals will attract teams that do not expect to qualify for Nationals. For example, looking at Scotland: this Regional qualifier will be our first *UKU* Scottish Championships, and has the potential to:

1. Create a competitive focus-point for Ultimate in Scotland – which can reasonably be expected to support development and growth in player numbers.
2. Attract teams and players that certainly aren't going to spend the time and money required travelling to a weekend-long tournament in England; or perhaps teams that wouldn't ordinarily enter Open Nationals (e.g. Swift?).

The Bids

In this context we are using the word “bid” to mean a qualification place at Nationals.

We intend to use Tour Rankings from the previous year to determine the number of bids awarded to each region. Note that, with N teams qualifying for Nationals, we will use information about more than N teams to determine the regional strength. In 2010 we used information about the top 24 teams as ranked by *UKU* Tour Rankings 2009. Where regions are combined for a Regional Qualifier they will have their number of bids combined and all teams at that tournament will play the same event. (I.e. in theory all teams from NW, NE and Y&H could come from just one of those regions in 2010.)

For 2010 the regions will be combined as shown below. The table also shows the location of the 2010 Regional Qualifiers, and the number of bids per Regional Qualifier.

Qualifier	Regions	Number of Bids	Tournament
Scotland	Sc	1	1-day Edinburgh
North	NW,NE,Y&H,NI	3	2-day Sheffield
Midlands	EE,EM,WM	2	2-day L’boro
South-East	SE,GL	8	2-day SE London
South-West	SW,Wa	2	1-day TBD

The *UKU* Scheduling committee will be involved in the formats and schedules for each Regional Qualifier to ensure that the format follows an appropriate multiple-elimination approach for the positions around the qualification boundary.

Defining a Club’s Region

Each club will be required to specify the region in which they are based. Clubs are expected to do this based on the home addresses of their players and/or their primary practice location. It is well understood that neither of these will work for all teams. In those cases the teams will be asked to apply to join the region they believe is most appropriate to them. Final decision will be with the Competitions Committee, and clubs should also note that they will not be able to change their region from year to year. Clubs will have the option of applying to the Competitions Committee to change region, but there will need to be a reasonable explanation, and the request may not be granted.

Exceptions

We want these tournaments to be accessible to all. It is inevitable when defining regional boundaries like this that some teams will find that their regional event is further away than the regional event in a neighbouring region. For this reason, teams that are not in the top ranked 24 teams (by previous and current year rankings) will be free to APPLY to attend their preferred event. The Competition Committee reserves the right to refuse this request to teams that appear strong enough to compete for a qualification place but do not have a ranking for some reason.

