

2026-27 SEASON · PROGRAM BRIEF

THE CLASH.

Unified Collegiate Championship

A guide for program directors and head coaches

EVENT DATES

April – May 2027

VENUE

Butler Esports Park, Indianapolis

PUBLISHED

April 2026

A Note from Leadership

To program directors and head coaches,

The 2026–2027 season marks the most significant operational change for our league since launch. We're consolidating our regional conferences (MEC and MAEC) under a unified umbrella, moving to a single premier LAN event, and restructuring our pricing around real per-team economics.

These decisions come from what our programs told us last year. Twelve universities attended our championship. Our per-university fee range spanned \$500 to \$4,000. Coaches told us that scattered regional events, unpredictable budgets, and vague commitment structures were barriers to participation — not a lack of interest.

This brief is your guide to what's new, what to budget for, and how to participate. Please review with your athletic department and return your participation declaration by **June 1, 2026**.

We're here to support your program's success. If anything in this brief raises questions, reach out directly — contact information is on the final page.

On behalf of the leadership team,

Ramsey Jamoul

01 What's New in 2026–2027

1

UNIFIED
LEAGUE

1

PREMIER
LAN

3

REGIONS

6

TITLES

12+

MONTHS
NOTICE

AREA	LAST SEASON	2026–2027
League structure	MEC and MAEC conferences operated separately	Unified Collegiate with regional tags for marketing and storylines
LAN events	Multiple regional finals	Single premier LAN — The Clash, April or May 2027
Venue	Variable	Butler Esports Park, Indianapolis — purpose-built, professional production
Schedule notice	Rolling	Full season calendar published now , 12+ months before The Clash
Pricing	\$500–\$4,000 per university, negotiated	Tiered membership + per-team LAN fee , published and transparent
Travel	Self-booked, no coordination	Optional coordinated hotel block and meal plan, or book your own
Commitment	Honor system	Refundable deposit protects the event and your spot
Format scaling	Fixed	Adapts to actual participation — 8/12/16 team brackets per title

02 The Unified Collegiate Structure

We're replacing the MEC/MAEC conference split with a **single unified league**. Regional tags — Midwest, Atlantic, and the new Southern region — are for marketing, storylines, and rivalry content. Seeding, brackets, and championship play are **unified across the full field**.

WHY THE CHANGE

- **Fewer barriers.** Schools that didn't fit neatly into MEC or MAEC geography now have a home.
- **Stronger competition.** Cross-regional matchups across the full online season and The Clash.
- **Cleaner operations.** One calendar, one registration, one seeding system — no regional red tape.
- **Growth ready.** The Southern Region opens the door for schools currently underserved.

YOUR PROGRAM KEEPS ITS IDENTITY

Regional identity lives on in storylines, rivalry content, and brackets where it matters. But you're no longer boxed into a conference scheduled by geography — you're part of a unified collegiate championship.

03 The 2026–2027 Season

Online Regular Season · September 2026 – March 2027

A structured two-phase pipeline where every match matters:

PHASE	DURATION	WHAT HAPPENS
Phase 1	7 weeks	Round robin or Swiss, depending on field size. Every team plays through the full season.
Phase 2	3–4 weeks	Double elimination playoff bracket. Online champions crowned, LAN seeding set.

Final bracket placement determines seed at The Clash for LAN Track teams. Online-Only Track teams crown their online champion in Phase 2.

The Clash · April or May 2027

Three days. Six titles. Championship + Challenger brackets. Butler Esports Park, Indianapolis.

04 The Clash — Championship Weekend

VENUE

Butler Esports Park, Indianapolis, IN — a 7,500 sqft purpose-built facility with 45 LAN setups, professional stage lighting, and a full production studio. Supplemented with additional rented equipment to support concurrent title play.

