



2014-2015 Halo Championship Series (HCS) Season 1 Handbook

343
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General Information

Description

The Halo Championship Series (“HCS”) is the official Halo eSports league established by 343 Industries (“343”) to create the best environment and platform for competitive Halo gameplay. 343 is responsible for the coordination of partner management, direction, and government of the HCS.

The official Halo game of the 2014-2015 year is Halo 2: Anniversary. Teams will compete in a mix of online and in-person LAN tournaments of varying tournament formats, prize pools, and “HCS Points” values.

Turtle Entertainment / Electronic Sports League (“ESL”) is the official tournament organizer. Twitch Interactive, Inc. (“Twitch”) is the official HCS broadcast partner.

Player Eligibility

HCS is open to participants who meet the following requirements: Players must be 16 years of age, must have permission from a parent or guardian if under 18 years of age, and must meet the eligibility requirements of the tournament organizer(s) **and** applicable law. All players must be registered on the ESL website (www.esl.gg/haloesports). For online tournaments: participants must reside in North America, have a copy of Halo: The Master Chief Collection, have an Xbox LIVE Gold membership in good standing, and must meet the eligibility requirements of the tournament organizer(s) **and** applicable law.

Participants may not be employees of 343, Microsoft or any HCS partner company including but not limited to Twitch and ESL.

Handbook Notes

The rules within this document apply to all HCS teams, players, coaches, managers, and staff, as well as all tournament staff, sponsors, event attendees, and those associated with the HCS.

The Halo Championship Series handbook is considered a living document and may be updated and modified at any time, for any reason, by 343 only.

Definitions

Halo Championship Series (HCS): The official Halo eSports league created by 343.

HCS Points: Each official and sanctioned HCS tournament awards points based on team placing. Points are awarded to teams rather than individual players. Seeding at all sanctioned LAN tournaments will be determined by a team's points at the first day of competition. At the culmination of Season 1, the top teams will be invited to the season finals, as determined by total HCS points accumulated in that season and the final ranking as posted on the official HCS website (www.HaloWaypoint.com/HCS). Points reset for all teams after each Season Finals.

Tournament Organizer (TO): Organization responsible for running tournaments.

Online Tournaments/Cups: Online tournaments (also referred to as "cups") are scheduled to run once a week through ESL. Official HCS online tournaments will award HCS Points, as outlined in the "HCS Points" section. These tournaments are free to enter, and require an Xbox Live Gold account in good standing in order to compete.

Gold Tournaments: Gold tournaments offer entry-level prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. (See HCS Points Below)

Platinum Tournaments: Platinum tournaments offer the mid-range prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. (See HCS Points Below)

Diamond Tournaments: Diamond tournaments offer the highest prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. (See HCS Points Below)

League Format

The Halo Championship Series is comprised of both online and LAN tournaments.

All official or sanctioned Halo Championship Series tournaments (both online and LAN) will award points based on a team's placing in a tournament. At the end of the season, the top teams with the most points will be invited to the Season Finals.

Online Tournaments: As listed above, online tournaments (also referred to as "cups") are scheduled to run once a week through ESL. Official HCS online tournaments will award HCS Points (outlined in the "HCS Points" section), as well as any associated prize money.

LAN tournaments are broken down into the following categories:

Gold Tournaments: Gold tournaments award entry-level prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. These tournaments feature a minimum \$5,000 prize pool. The top 32 teams will receive HCS Points as outlined below in the "HCS Points" section. Information for tournament organizers on applying to run an official sanctioned Gold Tournament is below.

Platinum Tournaments: Platinum tournaments award the mid-range prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. These tournaments will feature a \$10,000 prize pool minimum. The top 32 teams will receive points as outlined in the "HCS Points" section. Information for tournament organizers on applying to run an officially sanctioned Platinum Tournament is below.

