



Club Sports Tier System Guide

Department of Harvard Athletics & Recreation

Club Sports Office

2026-2027

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Introduction

The Department of Harvard Athletics & Recreation (DHA) is committed to offering a wide variety of activities that meet students' competitive, recreational, educational, and social needs at Harvard University. Through both recreational and competitive settings, the Club Sports program fosters positive and healthy experiences that facilitate individual and team development while providing vital opportunities for skill-building and stress management.

All recognized club sports operate as independent, student-run organizations that maintain complete local autonomy in their governance and policy decisions. The DHA oversees the broader program and provides administrative, safety, and logistical guidance through the Club Sports Office (CSO). To effectively support, manage, and allocate resources to the wide variety of clubs, the CSO utilizes a tiered system to categorize organizations based on their operational scope and institutional needs.

The Principle of Proportional Responsibility

The Harvard Club Sport Tier Structure balances departmental support with organizational accountability through a model of **proportional responsibility**. Under this system, clubs are assigned to one of four operational Quadrants or designated as Developmental based on achieving designated point thresholds. This system allows student organizations to retain complete autonomy over their operational footprint.

Because each quadrant represents a distinct operational track, the volume of resources an organization draws from the DHA scales directly with its administrative, competitive, and financial expectations. Moving into a quadrant that unlocks greater benefits, such as increased grant funding thresholds, carries a corresponding agreement to meet a more rigorous standard of reporting and independent fundraising. Conversely, lower-resource quadrants feature a significantly reduced administrative burden, ensuring a club's classification simply reflects its true goals and operational capacity. Clubs may voluntarily choose to remain in or drop to a lower Quadrant if they prefer a reduced administrative burden, regardless of achieving a higher point total.

- **High-Resource, Competitive Tracks:** Clubs that require facility space, travel extensively, compete at regional or national levels, and request higher grant funding caps are subject to more rigorous administrative milestones, stricter reporting, and higher fundraising mandates.
- **Low-Impact, Recreational Tracks:** Quadrants III and IV are specifically designed for organizations focused primarily on instructional play, local community-building, and stress relief. Because these groups draw fewer resources from the department, they enjoy a significantly reduced administrative burden.

Student-Driven Outcomes & Autonomy

Because this framework utilizes an objective, transparent **points system**, each club sport organization directly controls its own tier appointment. Clubs accrue points throughout the academic year across five distinct categories:

1. Compliance
2. Community Building
3. Performance-Based Success
4. Growth
5. Fundraising

If a club wishes to move to a different Quadrant to unlock greater funding, the roadmap to earn those points is clearly defined. Conversely, if a club chooses to scale back its competitive footprint for a season, officers can intentionally plan for a lower administrative threshold. Club's data, execution, and engagement dictate the organization's tier destiny.

Universal Benefits of Club Sport Affiliation

Every club placed into a tier, provided they remain an organization in good standing, is guaranteed a foundational suite of privileges. These baseline benefits are granted to all clubs regardless of their specific tier assignment and include:

- Official recognition as a Harvard Athletics & Recreation Club Sport organization.
- Authorized use of the Harvard name and DHA logo (e.g., *Harvard "Sport" Club*).
- Eligibility to reserve DHA & Recreation facilities for designated practices, competitions, and events.
- Eligibility for free equipment storage.
- Access to baseline club sport grants and administrative support resources.

Foundational Requirements for All Clubs

To maintain official club sport recognition within the Department of Harvard Athletics and Recreation, every organization, regardless of its tier or point total, must satisfy the following baseline criteria:

- **Minimum Membership:** Maintain a minimum of **10 active club members**.
- **Officer Structure:** Designate ONE undergraduate officer as President (or equivalent title) and ONE undergraduate officer as Treasurer.
- **Roster Composition:** Ensure that the majority (>50%) of club members are currently Harvard undergraduate students.
- **Policy Compliance:** Maintain absolute compliance with all University policies, including the [Harvard College Handbook for Students](#), specific club sports policies, and the [College Policy on Hazing](#).
- **Legal Standards:** Maintain full compliance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- **Resource Management:** Manage resources, including grants, facility reservations, and athletic spaces, wisely, ethically, and in accordance with University, College, and DHA guidelines.
- **Local Autonomy:** Maintain complete independence in governance. Club sport organizations must make all policy and operational decisions without obligation to, or direction from, any national chapter, parent organization, or external charter.

