

## MCSA Midwest Collegiate Cup: Regional Championships

*CSO Women, MTU Men take Regionals titles; Cup standings hold ahead of Birkebeiner*



*Above: Start of the Men's mass-start 10k skate. Photo courtesy of Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost.*

Rhineland, WI's Northwoods Nordic Ski Club played host to the MCSA Regional Championships this weekend, with seventy skiers across twelve teams taking to the daunting climbs and technical turns of the Cedric A. Vig Outdoor Center. Saturday and Sunday's races served a double purpose, qualifying teams for the USCSA National Championships and constituting the fourth of five events in the Midwest Collegiate Cup. They also represented a significant milestone for the MCSA: a triumphant homecoming to [Hodag Country](#) two years, one pandemic, and back-to-back seasons of explosive growth after the league's inaugural promise to return stronger than ever. Indeed, this year's Regional Championships included nearly three times as many skiers and teams as in 2020 – a resounding testament to the vitality of MCSA Nordic, and to the dedication of the students whose team leadership, league decision-making, and racing make collegiate competition possible.

Despite concerns that a mass-start format would wreak 'havoc at the CAVOC,' Saturday's 10k skate went off without a hitch. Skiers completed two 5k laps on snow which, earlier in the day, had rendered youth races a glideless grind; however, warming temperatures and a mid-afternoon start ensured fair conditions for the college competitors. While the base remained largely stable, rapid descents and harrowing hairpins caused no shortage of slips and spills – adding to the adrenaline and excitement of the Cup's shortest course.

Sunday brought a different kind of slipping in the 10k individual-start classic, as temperatures rose to a sunny 38°F and teams scrambled to find a viable wax formula. Racers arriving at the CAVOC tested skis and consulted lingering high school coaches for advice, making the afternoon a frenzy of experimentation as skiers blended gels, kickwax, and klister in search of suitable stick. With recipes picked and chances taken, parents, teammates, and volunteers crowded the course-side for the second day in a row – their exuberant energy matching the bright skies as the 2022 Regional Champions were decided.

## MCSA Regional Championships Breakdown

As a standalone event, the MCSA Regional Championships qualified teams for the USCSA National Championships. Using the USCSA Nationals scoring system, wherein a team's top three skiers score, with skiers four and five displacing, teams' 10k skate scores were added to their 10k classic scores to determine final standings. The teams with the lowest scores were crowned as the MCSA Regional Champions. Only skiers who had met the MCSA's race participation requirements were allowed to score.

### Day 1: 10k Mass-Start Skate

In the **Men's 10k Skate**, St. Olaf's **Peter Carlen** repeated his [Dala success](#), finishing in 30:32.3. Carlen was only narrowly ahead of MCSA veteran **Henry Campbell** (MTU), who crossed the line in 30:37.4. In third was **Joseph Thuente** (UND), who had previously made the long trek from Indiana to compete in the Noquemanon and Mt. Ashwabay Summit Skiathlon. Thuente finished in 31:30.8. **Brian Olson** (CSO) took fourth, with 31:39.0, followed by **Nathan Bich** (UMNTC) in fifth, with 31:43.6.

In the **Women's 10k Skate**, St. Olaf erected its increasingly-familiar 'orange wall' with a complete sweep of the podium. **Erica Meyers**, MCSA winner in both the Dala and the [Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon](#), won the day in 36:25.7, followed by teammates **Julia Everest** in second

with 36:39.1, and **Lily Hubanks** in third with 37:28.5. In fourth was **Katie Susong** (UWM), who finished in 38:17.8, ahead of **Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost** (UMNTC), with 38:48.1.

At day's end on Saturday, the **College of St. Olaf** led the Women's Division with a perfect score (6 points), ahead of the **University of Wisconsin – Madison** (19 points) and the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** (23 points).

Standings were nail-bitingly close in the Men's Division, with a tie for the lead between the **College of St. Olaf** and **Michigan Technological University** (both with 17 points). The **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** stood in a close third, with 26 points. Full results are available [here](#).