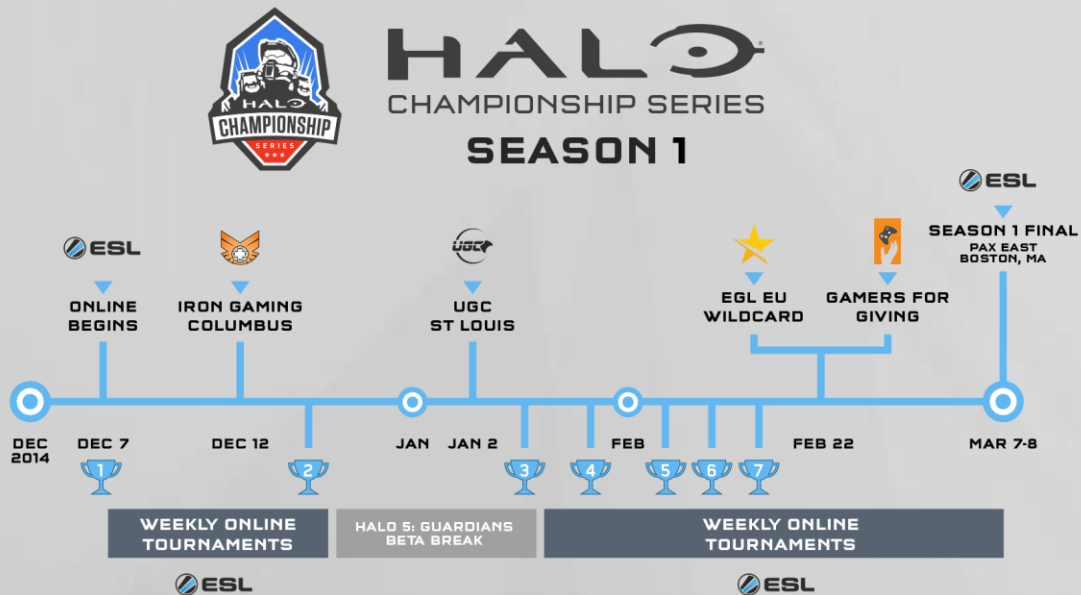
Diamond Tournaments: Diamond tournaments award the highest prizing and HCS points in the Halo Championship Series. These tournaments will feature a \$20,000 prize pool minimum. The top 32 teams will receive points as outlined in the "HCS Points" section. Information for tournament organizers on applying to run an officially sanctioned Diamond Tournament is below.

Season Finals: The Season Finals will determine the season champion. Entry and seeding into this tournament is determined by the teams with the top points after the final LAN or online tournament, as well as potential Wild Card tournaments. For example, if two wild card events are held, the top 6 teams based off of points will be invited to the Season Finals, for a total of 8 teams.

Wild Card Tournaments: Throughout the season, "wild card" events may be announced as part of the season structure. More details will be provided at the time of these announcements.

Schedule

As of January 7, 2015, the schedule for Season 1 is as follows. Tournaments will be added to www.HaloWaypoint.com/HCS as they become sanctioned.



How to Participate

To register for competition in the Halo Championship Series, head to www.esl.gg/HaloeSports.

Teams that have registered for the HCS and are in good standing are eligible to participate in any official Halo Championship Series tournaments. Registration for LAN tournaments will be coordinated by tournament organizers, but players and teams must compete under their official, registered HCS team names and gamertags. If teams compete under a different name or gamertags, they risk not being awarded the proper points from the event.

For tournament registration for LAN tournaments, see "LAN Tournaments."

Online Tournament Format

Official online tournaments are run by ESL. Eligible players may only compete in the Halo Championship Series with one team. To ensure a fair standard of play, online tournaments are currently only open to competitors within North America. For

additional details on team registration and roster guidelines, see the ESL Rule Set at <http://esl.gg/hcsrules>.

The "preseason" will entail two (2) online exhibition tournaments, which will not award prize money nor HCS points. The first online exhibition tournament will be held on Sunday, November 23, 2014, and the second will be held on Sunday, November 30, 2014. At the end of this three week period, the "preseason" period will end, and the HCS online tournaments will begin on Sunday, December 7, 2014. A three (3) week break will occur during the Halo 5: Guardians Beta period. No official online tournaments will be held during this time.

Official HCS online tournaments (also known as "cups") will take place on the following Sundays:

1. 12/7/14
2. 12/21/14
3. 1/11/15
4. 1/25/15
5. 1/31/15
6. 2/8/15
7. 2/15/15

On 2/22/15 and 3/1/2015, open online cups will occur, but only prize money will be awarded, as Season 1 HCS Point tournaments will have ended on February 15, 2015.

The Season 1 Finals live event will take place on March 6-8 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Online Player Conduct

The [Xbox Live Code of Conduct](#) outlines the rules that all players must follow when competing online.

For details on match disputes, disconnects, and ties, please refer to the ESL Rule Set at <http://esl.gg/hcsrules>.

LAN Tournaments

LAN tournaments are tournaments held in a physical location rather than over Xbox Live. LAN tournaments are held by tournament organizers and range from Gold to

Platinum to Diamond tournaments, as detailed in "League Format."

At LAN tournaments, each individual tournament organizer shall provide Xbox One consoles and monitors to competitors. All tournament organizers must allow players to use their own controllers and headphones / headsets, but hold the right to ban any controllers or headsets at their discretion. If technical problems are suspected during a tournament, the tournament organizer is obligated to review the situation and resolve any issues.