Administrative Notice: All clubs across all Quadrants are expected to complete basic administrative tasks and abide by core club sport policies. Failure to maintain baseline compliance, submit required documentation, or adhere to safety guidelines may result in the loss of official recognition, independent of a club's standing in the points system.



TL; DR: You get out what you put in. Your quadrant assignment matches your club's real-world needs. Quad I-II come with higher expectations for reporting and fundraising. Quad III-IV keeps your administrative workload fast and simple.

The Tier Structure

Understanding the Five Tiers

At the end of each academic year, clubs are categorized into five distinct tiers based on their final cumulative point totals. This classification ensures that a club's operational track matches its institutional engagement and resource requirements. The tiers are defined by the following point placements:

- **Quadrant I (3,500+ Points):** Earned by clubs accumulating 3,500 cumulative points or more. These organizations maintain extensive reporting schedules, governing body association, and high-level regional or national competition.
- **Quadrant II (2,200 – 3,499 Points):** Earned by clubs accumulating 2,200 to 3,499 points. These organizations demonstrate regular administrative compliance and consistent competitive operations.
- **Quadrant III (1,200 – 2,199 Points):** Earned by clubs accumulating 1,200 to 2,199 points. These organizations focus on standard administrative benchmarks and baseline independent operations.
- **Quadrant IV (0 – 1,199 Points):** Earned by clubs accumulating 1,199 points or fewer. These organizations focus primarily on core administrative compliance and localized activities.
- **Developmental (New Clubs):** Reserved specifically for newly established clubs.

Point Tracking & Visibility

To maintain transparency and a reliable record, the CSO logs points over the course of each semester.

- **Ongoing Tracking:** Point tracking takes place continuously throughout the academic year based on regular club activities and compliance milestones.
- **Officer Request Process:** Point totals are shared directly with student officers upon request. Club officers may formally request a copy of their current point standings from the CSO at the end of each semester.
- **Operational Planning:** This semesterly review process allows student officers to evaluate their administrative data, assess compliance standings, and plan their organizational strategies for the following term.

The Developmental Framework

The Developmental Tier serves as an introductory space for new organizations who are considered prospective club sports.

- **Point Accumulation:** Prospective clubs can earn points while in the Developmental Tier. These points count towards their quadrant placement when and if they receive official recognition as a club sport organization.

- **Administrative Discretion:** Final placement and movement within the Developmental Tier remain subject to the evaluation and discretion of the Club Sports Office (CSO).

Voluntary Tier Downgrade

Recognizing that organization goals and team-level capacity change year-to-year, any club that meets the point threshold of a higher Quadrant has the right to voluntarily opt down into a lower Quadrant.

- **Rationale:** A club may choose this option to avoid mandatory fundraising requirements, budget/goal reporting, or heavier administrative expectations.
- **Deadline & Procedure:** Officers must notify the CSO in writing via email prior to October 1st to request placement in a lower Quadrant for the active academic year. Opting down forfeits access to higher-tier grant caps but reduces administrative requirements accordingly.
 - Once you opt down, you cannot change tiers until the next appeals window.

Appeals & Review Process

The CSO recognizes that specific point totals may occasionally require additional institutional context. A structured review and appeals process handles these edge cases.

- **The Placement Rule:** Organizations that finish within 100 points (or a minor margin) of an established tier threshold may officially appeal to the CSO for a tier adjustment.
 - The appeal submission deadline is October 1st.
 - Clubs are permitted one placement appeal per year.
- **Reviewing Bodies:** Appeals must be formally submitted via email for evaluation to the CSO and the Club Sport Advisory Board (CSAB).
- **Discretionary Change:** If an organization presents a compelling, documented case, the CSO retains the authority to change the club to a different tier at their discretion.
- **General Adjustments:** All tier placements are reviewable and adjustable by the CSO at the close of the year to maintain the structural balance of the entire program.

TL; DR: Your tier is completely in your control! Hit the point threshold to lock in your desired Quadrant. If your team earns the points for a higher tier but prefers a lighter administrative load, you can voluntarily opt to stay in a lower tier, no competition against other clubs required.

