

2026-2027
**JUNIOR GOLD
LEAGUE
GUIDE**

U12/U14/U16/U18 Divisions



Prepare your bowlers for the
2027 Junior Gold Championships

JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026-2027 LEAGUE GUIDE

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP AND CHAMPIONSHIPS OVERVIEW

The Junior Gold Championships now offers eight youth divisions:

- U12 Boys, U12 Girls
- U14 Boys, U14 Girls
- U16 Boys, U16 Girls
- U18 Boys, U18 Girls

Date of Birth

Division

8/1/14 or later
8/1/12 - 7/31/14
8/1/10 - 7/31/12
8/1/08 - 7/31/10

U12
U14
U16
U18

The Junior Gold Championships serves USBC Youth Standard members who have a Junior Gold membership.

Helping youth bowlers progress and succeed in the sport through challenging competition, advanced training, skill development and coaching is the heart of the Junior Gold program.

Junior Gold membership and experiencing the challenges of Junior Gold competition help youth bowlers learn all aspects of the sport and prepare them to continue to bowl competitively as they grow older. Junior Gold members regularly compete at the high school and collegiate level. Dedicated youth bowlers may participate in Junior Gold for several reasons:

- Learn the nuances of the more competitive game
- Earn college scholarships
- Prepare for bowling at the collegiate level
- Prepare for the ultimate goals of international or professional bowling
- **Earn a spot on JUNIOR TEAM USA!**

Events can be conducted any time from July 1, 2026 - May 2, 2027.

JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The pinnacle for Junior Gold members is competing at the annual Junior Gold Championships.

The Junior Gold Championships is open to Junior Gold members who have qualified throughout the season in Junior Gold events. At the national championships, male and female Junior Gold athletes compete for berths on USBC Junior Team USA, individual national titles and scholarships in their respective divisions.

WHY OFFER A JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM?



Helps retain Youth members and attract new members

Emphasizes advanced training and skill development, coaching and elite competition

Acts as a feeder to collegiate bowling, Team USA and professional bowling

Helps continue positive relationships with the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

AND

Scholarships awarded to tournament participants at national finals



USBC JUNIOR GOLD MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Junior Gold Approach

- Junior Gold Approach is the official monthly newsletter of Junior Gold, delivered directly to members via email. It features tips from some of the top coaches and provides news about upcoming qualifying tournaments, leagues and scholarship opportunities.

Junior Gold membership card/gift

- Junior Gold members receive a membership card and a special gift.

Increased Scholarship Opportunities

- Junior Gold members can compete in exclusive Junior Gold qualifying events with the opportunity to win scholarships throughout the season, plus additional scholarships at the Junior Gold Championships.

Opportunity to become a member of Junior Team USA

- Members of Junior Team USA are chosen annually at the Junior Gold Championships. Team duties and activities begin Jan. 1 of the following year.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- USBC Youth Standard members, in good standing, can apply for Junior Gold membership at any time.
- Athlete must purchase a Junior Gold membership for \$25 for U12, \$40 for U14 and \$50 for U16 and U18 bowlers prior to participating in Junior Gold Championships qualifying tournaments. The USBC Junior Gold membership fee is separate from the regular USBC Youth membership fee. Each membership is valid for the current bowling season only regardless of date of purchase.
- Once the Junior Gold membership is obtained, it remains valid for the current bowling season, July 1 - July 31, 2027.



JUNIOR TEAM USA MEMBERS HAVE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Represent the United States in international competition
- Earn scholarship awards
- Train at the International Training and Research Center in Arlington, Texas
- Enjoy expense-paid national and international travel and competition
- Make appearances in Junior Team USA uniforms
- Access world-class coaching
- Be seeded into next year's Junior Gold Championships

JOIN THE JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM

- Purchase the Junior Gold membership online. | BOWL.com/JuniorGold, select "Membership"
- Obtain a USBC Youth Standard membership online or through your league. | BOWL.com/join

JUNIOR GOLD CONTACT INFORMATION:

Junior Gold Program
621 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011
(817) 385-8426
Email: youthtournaments@bowl.com



JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: OVERVIEW

Junior Gold members who have already earned an entry in this season's Junior Gold Championships can still enter and participate in additional Junior Gold qualifying events.

However, because an athlete can only earn one entry into the Junior Gold Championships, he/she must accept the berth from his/her earliest completed competition.