Tournament organizers are required to ensure that competitors cannot hear shoutcasters during gameplay, as this has the potential to compromise tournament legitimacy and fair play. If a tournament organizer offers soundproof headphones, players are required to use them.

Teams must compete under their registered HCS team name. Players must use the same gamertag throughout the entire tournament. It is the obligation of tournament organizer to verify that teams compete with their registered HCS rosters and gamertags to be eligible for HCS points.

LAN Tournament Format

All HCS tournaments must use HCS-approved game types. (See "Official Tournament Map Pool & Game Types"). No other game types may be played in tournament matches. 343 reserves the right to add, remove, or change game types at any time.

Tournament organizers may determine the bracket and format for each event at their discretion subject to 343 approval.

LAN Event Player Conduct

Players must not use obscene gestures, language, or offensive comments during tournament activity. These include:

- Profane words or phrases
- Hate speech
- Illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Illegal activities
- Controversial religious topics
- Any "sound-alike" or "lookalike" words, or phrases, that reference these topics
- Any other type of conduct deemed inappropriate at the discretion of the tournament organizer or 343

Drugs and Alcohol

Players that are under the influence of drugs or alcohol during tournament hours may be removed from the tournament at the discretion of the tournament organizer.

Cheating

No forms of cheating will be tolerated. This includes software modification, hardware modification, match fixing, or any other behavior as determined by the tournament organizer.

Gambling

No individuals involved in the HCS may take part in any betting or gambling on HCS tournament results.

Players engaging in any of the above or similar behavior may be removed from the tournament at the discretion of the tournament organizer. If a player exhibits behavior similar to the above offenses, they may be suspended or banned from the Halo Championship Series. Final decisions regarding player behavior, violations, and suspensions will be determined by 343.

General Tournament Information

Prizing

Tournament organizers must pay all tournament prize money within forty-five (45) days from when correct prize release paperwork has been received.

Non-HCS Tournaments

Teams are free to compete in any tournaments outside of the Halo Championship Series.

Sponsorships

Halo Championship Series players and teams are allowed to represent their personal and team sponsors at HCS tournaments, and tournament organizers are encouraged to collaborate to promote said sponsors, with the exception of any conflicts with the tournament organizer's sponsors.

343 has the right to restrict any sponsors from participating in HCS tournaments.

Player Stations and Stages

Players and teams have the right to a competitive environment. Tournament organizers are required to ensure that competition spaces provide an environment for fair play.

HCS Points

Halo Championship Series Points (HCS Points) are awarded at all official Halo Championship Series tournaments, both online and LAN. Points from officially sanctioned HCS tournaments will be awarded following the conclusion of the tournament.

The HCS Points Breakdown is as follows:

HALO CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES — POINT BREAKDOWN —

ONLINE WEEKLY PRIZE POOL: \$1,000		GOLD PRIZE POOL MIN: \$5,000		PLATINUM PRIZE POOL MIN: \$10,000		DIAMOND PRIZE POOL MIN: \$20,000	
PLACING	POINTS	PLACING	POINTS	PLACING	POINTS	PLACING	POINTS
1	550	1	1500	1	3000	1	4000
2	360	2	1000	2	2000	2	2500
3	240	3	700	3	1400	3	1800
4	160	4	500	4	900	4	1200
5 - 6	75	5	250	5	450	5	600
7 - 8	50	6	220	6	400	6	550
9 - 16	25	7	160	7	300	7	400
17 - 32	15	8	120	8	250	8	350
33 - 64	5	9 - 16	80	9 - 16	150	9 - 16	200
		17 - 32	50	17 - 32	75	17 - 32	100

Note: At both online and LAN events, teams must win at least one round (advance into the next stage of the bracket) to be eligible to receive HCS points for that event.

In an effort to support the global Halo eSports ecosystem, LAN tournament organizers may apply to become a sanctioned HCS partner. See "Halo Championship Series Tournament Application" for more information.

Halo Championship Series Tournament Application

Independent tournament organizers may apply to have their event sanctioned as official HCS tournaments. If the application is approved, the event will award official HCS points, and may also receive tournament promotion from 343 and Twitch.

All eligible LAN tournaments must provide:

- Exclusive Live stream viewable on Twitch.tv in 720p resolution or higher
- On-site shoutcasting and commentary
- Soundproofing solution, if shoutcasters can be heard in competition area
- A tournament graphics package, to be approved by HCS / 343

If you are a tournament organizer and would like to submit your event for consideration into the HCS, please send an email to: HCSApp@HaloWaypoint.com, and include the following information:

- Tournament name
- Tournament organizer
- Tournament sponsors
- Website
- Date & Venue
- Registration process
- Prize pool & prize breakdown
- Tournament format
- Bracket size
- Graphics Package
- Twitch channel(s)
- Shoutcasters / Talent

343 will review and make all final decisions regarding tournament sanctioning.