The Points System: How to Earn Points

Point Accumulation Categories

Club sport organizations earn points throughout the academic year to determine their tier placement. These points are distributed across five primary operational categories, allowing clubs to build their totals through diverse pathways:

- **Club Sports Compliance:** Points are awarded for submitting all required administrative documents and forms on time throughout the year. Full point accumulation also requires attending and completing all mandatory officer training sessions, including Hazing Prevention Training, Online Officer Training through SOCO, and scheduled leadership workshops.
- **Community Building:** Clubs earn points by actively engaging with the broader campus sports community, which includes attending events hosted by other recognized club sports.
- **Performance-Based Success:** Points are allocated based on competitive achievements, such as qualifying for regional and national events, or performing at a high-level during Ivy level, regional, and national competitions.
- **Growth:** This category rewards year-over-year organizational development, measured by increases in club membership, competitive athletic improvement, and expanded fundraising outreach.
- **Fundraising:** Points are calculated and awarded relative to the number of successful approved fundraising campaigns that a club completes.

Point Deductions

To maintain accountability, the CSO applies point deductions when organizations fail to meet basic operational standards. Deductions are issued for the following infractions:

- Failing to submit required administrative forms or demonstrating consistent tardiness in required paperwork.
- Missing mandatory Officer Training sessions.
- Experiencing several minor and/or major infractions in accordance with the [Club Sport Disciplinary Policy](#) in one semester.

▶▶ **TL; DR:** You control your standing through everyday tasks. Earn points across five main areas: staying compliant, attending peer matches as fans, competing, growing your roster, and executing approved fundraisers. You can request your current point standings from the CSO at the beginning or end of any semester.

Tier Benefits & Resource Allocation

Resource Access by Tier

To maintain an equitable distribution of resources, funding access and maximum grant thresholds are mapped to each tier. This ensures that clubs receive financial support tailored to their specific operational scale, balancing a club's independent fundraising capacity.

Tier	DHA Annual Grant Cap	Eligible Supplementary Grants
Quadrant I	Up to 30% of expected expenses, capped at \$2,000	• Event Insurance Reimbursement • National Grant • Travel Support Program • Community Through Sports Grant • Equipment & Uniform Grant
Quadrant II	Up to 30% of expected expenses, capped at \$1,500	• Event Insurance Reimbursement • Championship Grant • Travel Support Program • Community Through Sports Grant • Equipment & Uniform Grant
Quadrant III	Up to 30% of expected expenses, capped at \$1,000	• Event Insurance Reimbursement • Championship Grant • Community Through Sports Grant • Equipment & Uniform Grant
Quadrant IV	Up to 30% of expected expenses, capped at \$1,000	• Event Insurance Reimbursement • Community Through Sports Grant • Equipment & Uniform Grant

Tier Maintenance: Keeping Your Status

The Maintenance Framework

To remain in a specific tier, clubs must consistently fulfill the respective operational, financial, and administrative milestones outlined below. Tier placement is not permanent; if a team fails to meet its tier-specific requirements, they may be adjusted to a more fitting tier at the end of the evaluation period, regardless of their total points.

Tier Maintenance Requirements

Quadrant I

- **Competition:** Must provide proof of league membership or an official association with a recognized governing body. The club must compete continuously throughout its designated competitive season, regularly participate in regional and/or national competitions, and maintain a track record of competitive success at those levels.
- **Fundraising:** Must submit one independent fundraiser campaign proposal to the CSO for approval.
- **Administrative Training:** All elected club officers must attend and complete mandatory Officer Training.
- **Required Reporting:** Timely completion and submission of the following administrative documents are required:
 - Club Sport Annual Registration

- Goal Sheet (submitted at the beginning of the academic year, detailing fundraising, competition, organizational, and student/community engagement goals)
- End of Semester Reports (Fall & Spring)
- Budget Reports (End of Fall & Spring semesters)
- Annual Report (submitted at the end of the Spring semester)
- **Compliance:** Maintain good standing with all applicable Harvard University and Club Sports policies, rules, and procedures.

Quadrant II

- **Fundraising:** Must submit one independent fundraiser campaign proposal to the CSO for approval.
- **Administrative Training:** A minimum of two club officers must attend and complete mandatory Officer Training.
- **Required Reporting:** Timely completion and submission of the following administrative documents are required:
 - Club Sport Annual Registration
 - End of Semester Reports (Fall & Spring)
 - Budget Reports (End of Fall & Spring semesters)
- **Compliance:** Maintain good standing with all applicable Harvard University and Club Sports policies, rules, and procedures.

Quadrant III

- **Fundraising:** There is no independent fundraising requirement for clubs in this tier.
- **Administrative Training:** A minimum of two club officers must attend and complete mandatory Officer Training.
- **Required Reporting:** Timely completion and submission of the following administrative documents are required:
 - Club Sport Annual Registration
 - End of Semester Reports (Fall & Spring)
- **Compliance:** Maintain good standing with all applicable Harvard University and Club Sports policies, rules, and procedures.