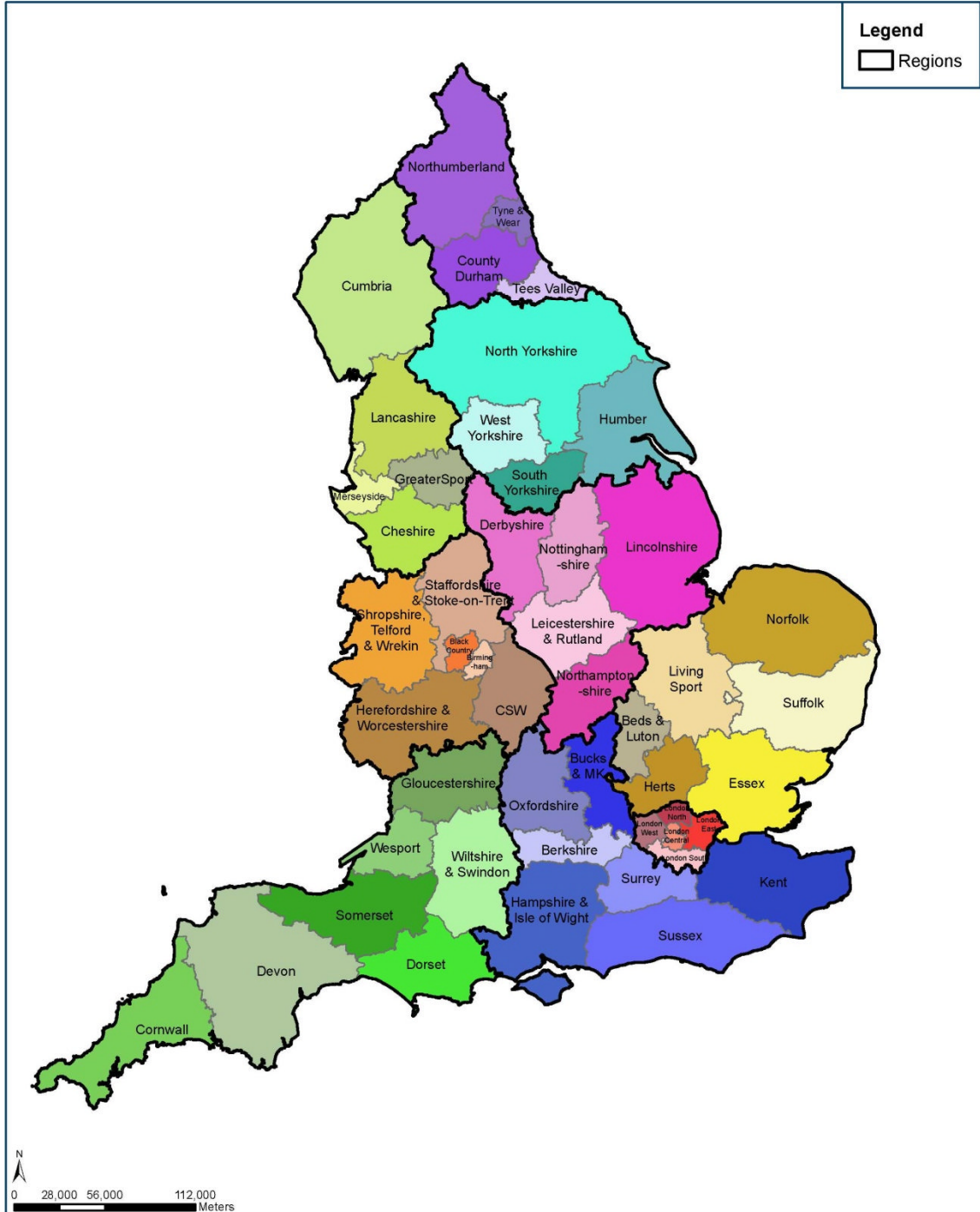
The Future

Here are some additional comments – in no particular order – about what we are trying to do with *UKU* National Championships over the next few years.

- For the moment we are only introducing these changes to the Open Division. If it works well it is reasonable to expect that we might well do something similar in Mixed and Women's at some point.
- We are likely to run into some problems in the first year or two – but in the interests of promoting regional ultimate around the country we will keep pushing this structure whilst trying to learn from things that could be improved each year.
- We are looking to highlight Nationals as the top Ultimate event of the year in the UK – including ideas that we hope might attract non-players to come and watch a Saturday evening show-game and/or the finals on Sunday.
- We intend that Nationals will be the tournament from which UK teams qualify to attend EUUCF.
- We are looking to move Nationals to the August bank-holiday and create a 3-day tournament where we can increase the number of bids and still run an appropriate format (appropriate for both Nationals and the constraints of being a qualification event within the EUUCS) with enough time and space for show-games. We've already cleared this with the organisers of the Copa Cabana tournament.
- In 2011 we plan to separate London and South-East. The next priority will be to establish Home-Nation championships in Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Further separation of the other regions will probably depend on demand from teams/players within those regions.



County Sports Partnerships



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
Sport England 100033111 2008.

Sport England, 51A Church Street,
Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AX

Tel: 020 7273 1915
Email: helen.price@sportengland.org

Drawn by: Helen Price
Reference: 0000HP