Team Structure and Player Trading

An HCS team is made up of up to five players who have registered at www.esl.gg/HaloeSports. Additionally, teams may have one coach (to be used at LAN events).

Coaches

At LAN tournaments, teams may use a coach. This coach may change throughout HCS Season 1, but may not change during a live event. Coaches may not join teams mid-way through an event, and must be registered with the tournament organizer prior to the start of the first match. Coaches are held to the same code of conduct and eligibility guidelines as players, team managers, and team staff.

Team HCS Points

Teams will be awarded HCS points, which determine seeding at official LAN tournaments. Players do not individually earn nor hold HCS points. Season 1 has two transfer periods.

Updated 1.24.15: Teams may remove players and maintain their points so long as they keep at least three of their current players. "Current players" is defined by the roster at the start of transfer period #2. Additionally, teams cannot add a player unless during a roster transfer period.

Team Changes

- Transfer period #1 is between the end of HCS Cup #1 (December 7, 2014) and the beginning of HCS Cup #2 (December 21, 2014)
- Transfer period #2 is between the end of HCS Cup #5 (February 1, 2015) and the beginning of HCS Cup #6 (February 8, 2015)

At no time can a team have more than five players. Once the new member appears on the team's roster on the ESL website, he or she is eligible to play for that team.

Any team changes must be submitted to an ESL admin via an ESL support ticket. Team changes must be requested 24 hours before a tournament begins.

In the event that a player is no longer competing in the league or cannot due to unforeseen circumstances and a team does not have a trade available, the team captain may apply for a player movement exception by submitting a ticket to the ESL admins. If a player movement exception is granted, the player who is removed from the roster may not compete in the HCS for the remainder of the season.

The pre-season and open cups are exempt from these rules.

Maintaining Seeds and Points

In order to maintain HCS Points (and the corresponding seed), teams must adhere to the aforementioned team change rules. If a team makes roster changes that violate

these rules, the team will lose the HCS points and seed that were associated with that team. In this event, the team may still operate under the same name and logo.

The pre-season and open cups are exempt from these rules.

Roster Lock

With the start of HCS Cup #6 (February 8, 2015) all rosters become "locked." This means that if any roster changes are made (via support tickets) beyond this point, teams will forfeit all of their current HCS points as well as their chance to compete in the Season Finals.

The pre-season and open cups are exempt from these rules.

Official Tournament Map Pool & Game Types

As of December 3, 2014, the official HCS Season 1 Halo 2: Anniversary game types are as follows:

Team Slayer	Neutral Bomb	3 Flag CTF	5 Flag CTF	King of the Hill	Oddball
Shrine	Shrine	Shrine	Warlord	Lockdown	Lockdown
Lockdown	Warlord			Warlord	Warlord
Warlord					

Global gametype settings:

- Primary Weapon: Battle Rifle
- Secondary Weapon: None
- Motion sensor: Off
- Death Cam: Off
- Map loadouts: Off
- Weapons on Map: Default
- Suicide Penalty: None
- Betrayal Penalty: None

Team Slayer settings:

- Time limit: 15 minutes
- Score to win: 50

3 Flag CTF settings:

- Score to win: 3
- Time limit: 30 minutes
- Flag at home to score: Off
- Flag return: Off
- Flag reset time: 15 seconds

5 Flag CTF settings:

- Score to win: 5
- Time limit: 30 minutes
- Flag at home to score: On
- Flag return: On touch
- Flag reset time: 15 seconds

Team King of the Hill settings:

- Score to win: 200 seconds
- Time limit: 12 minutes
- Hill movement: Progressive
- Hill duration: 1 minute

Neutral Bomb Assault Sanctuary settings:

- Score to win: 3
- Time limit: 30 minutes
- Bomb Arm time: 5 seconds
- Bomb diffuse 3 seconds
- Bomb reset: 30 seconds

Neutral Bomb Assault Warlord settings:

- Score to win: 5
- Time limit: 30 minutes
- Bomb Arm time: 5 seconds
- Bomb diffuse 3 seconds
- Bomb reset: 30 seconds

Oddball settings:

- Score to win: 200
- Time limit: 12 minutes
- Respawn time: 10 seconds
- Ball Spawning: Static
- Initial Bomb Physics: Free

343 reserves the right to modify these settings at any time. 343 will make an effort to not change game type settings within seven days of a sanctioned Platinum or Diamond LAN tournament unless deemed necessary for the competitive integrity of said tournament.

Amendments & Additions

343 may, at any time, make changes to the official HCS handbook in order to ensure the highest level of competition and integrity.

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