Quadrant IV

- **Fundraising:** There is no independent fundraising requirement for clubs in this tier.
- **Administrative Training:** A minimum of two club officers must attend and complete mandatory Officer Training.
- **Required Reporting:** Timely completion and submission of the following administrative documents are required:
 - Club Sport Annual Registration
 - End of Semester Reports (Fall & Spring)
- **Compliance:** Maintain good standing with all applicable Harvard University and Club Sports policies, rules, and procedures.

Developmental Tier

- **Fundraising:** There is no independent fundraising requirement for clubs in this tier.
- **Administrative Training:** A minimum of two club officers must attend and complete mandatory Officer Training.
- **Required Reporting:** Timely completion and submission of the following administrative documents are required:
 - End of Semester Reports (Fall & Spring)
- **Compliance:** Maintain good standing with all applicable Harvard University and Club Sports policies, rules, and procedures.

TL; DR: Your quadrant's workload matches your club's activity level. Quadrants I–II have more administrative tasks because managing heavy competition schedules and travel requires more structure. Quadrants III–IV have far fewer requirements so recreational clubs can focus on having fun without excess paperwork. Submit your specific tier's forms on time, and you're good to go!

Fundraising & Campaign Proposals

Financial Self-Sustainability & Autonomy

Because Harvard club sports operate as independent, student-run organizations, clubs are financially self-sustaining and bear the responsibility for generating their own operational revenue. While the CSO provides grant access based on tier placement, all organizations are strongly encouraged to engage in continuous fundraising activities throughout the academic year to expand their budgets and secure competitive and recreation opportunities.

The Fundraiser Proposal Process

To support fundraising initiatives, a structured approval process is available for formal fundraising campaigns. However, formal proposals are not required for every individual fundraising activity a club conducts.

- **Mandatory Submissions by Tier:** Clubs that carry an explicit independent fundraising requirement (Quadrant I & II) must formally submit at least one official fundraising campaign proposal to the CSO per academic year.
 - This process is not restricted to clubs with the fundraising requirement. All clubs, regardless of their specific tier are highly encouraged to develop formal campaigns and utilize this approval pipeline.
- **Submission Process:** When sharing a formal fundraising campaign proposal, club officers must submit their detailed plans through SOCO using the Club Sport Fundraiser Proposal Form.

Submission Form: Access and submit the official [[Fundraiser – Campaign Proposal Form](#)].

Fundraising Incentives & Point Allocation

The tier structure treats fundraising not just as an administrative obligation, but as an active pathway for organizational advancement.

- **Completion Points:** Any recognized organization, regardless of its current tier assignment, will receive points for successfully executing a submitted and approved fundraising campaign.
- **Semesterly Cap:** Clubs may earn a maximum of 200 points per semester for fundraisers.
 - Equivalent of one fundraiser per semester.

TL; DR: You don't need formal proposals for routine fundraisers or small bake sales. However, if you want your fundraising efforts to count for tier points, you must submit a campaign proposal on SOCO and get prior approval before starting. Additionally, clubs in Quadrants I–II are required to submit at least one approved campaign per year. Any club, regardless of tier, can submit campaigns to earn extra points toward next year's placement while boosting their budget!

Event Participation: The Super Fan System

Community Fan Engagement & Purpose

To promote a supportive, vibrant, and interconnected club sport culture across campus, organizations can earn points toward their tier placement through mutual fan engagement. This initiative rewards clubs not only for going out to support their peers, but also for actively inviting and hosting fellow club athletes at their home events.

Point Allocation & Program Rules

Points earned through the Super Fan System directly contribute to an organization's annual total in the Tiered Quadrant System under the *Community Building* category.

- **Mutual Point Award:** Points are credited to **both** the Attending Club (for crowd support) and the Host/Competing Club (for promoting and hosting peer clubs).
- **Attendance Minimum:** A minimum of **5 active club members** from the attending team must be present at the event for points to count.
- **Semesterly Cap:** To maintain a balanced point structure across all tracking categories, clubs may earn a maximum of **100 points per semester** through the Super Fan System (equivalent to credit for one event per semester).
- **Universal Eligibility:** All recognized clubs, regardless of their current quadrant are eligible to participate and earn points.