Team Scores: Women (Regionals 10k Skate)					
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Day 1 Score:			
1	CSO	6	Meyers (1)	Everest (2)	Hubanks (3)
2	UWM	19	Susong (4)	Straka (7)	Koehler (8)
3	UMNTC	23	Hilgendorf-Roost (5)	Den Hartog (6)	Anderson (12)
4	UMD	41	Suhr (10)	Houts (15)	X (16)
4	UWEC	41	Bussman (9)	X (16)	X (16)
Team Scores: Men (Regionals 10k Skate)					
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Day 1 Score:			
1	CSO	17	Carlen (1)	Olson (4)	Dorsey (12)
1	MTU	17	Campbell (2)	Hudrlik (7)	Petersen (8)
3	UMNTC	26	Bich (5)	Gude (10)	MacKinnon (11)
4	UMD	49	Anderson (6)	Dybing (19)	Grabow (24)
5	UND	59	Theunte (3)	Novitch (14)	X (42)
6	UWM	77	Jaeger (22)	Lee (27)	Wentz (28)
7	UWEC	88	Swenson (17)	Ernst (29)	X (42)

MCSA Regionals Team Scores, Day 1. Calculated using the USCSA Nationals Scoring System. X indicates a 'Ghost Skier' given last-place points, for teams with fewer than three eligible competitors.

## Day 2: 10k Individual-Start Classic

In the **Men's 10k Classic**, **Peter Carlen** (CSO) was again the winner, kicking his way to the top of the podium in 33:07.0. He was followed by MTU teammates **Nick Petersen**, finishing second in 33:42.6, and **Henry Campbell**, finishing third in 34:07.4. **Joseph Thuente** (UND) finished fourth with a 34:34.4, and **Luke MacKinnon** (UMNTC) was fifth with 34:44.6.

In the **Women's 10k Classic**, the orange wall remained unbreachable – although not immune to an internal shakeup! **Lily Hubanks** (CSO) took first in 37:26.1, ahead of podium returnees **Erica Meyers** (CSO) and **Julia Everest** (CSO), who finished in 38.36.2 and 41.25.7, respectively. **Shelby Suhr** (UMD) secured the Bulldogs' first top-five finish of the event with her fourth-place

42:22.2, and **Claire Bussman** (UWEC) achieved a similar milestone for the Bluegolfs, taking fifth with 43:43.9.

In the Women's Division, the **College of St. Olaf** again won the day with another perfect score (6 points). Aided by three top-ten finishes, the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** (25 points) took second, followed by the **University of Wisconsin – Madison** (28 points).

In the Men's Division, two podium finishes made Michigan **Technological University** (12 points) the day's winners, ahead of the **College of St. Olaf** (21 points) and the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** (30 points). Full results are available [here](#).

Team Scores: Women (Regionals 10k Classic)					
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Day 2 Score:			
1	CSO	6	Hubanks (1)	Meyers (2)	Everest (3)
2	UMNTC	25	Mittelstadt (6)	Hilgendorf-Roost (9)	Bogenschuetz (10)
3	UWM	28	Straka (7)	Koehler (8)	Gould (13)
4	UMD	37	Suhr (4)	Houts (16)	X (17)
5	UWEC	39	Bussman (5)	X (17)	X (17)
Team Scores: Men (Regionals 10k Classic)					
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Day 2 Score:			
1	MTU	12	Petersen (2)	Campbell (3)	Hudrlik (7)
2	CSO	21	Carlen (1)	Olson (8)	Dorsey (12)
3	UMNTC	30	MacKinnon (5)	Bich (11)	Gude (14)
4	UMD	36	Anderson (6)	Grabow (10)	Miller (20)
5	UND	64	Theunte (4)	Novitch (19)	X (41)
6	UWM	77	Koob (21)	Jaeger (23)	Lee (24)
7	UWEC	84	Swenson (17)	Ernst (26)	X (41)

MCSA Regionals Team Scores, Day 2. Calculated using the USCSA Nationals Scoring System. X indicates a 'Ghost Skier' given last-place points, for teams with fewer than three eligible competitors.