If a Junior Gold member wins an entry but cannot attend the Junior Gold Championships, he/she is responsible for alerting the Junior Gold Championships qualifying event director so that the entry may be passed to the next qualified participant in that event. An athlete who gives up his/her spot or is unable to attend must requalify for the following year; individual berths are not carried over to the next year. If the Junior Gold member fails to alert the Junior Gold event director, he/she risks disqualification from that Junior Gold qualifier for the following year.

Tournaments may run U12-, U14-, U16- or U18-only qualifiers. Tournaments may also conduct a combination of any divisions. Athletes are only allowed to compete in a competition that includes their appropriate age division.

**DON'T BE LOCKED OUT.
RESERVE YOUR SPOTS EARLY!
EVENTS CAN BE CONDUCTED FROM
JULY 1, 2026 - MAY 2, 2027**

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGULAR AND "PREMIER" EVENT?

- A regular event pays only the advancer's entry fee into the Junior Gold Championships.
- A "premier" event is an enhanced event that pays the winner's advancer entry fee plus any or all expenses at the Junior Gold Championships. There is no minimum stipend amount for the spot to qualify as a "premier" spot.
- If an athlete already has won an entry to the Junior Gold Championships and then wins another, he/she cannot take the second entry as a scholarship. The spot must go to the next-highest qualified Junior Gold member.
- Junior Gold Championships berths, stipend and scholarship money are considered separate awards. If the athlete already has won an entry and wins a second event, the athlete would be awarded the first-place scholarship money and/or stipend money, but the entry would be given to the next eligible Junior Gold athlete.



JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: LEAGUES

Qualifying can be conducted as part of any USBC-certified event.

- Existing leagues
- New leagues
- Junior Gold Championships-specific leagues

Format must be scratch

Basic Rules

- Bowlers are permitted to enter once per qualifying event.

At least half of the league members must be Junior Gold members.

At least 24 games of competition

*League information must be sent in **BEFORE** your event takes place. Failure to submit the league application prior to the start of the event may result in the refusal to accept those qualifiers.

CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A LEAGUE QUALIFYING EVENT

1. Download Junior Gold Championships qualifying materials, applications and report forms from BOWL.com on the Youth/Junior Gold pages.
2. USBC league certification forms can be obtained from your local association manager.
3. Complete an application for league certification. After you have the league certification number, you must still submit a Qualifying Event Application to Junior Gold PRIOR to the start of your competition.
4. Will the event be conducted on a Sport/Challenge lane condition?
5. Determine your league format.
The competition must be scratch and consist of a minimum of twenty-four (24) games.
6. Determine the rules for the event(s).

The rules for your event MUST include the following:

- League start and end date
 - List of all league fees
 - Clear explanation of how advancers will be determined
 - Advancement ratio being used
 - Tiebreaking system based on the format of the qualifier
 - Statement requiring JG membership to participate
7. Determine whether you want your Junior Gold event to be a regular Junior Gold event or a "premier" event.
 8. The advancement ratio can be 1:4 through 1:10 or champion(s) only advancing at the end of your short-season (minimum 24 games) or full-season league.

The entire league cannot qualify through the Junior Gold league.

Determining the number of advancers will occur at the end of your season. Advancement ratio/champion is applied only based on the number of Junior Gold members in the league.

You must also state if a "major fraction thereof" will be used for advancement purposes. For a separate girls division, you need only four girls to hold the division. You may still only advance a minimum of a 1:4 ratio or major fraction thereof. Be sure your rules indicate the "or major fraction thereof" wording if you want to advance as many Junior Gold

Checklist continued on p. 7



JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: LEAGUES (Continued)

CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A LEAGUE QUALIFYING EVENT

(Continued from p. 6)

athletes as possible. Using a 1:4 ratio or major fraction thereof, a total of four-to-six entrants would advance one, 10 entrants would advance two, etc.

9. Prior to the start of the league, determine the rule for alternates. In league competitions, alternative processes for naming replacements need to be clearly defined.
10. One MONTH prior to your event, complete a Junior Gold Championships Qualifying Event Application through the online portal, and submit a payment.

The cost for a reserved spot from a U12-only qualifier will be \$150, a U14-only qualifier will be \$200 and a U16- and U18-only qualifier will be \$250. A combined event will cost the amount of the oldest competitor in the combined division.