TITLES

VALORANT

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

OVERWATCH 2

MARVEL RIVALS

ROCKET LEAGUE

SUPER SMASH BROS. ULTIMATE

THREE-DAY FORMAT

DAY	WHAT HAPPENS
Friday · Group Stage	GSL-style groups of 4 teams per title. Top seeds advance to Championship, bottom seeds to Challenger — <i>every team gets multiple days of competitive play.</i>
Saturday · Semifinals	Championship and Challenger semifinal brackets across all titles. Saturday evening: community event, sponsor mixer, coach fireside.
Sunday · Grand Finals	All Grand Finals (Championship + Challenger) and 3rd-place matches. Awards ceremony on the main stage.

WHY TWO BRACKETS

The Challenger bracket ensures every team that travels to Indianapolis plays meaningful matches through Sunday — not just Friday group games. Every program gets a real competitive path, a chance to win hardware, and content-worthy moments for their community.

05 What Your Program Pays

Three components. No hidden fees. Travel and meals are **optional** — take our coordinated block or use your athletic department's vendors.

Annual University Membership

TIER	PROGRAM PROFILE	PRICE
Tier 1 · Entry	1–2 titles, online-only eligible	\$750 / year
Tier 2 · Standard	3–5 titles	\$1,750 / year
Tier 3 · Premier	6+ titles, LAN priority	\$3,500 / year

Per-Team Fees

FEE	WHAT IT COVERS	PRICE
LAN Track	Competition entry, production, merch, prize pool, awards — per team, per title	\$1,500 / team
Online-Only Track	Online season + playoffs — per team, per title	\$350 / team
Refundable Deposit	Held per team from signup through roster lock; refunded unless withdrawn late	\$500 / team

Optional Travel & Meal Add-Ons

If your athletic department doesn't handle travel, we offer a coordinated block at cost:

ADD-ON	INCLUDES	APPROXIMATE
Travel Bundle	2 nights in our hotel block (3 rooms per team)	~\$900 / team
Meal Plan	Saturday lunch + dinner, 7-person allocation	~\$420 / team

Add-ons are pass-through to our partners. No markup. Schools that book their own travel through their athletic department should skip the Travel Bundle — LAN Track entry is unchanged at \$1,500/team.

06 Sample Program Costs

Four common program profiles showing what you'd pay for the full 2026–2027 season:

Small Program

1 LAN team · 1 title

Tier 1 Membership \$750

LAN Track (1 team) \$1,500

Refundable Deposit \$500

Upfront \$2,750

Net season cost (deposit returned) \$2,250

Optional Travel + Meal Bundle +\$1,320

Mid Program

2 LAN teams · 2 titles

Tier 1 Membership \$750

LAN Track (2 teams) \$3,000

Refundable Deposit \$1,000

Upfront \$4,750

Net season cost \$3,750

Optional Travel + Meal Bundle +\$2,640

Large Program

4 LAN teams · 4 titles

Tier 2 Membership \$1,750

LAN Track (4 teams) \$6,000

Refundable Deposit \$2,000

Upfront \$9,750

Net season cost \$7,750

Optional Travel + Meal Bundle +\$5,280

Full-Scale Program

6 LAN teams · 6 titles

Tier 3 Membership \$3,500

LAN Track (6 teams) \$9,000

Refundable Deposit \$3,000

Upfront \$15,500

Net season cost \$12,500

Optional Travel + Meal Bundle +\$7,920

ONLINE-ONLY ALTERNATIVE

Programs that can't send teams to LAN can still compete in the unified online season via the **Online-Only Track at \$350/team/title**. A small program at 2 online-only teams plus Tier 1 membership = **\$1,450** for the full season. You stay in the competition, earn seeding credit, and become LAN-eligible for 2027–28.

07 Commitment Timeline

JUNE 1, 2026

Signup opens. Membership registration and LAN Track reservation begin.

JULY 15, 2026

Early commit deadline. \$500 deposit per team required. 50% forfeit begins for late withdrawals.

AUGUST 30, 2026

Roster lock. Final rosters submitted. Full deposit forfeit thereafter. Schedule published.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

Online season begins. Phase 1 round-robin / Swiss across all titles.

MARCH 2027

Online season concludes. Playoff brackets seed final Clash invitations.