## MCSA Regional Champions

To determine the MCSA Regional Champions, team scores from Day 1 were added to team scores from Day 2. In the Women's Division, the **College of St. Olaf** won a resounding victory with a perfect 12 points, and took home the 2022 MCSA Regional Championship trophy. While a crash-out during the classic race by Katie Susong appeared to imperil the Badgers' second place standing, it was indeed the **University of Wisconsin – Madison** (47 points) next on the podium, whose strong performances from Jane

Straka and Katherine Koehler held off the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** (48 points) by a single point.

In the Men's Division, the Huskies' hard-charging Sunday secured the 2022 title for **Michigan Technological University** (29 points). They were followed by the **College of St. Olaf** (38 points). The **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** was again third, with 56 points.

Team Scores: Women (MCSA Regional Championships)				
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Total Score:	Day 1 Score	Day 2 Score
1	CSO	12	6	6
2	UWM	47	19	28
3	UMNTC	48	23	25
4	UMD	78	41	37
5	UWEC	80	41	39
Team Scores: Men (MCSA Regional Championships)				
Regionals Rank:	Team:	Total Score:	Day 1 Score	Day 2 Score
1	MTU	29	17	12
2	CSO	38	17	21
3	UMNTC	56	26	30
4	UMD	85	49	36
5	UND	123	59	64
6	UWM	145	68	77
7	UWEC	175	88	84

*MCSA Regionals Team Scores, Day 2. Calculated using the USCSA Nationals Scoring System. X indicates a 'Ghost Skier' given last-place points, for teams with fewer than three eligible competitors.*

The top two teams from each Division qualify to represent the MCSA at the USCSA National Championships in Lake Placid, New York. In the Men's Division, however, hotly-debated USCSA bylaws will prevent the Michigan Technological University Nordic Ski Club from attending the event as a team, due to MTU's sanction of an NCAA Nordic ski team (despite the Club having no financial, material, or administrative connection to the NCAA team, and the Club's role as a founding member of the MCSA). These bylaws would also, unless challenged, prevent MTU's recognition as the 2022 Regional Champions. Finding these constraints inapplicable to their conduct of league racing in the Midwest, the MCSA Nordic Assembly [voted unanimously](#) in August to continue to recognize MTU as a full competing member of the MCSA, and to recommend their Nationals attendance to the USCSA Board of Directors in the event of their qualifying. Accordingly, the Michigan Technological University Nordic Ski Club Men are unambiguously the 2022 MCSA Regional Champions, and they will be permitted to attend Nationals as a 'Guest Team,' pending a more sustainable – and fair – rules adjustment.

This Guest Team attendance does not occupy one of the Midwest's Nationals qualifying berths. The University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Men have therefore also qualified to compete at Nationals.

### *Midwest Collegiate Cup Breakdown*

Distinct from the MCSA Regional Championship awards, this weekend's races also served as the fourth of five events in the Midwest Collegiate Cup. To assign Cup points, skiers were pursuit-ranked, with their cumulative times across Saturday and Sunday determining their final position. Points were then assigned using the Mathie-Halvorson System, standard for Midwest Collegiate Cup races. Medals were also given to the top three Men's and Women's pursuit times.

Per the Mathie-Halvorson System, there was no participation threshold to scoring in the Midwest Collegiate Cup. All skiers – including those not scored towards the MCSA Regional Championship awards – therefore received points.

In the **Women's Division**, a dominant classic performance on Sunday gave **Lily Hubanks** (CSO) a narrow weekend win, with a total time of 1:14:54. Fellow Oles **Erica Meyers** (CSO) and **Julia Everest** (CSO) followed in second and third, with 1:15:01 and 1:18:04, respectively. Sunday's classic also proved pivotal for **Shelby Suhr** (UMD), who finished fourth in 1:23:31.1 – a boot throw's three tenths of a second ahead of Kaia **Hilgendorf-Roost** (UMNTC), who was fifth with 1:23:31.4.

In the **Men's Division**, two consecutive wins put **Peter Carlen** in first, with a total time of 1:03:39. In second was **Henry Campbell** (MTU) with 1:04:44, followed by **Joseph Thuente** (UND) with 1:06:05. **Nick Petersen** (MTU) took fourth with 1:06:22, ahead of **Ethan Anderson's** (UMD) 1:06:42.