11. **Within 15 days of completion of your Junior Gold Championships event, you must complete your event in the Junior Gold Qualifying portal at BOWL.com/juniorgold.**

Junior Gold Championships finalist packets will be emailed directly to the advancers once your post-event information has been processed.

12. All scholarship prize awards must be forwarded to USBC Headquarters for deposit with the SMART program (Scholarship Management and Account Reporting for Tenpins) within 30 days after the end of the competition.

(USBC Rule 100c, Item 4)



Junior Gold reserves the right to institute additional methods of entry into the Junior Gold Championships for those athletes who live in areas determined to be under-served by the current Junior Gold qualification process.

Additional spots may be purchased after completion of the qualifier, pending availability. An entry is not reserved until full payment of that entry fee is received. Unused spots will not be refunded and may not be carried over to the next season.

*Event information must be entered online **BEFORE** your event takes place. Failure to submit the event application prior to the start of the event may result in refusal to accept those qualifiers.



JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

ENHANCED ADVANCER RATIO POLICIES

The minimum ratio to advance players to the Junior Gold Championships is 1:4. What follows is an explanation of how this standard applies to various situations.

When stating an advancement ratio, event management will state that the ratio is either a “hard” number (1:4), which means they will only advance one player for every four entrants, or they will add the caveat in their rules stating “or a major fraction thereof,” which would allow them to advance an additional player should they have additional entries in excess of 51% of their ratio number. When an event reaches this standard, an additional player is allowed to advance and the event is required to subsidize any shortfall in the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships.

As an example, in an event having a 1:4 or major fraction thereof ratio, the event would need to have seven entrants to advance a second player. The event would bear the financial responsibility to fund any shortfall of the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships. Six entrants does not meet the threshold of 51%, so a second player could not advance under that rule.

If the event has additional entries in excess of their ratio but does not meet the 51% threshold to advance an additional player, we have historically asked that the additional money be returned to the event as additional prize money. To address this issue and provide more players the opportunity to advance, a new policy has been adopted that could allow the next player in line to advance to the Junior Gold Championships. This policy is:

Once an event has met their initial ratio

and has additional entries in excess of that ratio, the next player in line will have the option to claim that spot by paying any remaining shortfall between the money collected and the entry fee for the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

IF YOU DO NOT USE A MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF

Here is an example of how the new ratio policies will be applied to qualifying events for the Junior Gold Championships given a 1:4 advancement ratio **without** the “or a major fraction thereof” stipulation.

If the event has five, six or seven entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio. The second-place finisher would now be given the opportunity to fund any remaining shortfall between the entry money collected and the appropriate division entry fee and claim a spot in the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

IF YOU USE A MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF

Here is an example of how the new ratio policies will be applied to qualifying events for the Junior Gold Championships given a 1:4 advancement ratio **with** the “or a major fraction thereof” stipulation.

If the event has five or six entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio. The second-place finisher would be given the opportunity to pay any remaining shortfall between the entry money collected and the entry fee and claim a spot in the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

If the event has seven entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio and an additional advancer under the “or a major fraction thereof” stipulation and the event is required to subsidize any shortfall in the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships.

MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF CHART

RATIO	ENTRIES NEEDED TO ADVANCE AN ADDITIONAL PLAYER
1:4	7
1:5	8
1:6	10
1:7	11
1:8	13
1:9	14
1:10	16



FAQ

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Where can I obtain Junior Gold Championships information?

This handbook is available on BOWL.com. Simply click on the Tournaments tab and then on the Junior Gold link and proceed to the Qualifier section where you will see the Junior Gold Tournament Handbook tab. Here you will find the necessary materials to run your event. As always, the Junior Gold staff is available to assist and answer any questions. We can be reached at youthtournaments@bowl.com or by calling (817) 385-8426.

What are the age divisions for the Junior Gold Championships and how much do we pay for memberships?

Division	Membership
U12	\$25
U14	\$40
U16	\$50
U18	\$50

How much do spots cost for the Junior Gold Championships?

The cost for a reserved spot from a U12-only qualifier will be \$150, a U14-only qualifier will be \$150, and U16- and U18-only qualifiers will be \$250.

What are the minimum average requirements for the divisions?

There are no minimum average requirements for participation. Any and all current USBC Youth Standard members are eligible to become a Junior Gold Member and bowl in a Junior Gold Championships qualifying event.

How is it determined what division the advancer competes in?