Verification & Submission Process

To ensure fair distribution and accurate tracking, points are verified through a mandatory dual-confirmation pipeline on the SOCO platform:

1. **Host & Attend:** The host club invites peer clubs, and at least 5 members of the attending club arrive to cheer at the event.
2. **On-Site Check-In:** Officers from both clubs connect briefly at the venue to confirm the attending group's presence. Cheering club members must take a photo at the event.
3. **Dual Form Submission:** Within 48 hours of the event's conclusion, an officer from the attending club **and** an officer from the host club must each independently submit the official form on SOCO.

Attending club must submit the photo of club members in attendance as part of the verification process.

4. **Point Validation:** Points will only be credited to both organizations once the Club Sports Office (CSO) successfully verifies matching submissions from both teams.

Verification Form: Access and submit the official [[Club Sport Super Fan Event Verification Form](#)].

TL; DR: Supporting peer teams pays off for everyone! Both the **attending fans** (minimum 5 members present) and the **host club** earn points toward next year's tier placement. To get credit, an officer from each team must submit the verification form on SOCO within 48 hours of the event. Points are capped at 100 per semester (equivalent to 1 verified event).

Annual Operational Timeline

To help student officers plan their academic year, the CSO operates on a standardized annual timeline for tracking points, assigning tiers, and managing the appeals process.

The Annual Cycle

- **Ongoing Tracking:** Point tracking takes place continuously throughout the academic year based on regular club activities, performance metrics, and compliance milestones.
- **Semester Checks:** Club officers may formally request a copy of their current point standings from the Club Sports Office at the beginning and end of each semester to monitor their progress.
 - Requests for point totals during the semester will not be fulfilled.
- **May (Official Tier Placement):** At the end of each academic year, final point totals are calculated. Official tier placements for the upcoming academic year are formally announced every May.
- **October 1st (Appeals Deadline):** Organizations that finish within exactly one place of moving up to the next consecutive tier have the opportunity to contest their placement. All formal appeals must be submitted via email to the Club Sports Office (CSO) by October 1st.

Summary of Key Dates

Month / Deadline	Action Item	Responsibility
Ongoing	Continuous point accumulation and administrative compliance tracking.	Club Officers / Club Sports Office
End of Semester	Optional officer request for current point tracking data.	Club Officers
May	Official Tier placements announced for following academic year.	Club Sports Office
October 1st	Final Deadline to submit a tier placement appeal via email.	Club Officers



TL; DR: Your club receives its official tier placement every May for the upcoming academic year, and you have until October 1st to submit an appeal. After October 1st, your tier is locked for the rest of the year. Any points you earn throughout the active season won't alter your current tier; instead, they build your cumulative total to determine your placement for the *following* year.

Contact & Support Resources

For questions regarding semesterly point status reviews, tier appeals, or financial planning, contact the Club Sports Office or Club Sport Advisory Board:

- **Club Sports Office (CSO):** Athletics_CSO@fas.harvard.edu
- **Club Sport Advisory Board (CSAB):** HCSAB@fas.harvard.edu

Point Breakdown

Point values, earning criteria, tracking categories, and quadrant allocation thresholds outlined in this guide are subject to review and modification at the discretion of the Club Sports Office (CSO). Any operational adjustments or updates to the point system will be made to maintain structural fairness across all organizations and will be communicated directly to club officers prior to implementation.

Action	Point Allotment
Completed Required Forms/Documents on Time	100
Completed Annual Registration on Time	200
Completed End of Fall Semester Report on Time	100
Completed End of Spring Semester Report on Time	100
Applying for the DHA Annual Grant	200
Completed Fall Insurance Reimbursement	200
Completed Spring Insurance Reimbursement	200
Completed Fall Travel Support Program Application	200
Completed Spring Travel Support Program Application	200
Completed Online Officer Training on SOCO on Time	100
Attended Required Officer/Leadership Training Forum	100
Attend Required Hazing Prevention Training	100
Completed During Fall Semester	200
Completed During Spring Semester	200
Completed Full League Schedule	200
Ivy Tournament Attendee	100
Ivy Tournament Champion	300
Completed in Regional Level League Event	200
Qualifying for Nationals (for event-qualifiers)	750
Top 25% finish at Nationals (for event-qualifiers)	750
Winning Nationals (for event-qualifiers)	1500
Qualifying for Nationals (for auto-qualifiers)	500
Top 25% finish at Nationals (for auto-qualifiers)	500
Winning Nationals (for auto-qualifiers)	1000

Completed Fundraiser Proposal	100
Completing Approved Fundraiser Campaign	200
Attending Club Event - Super Fan	100
Opting Club into Athlete Assistance Funding	100
Missing make up deadlines for required missing forms	-50
Repeated Minor Infractions	-100