Turning to team standings, the **College of St. Olaf's** success in the Women's Regional Championships was reflected in the Cup standings, with the Oles winning the weekend and adding 145 points to their cumulative score. While USCSA Nationals Scoring System favored the Badgers for Regionals awards, the Mathie-Halvorson System's deeper team reach saw the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** take home 57 points, ahead of the **University of Wisconsin – Madison's** 46.

In the Men's Division, **Michigan Technological University** led the field with 162 points, followed by the **College of St. Olaf**, with 127 points. Buoyed by skiers who did not meet the Regionals participation requirement, but whose performances still scored towards Cup standings, the **University of Minnesota – Duluth** was third for the weekend, with 96 points.

Cumulative standings held steady in the Midwest Collegiate Cup – promising Main Street Mania at the Cup's fifth and final event, the American Birkebeiner. In the Women's Division, only 24 points separate the top three teams. The **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** continues to lead with 407 points. While they expanded their margin in Rhinelander, they stand just ahead of the **University of Wisconsin – Madison**, which has 387 points. Although still in third, the **College of St. Olaf** has leapt within striking distance of the Badgers and Gophers, and tackle Telemark with 383 points.

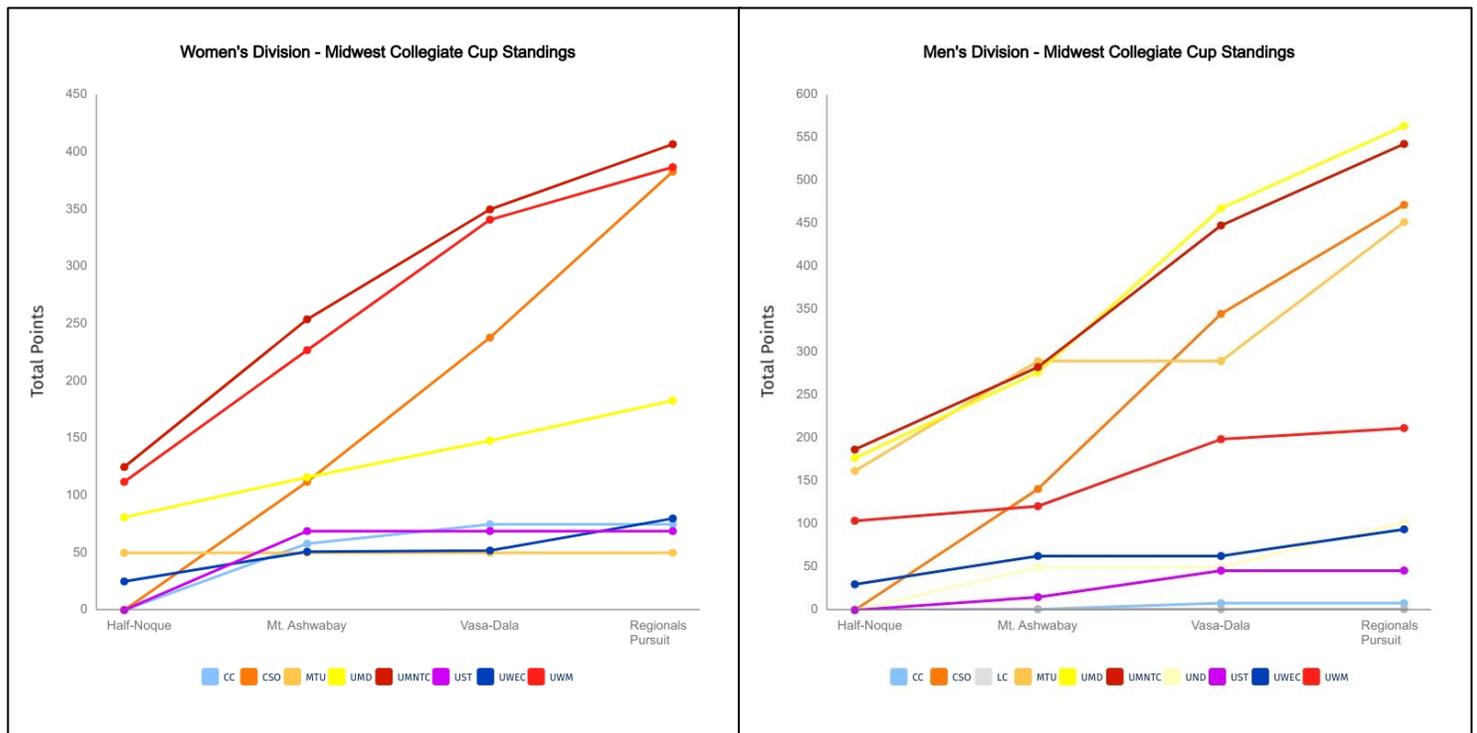
In the Men's Division, the **University of Minnesota – Duluth** remains in first, with 564 points. They added a single point to their lead over the **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities**, which now has 543 points. The **College of St. Olaf** sits in third with 472 points – but after their absence in Mora, Michigan Technological University has returned to the Cup chase: they are now only 20 points away from the podium, with 452 total points.