Any eligible bowler who qualifies for the Junior Gold Championships will be placed in the appropriate division based on their date of birth.

Can a U12 qualifier “play up” and participate in the U18 division instead of the U12 division at the Junior Gold Championships?

No, Junior Gold athletes must compete in the appropriate division based on their date of birth.

If I don’t have enough entrants to have a separate U14 or U12 division but my advancers are under the age of 12, how much will my advancer spots cost?

The price of the Junior Gold Championships spot in a U14/U12 combined event is not affected by the age of the winner. If there are not enough entrants for a separate event, all spots in a U14/U12 combined event will cost \$200 and the player will compete in the appropriate age division at the Junior Gold Championships.

How does the enhanced advancer policy work?

Once an event has met its minimum ratio and has entries in excess of that ratio, it has the opportunity to advance one additional entrant to the Junior Gold Championships. The next advancer only will be allowed to claim a spot by funding the balance of the money needed to pay for that spot. A detailed explanation of the policy can be found on the Junior Gold page of BOWL.com or Page 8 of this handbook.

I have excess funds from the Junior Gold qualifier. What should I do with those excess funds?

All excess funds must go back to the athletes who entered the Junior Gold qualifying event. However, if you hold a series of Junior Gold Championships events through the season, you can keep those funds in a “Junior Gold” account

to be used if there are any shortages in future events. If the event was not part of a series, you must return those funds through expenses for the advancer(s) (from receipts the advancer(s) provides) or it can be returned to the Junior Gold bowlers as a scholarship.

How can I award Junior Gold Championship spots? What are my options?

League directors may award their spot at the end of the season or at the half of their season (provided their half has a minimum of 24 games). League directors can award the champion or a minimum ratio of 1:4 if divisions are used.

Please be very specific in the event rules on how the advancers to the Junior Gold Championships will be awarded. Include the words “with major fraction thereof” after the ratio if you intend on awarding two Junior Gold spots with a 1:4 ratio and seven bowlers.

When can I hold Junior Gold Championships qualifying events?

Events can be held any time from July 1, 2026 - May 2, 2027 (during a regular season). In the case of a sold-out national event, Junior Gold will consider permitting qualifying events earlier. This is on a per-year basis.

How long do I have to submit my post-event reports?

Post-event information regarding your Junior Gold qualifying event is to be submitted to Junior Gold via the online portal within 15 days after the end of the event. Holding on to this information longer than this affects the accuracy of our records and can cause eligibility issues for players who may have paid their Junior Gold membership dues at your event.

FAQ continued on p. 10



FAQ

(Continued)

What benefits are included with the USBC Junior Gold membership?

- Junior Gold membership card
- Member gift
- Junior Gold Approach E-blasts
- Reduced prices for coaching at ITRC

In the Junior Gold Championships, can an individual opt to cross over to the other gender division?

No. Girls may only compete in the girls' divisions and boys may only compete in the boys' divisions.

Can we hold a Junior Gold Championships qualifying event during our association championship event?

You can easily incorporate a Junior Gold qualifying event into your local or state association championship events. Since you only need three games for a qualifying event, you can use the scores from any designated event or events from your championship tournament as a Junior Gold qualifier.

LEAGUE QUESTIONS

How many games do I need to run a league qualifier?

The minimum number of games needed for leagues is 24 games, and there is no minimum average to participate.

The rules say I can advance my league champion(s). Who are considered champions?

Junior Gold gives each league director the flexibility to deem the champion. Champion is considered ONE of the following: total point leader, team champion(s) (one for singles; two for doubles; three for trios), high average, high series, high game, etc. Please remember you need the minimum of four males, four females or a mixed gender group of four to conduct a qualifier for that division. If you are sending the high average boy and girl, there must be at least four male Junior Gold members and four female Junior Gold members to send one in each division.

I run a league. When do I determine how many bowlers will advance?

Advancers are determined by your advancement ratio and how many Junior Gold members are in the league. If your league will award points for having a high game or high series, make sure all athletes are able to earn those points throughout the season to ensure you are advancing the best bowlers you can. Keep in mind you may only award spots based on a 1:4 or higher ratio (major fraction thereof) or your champion(s). Remember that at least half of your league must be Junior Gold members, but your ratio is only taken on those members who are actually participating in the Junior Gold qualifying event. If you charge your athletes a participation fee for Junior Gold, only those athletes would count toward your ratio. If all bowlers are eligible for Junior Gold, then your ratio would be from all those eligible Junior Gold members.