APRIL OR MAY 2027

The Clash. Three days, six titles, Butler Esports Park, Indianapolis. Exact dates announced by October 2026.

08 Deposit & Commitment Policy

\$500 per team at signup — applies to every team regardless of track. The deposit is a shared commitment: your program holds its spot and we hold a budget base to deliver a professional event.

SITUATION	WHAT HAPPENS
We cancel the event or your title	Full refund of deposit and any paid team fees.
Your team withdraws before July 15, 2026	Full refund of deposit. Team fees refunded.
Your team withdraws between July 15 – August 30	50% forfeit of deposit. Team fees refunded.
Your team withdraws after roster lock (Aug 30)	Full forfeit of deposit. Team fees non-refundable.

Forfeited deposits subsidize the event's fixed costs when a program withdraws late, protecting the remaining teams from last-minute budget shocks.

09 Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What if we can't field 8 teams in every title?

A. We run each title at LAN only if 8+ teams commit by roster lock. Titles that fall short run as **online-only** for 2026–2027, and teams registered for that title at LAN receive a LAN Track refund or credit toward another title. No surprise cancellations.

Q. What if my athletic department won't approve travel?

A. Our **12+ month advance notice** and confirmed venue/dates are specifically designed to fit travel-approval cycles. If your AD still won't approve, the **Online-Only Track at \$350/team** keeps you in the competition and sets you up for 2027–2028 LAN eligibility.

Q. What if we already book travel through our athletic department?

A. Perfect — skip the optional Travel Bundle. LAN Track entry is **\$1,500/team**, unchanged. You'll still get the per-team player packet, merch allocation, and competition entry. You handle hotel and meals through your existing systems.

Q. Can we field an A-team and a B-team?

A. A and B teams are welcome in the **online regular season** — each roster registers independently and competes with its own record. For **The Clash (LAN)**, each university is limited to **one team per title**. We'll run a separate JV (Tier 2) division at LAN only if **8+ JV teams commit** for that title across all schools.

Q. How is seeding determined?

A. Online season final bracket placement determines your seed at The Clash. Regional tags (Midwest / Atlantic / Southern) are for storylines and marketing only — they don't affect bracket structure or seeding.

Q. What titles are supported for 2026–2027?

A. Valorant, League of Legends, Overwatch 2, Marvel Rivals, Rocket League, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate. Title support may adjust for 2027–2028 based on publisher partnership changes.

Q. What's included with LAN Track at the event?

A. Competition entry across the 3-day format, professional broadcast production, team merchandise (jerseys, lanyards, swag), prize pool eligibility for Championship and Challenger brackets, 3rd-place and Grand Final awards, and access to all sponsor mixer and coach events.

Q. Will publisher bids still be tied to the online season?

A. Yes. Publisher partnerships and bid processes remain tied to the **online regular season**. The Clash is our unified championship event — separate from bid qualifications. Your path to publisher-run national events is unaffected by The Clash format.

Q. What if we have more questions?

A. Reach out directly — contacts on the next page. We're happy to jump on a call with you and your athletic department.

10 Next Steps

- 1. Review this brief with your athletic department.** Share it with leadership, budget, and compliance stakeholders.

2. **Identify your participation profile.** How many titles? How many teams per title? LAN Track or Online-Only?
3. **Submit your declaration of interest by June 1, 2026.** A simple email confirming intent to participate and your expected tier — no commitment yet, just a planning signal.
4. **Complete registration when signup opens June 1, 2026.** Membership payment and per-team LAN Track reservation at that time.
5. **Submit deposit by July 15, 2026** (\$500/team, every track) to lock in your spots.

QUESTIONS BEFORE DECLARING?

We're scheduling office hours and open Q&A sessions for program directors and coaches in May 2026. If you want to discuss your program's fit before declaring, please email us directly to set up a time.

11 Contacts

ROLE	CONTACT	BEST FOR
Ramsey Jamoul Director of Programming	ramsey@midwestesports.com	Program strategy, pricing, membership tier questions, AD liaison, competition format, rosters, schedule, and The Clash logistics