Team Scores: Women (Regionals Pursuit)							
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:					
1	CSO	145	Hubanks (50)	Meyers (44)	Everest (39)	Vanderwilde (12)	
2	UMNTC	57	Hilgendorf-Roost (29)	Den Hartog (15)	Mittelstadt (9)	Reineke (3)	Anderson (1)
3	UWM	46	Straka (25)	Koehler (18)	Klein (1)	Schwartz (1)	Gould (1)
4	UMD	35	Suhr (34)	Houts (1)			
5	UWEC	28	Bussman (22)	Williams (6)			
Team Scores: Men (Regionals Pursuit)							
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:					
1	MTU	162	Campbell (46)	Petersen (40)	Hudrlik (34)	Novitch (26)	Miller (16)
2	CSO	127	Carlen (50)	Olson (32)	Dorsey (20)	Hanson (13)	Levey (12)
3	UMD	96	Anderson (37)	Donohue (24)	Grabow (15)	Schwinghamer (14)	Miller (6)
4	UMNTC	95	MacKinnon (30)	Bich (28)	Gude (22)	Wurst (10)	Ryan (5)
5	UND	52	Thuente (43)	Novitch (9)			
6	UWEC	31	Brown (24)	Swenson (11)	Ernst (1)	Dangstveit (1)	
7	UWM	13	Jaeger (7)	Lee (3)	Wenz (1)	Gordon (1)	Koob (1)
Total Teams: 12							
Total Skiers: 70							

*Regionals Pursuit Team Standings for the Midwest Collegiate Cup, 2/20/2022. Calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System.*

Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores: Women						
Collegiate Cup Rank:	Team:	Collegiate Cup Score:	Half-Noque	Mt. Ashwabay	Vasa-Dala	Regionals Pursuit
1	UMNTC	407	125	129	96	57
2	UWM	387	112	115	114	46
3	CSO	383	0	112	126	145
4	UMD	183	81	35	32	35
5	UWEC	80	25	26	1	28
6	CC	75	0	58	17	0
7	UST	69	0	69	0	0
8	MTU	50	50	0	0	0
Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores: Men						
Collegiate Cup Rank:	Team:	Collegiate Cup Score:	Half-Noque	Mt. Ashwabay	Vasa-Dala	Regionals Pursuit
	UMD	564	177	100	191	96
	UMNTC	543	187	96	165	95
	CSO	472	0	141	204	127
	MTU	452	162	128	0	162
	UWM	212	104	17	78	13
	UND	102	0	50	0	52
	UWEC	94	30	33	0	31
	UST	46	0	15	31	0
	CC	8	0	1	7	0
	LC	1	0	1	0	0
Total Teams: 18						

Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings, 2/20/2022. Calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System.



## *From the Athletes*

Reflecting on his winning weekend, Peter Carlen wrote that Saturday's mass-start format was an pleasant change of pace from CSO's usual racing fare. Perhaps learning from his Dala performance, Carlen "tried to draft off Henry Campbell most of the race," and relied on "fast skis" to "gap [Campbell] on the downhill going into the last uphill and then just went all out from there and managed to keep him away." Although getting solid kick proved a challenge on Sunday, CSO's "zero skis [...] worked decently well," and Carlen focused on going "hard the whole time, no real tactics or strategy involved."