Can a bowler enter a Junior Gold qualifying event multiple times and use his/her highest score to qualify?

No. A player can enter a specific Junior Gold qualifying event only once. Multiple participation is NOT allowed in Junior Gold qualifying events.

I would like to hold a special tournament for my league bowlers and make it a Junior Gold Championships event. Is this possible?

Yes, Junior Gold tournament rules still apply. The tournament must be a minimum of three games and must have a minimum of four Junior Gold boys/four Junior Gold girls or a minimum of four Junior Gold bowlers for a mixed division. You would then be able to advance bowlers through a ratio between 1:4 and 1:10 or champion only. This tournament must be scheduled by the league where the scores do not count towards regular league standings (USBC Rule 113C). You must also submit a Qualifying Event Application through the Junior Gold portal at BOWL.com/juniorgold.

I ran a league and advanced my champion team. However, one of the bowlers on the team has already won their Junior Gold Championships spot. What do I do now?

Since a bowler must accept their first entry, you must state in your rules how an alternate will be advanced. For example, you can state that the bowler from the second-place team with the highest average would then be the next person to advance. In the event a top qualifying bowler has already qualified and this entry is at the premier level, the top qualifying bowler will be awarded the additional perks and the qualifying spot would go to the first alternate.

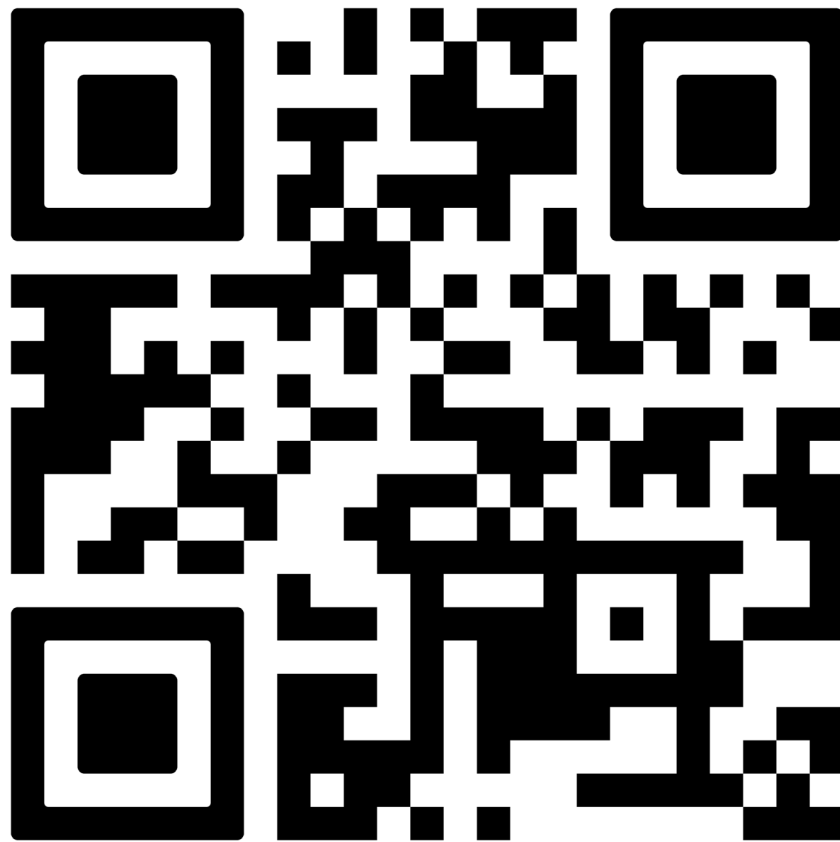
I would like to run a league qualifier during a week of league. What do I have to do to make this legal?

In order to conduct a qualifier during a league week, you must certify the week as a tournament online and with the Junior Gold staff. The scores can not count toward wins and losses or individual averages and only those who are Junior Gold Members will be allowed to compete in the event. You must also follow all procedures in the Junior Gold Tournament Handbook.

What is the final day I can replace an individual who declines the invitation?

The final day Junior Gold will accept replacements for individuals who decline is May 15, 2027.





**Purchase your Junior Gold
Membership online now**





JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM

**621 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011**

**(817) 385-8426
Email: youthtournaments@bowl.com**