For Campbell's part, the mass start skate also proved an exciting experience – one that "sorted itself out more smoothly than [he] thought it would," despite seeming "like it could be chaos and might be a challenge to pass people." After working his way up from a mid-pack starting position, Campbell battled with Carlen for most of the race, and found it "fun to try out some tactics and switch leaders back and forth" until, he conceded, he "got destroyed epically by Peter on the last uphill." On Sunday, Campbell was pleased with the "warm sunny weather," and thanked Mike Fraley for his help with kick waxing, as "everyone on [MTU] reported having good kick and glide despite the conditions."

Moreover, the MTU President said that "it was awesome to watch [his] teammates cross the finish line" on both days, and invigorating "to see the MTU Club become more racing-oriented and exciting to have some teammates who are even more competitive than I am." Pre-race discussions "about who each person needed to beat for our team to win" on Sunday would have been unheard of in years past – and reflect the league's growing effect on teams' appetites for intercollegiate camaraderie and competition.

UMNTC's Luke MacKinnon seemed to share Campbell's enthusiasm for weekend's intercollegiate dynamic. "It was a great atmosphere out there with some much-needed encouragement from teammates," he wrote, and despite a "tough" Saturday race, "Sunday brought a welcomed warm up for [his] first classic race of the season, even though it meant klister." Although there was "unfortunately no Hodag sighting," MacKinnon is "looking forward to coming



*Above, from top: Start of the Women's mass-start 10k skate. Campbell and Carlen laugh after Saturday's race. Photos courtesy of Sophia Hicks.*



*Above: MacKinnon soaks up the rays during Sunday's 10k classic. Photo courtesy of Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost.*



Above: Joseph Thuente, Ethan Anderson, and Nathan Bich during Saturday's 10k skate. Photo courtesy of Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost.

Below: Lily Hubanks, Erica Meyers, and Julia Everest on Sunday's Pursuit podium. Photo courtesy of Sophia Hicks.



Above: The MTU, CSO, and UMNTC Men are all smiles on Sunday's Regional Championship Podium. Photo courtesy of Sophia Hicks.

back next year." UND's Joe Thuente agreed that the temperature swing "made for an interesting and enjoyable weekend of racing," and found that the CAVOC's course "is amazing and flows nicely."

UWM's Katie Susong also reported that "it was a great course this weekend and even with the warm weather on Sunday [she] cannot complain about the conditions." Despite her "personal disappointment" about crashing out early on Sunday's race, Susong wrote: "I left the weekend feeling like I had done everything I could do to ski my best. The UW-Madison women did great overall and I am extremely proud and honored to be a part of the team."

### American Birkebeiner Preview

The American Birkebeiner will constitute the fifth and final event of the Midwest Collegiate Cup, and both Division leaders – the UMNTC Women and UMD Men – hold the top spot by narrow margins. As with the [Half-Noquemanon](#), both the Birkebeiner disciplines (the 50k skate and 55k classic) will be scored. Strong performances from the UMNTC Men – particularly from Nathan Bich and Alex Gude – in the classic will likely threaten to close their gap against the UMD Men, as the Gophers seek to win their third consecutive Collegiate Cup title. However, the Bulldogs will doubtless field an impressive and high-scoring contingent of skate skiers, with Ethan Anderson and Emmett Donohue leading their team's hustle to Hayward. The MTU Men, while out of the chase for the Cup lead, could surpass the CSO Men for a third-place finish with an ample contingent of Huskies, especially in the skate race. Look for Henry Campbell and Jonathan Hudrlik near the front of the MCSA skate field.

With few Women in the 55k classic, substantial points are on the line for the MCSA field winner – potentially Katie Susong (UWM) or Shelby Suhr (UMD). The event, however, will be decided by finishes in the 50k skate. Fast Saturdays from Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost and Lily Den Hartog could keep the Gophers ahead of the Badgers, although Jane Straka and Katherine Koehler will doubtless strive to pass some maroon and gold suits the hills "east of Seeley town."

Look for the MCSA on the storied Main Street Podium at **2:00pm on Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**, where the Midwest Collegiate Champions will be crowned!