

For 2016, OGLA has made changes to the way teams qualify and are seeded for playoffs. Following is an explanation of the new methodology.

Two Separate Brackets:

This year, there will be two separate playoff brackets. The Gold bracket will be comprised of the six Conference Champions (as decided on by each league's SOP**) and the six highest ranking non-champions as determined by the laxpower.com Reg In computer rating. The Navy bracket will include the next 12 highest ranked laxpower.com Reg In (discussion of laxpower.com below) teams. The Gold bracket winner is the OGLA State Champion. OGLA's goal in separating the brackets as such is to increase the percentage of games that are truly competitive. Over the last several years, aside from the #8 v #9 pairing, the higher seed has always won in the second round and generally by double digits. Separate brackets should increase competitiveness and provide for a more exciting and gratifying post-season experience. Further, bracket separation allows total play-off rounds to be reduced from five to four and for Gold and Navy early rounds to be offset on different nights. This helps ensure that higher qualify officials can be assigned to more play-off games.

** Each league can still award 'co-league champions' should they decide to, but one team per league must be awarded the 'league champion' (as determined by your league's SOP) for purposes of placing them in the top 6 spots of the Gold bracket.

Playoff Qualification:

In past years, as many as four teams from each conference automatically received playoff berths. This policy has resulted in highly-ranked teams from strong conferences being eliminated from playoff contention, creating a situation where the top teams in the state are not necessarily competing for a State Championship. This year the only automatic playoff berths will go to each Conference Champion. OGLA believes this is a proper compromise between ensuring that the most highly-ranked teams in the state get to participate in playoffs and honoring the importance of being a champion of your conference. As Conference Champions may or may not be ranked among the top 12 teams in the state, there may still be cases where a top 12 team misses out on playoffs. After the Conference Champions receive their berths, the next 18 most highly ranked teams will make playoffs with the top six of these earning berths in the Gold bracket and the next 12 forming the Navy bracket. Please keep in mind that the OGLA uses the laxpower.com Reg In ranking, not the Norm PR ranking.

Playoff Seeding:

Playoffs will be seeded using the laxpower.com Reg In computer ranking. The 12 teams comprising the Gold bracket will simply be seeded 1 through 12 according to their relative laxpower.com Reg In ranking with no special consideration for Conference Champions. The same process will be followed to seed the Navy bracket. Where possible, the OGLA will attempt to create brackets where first round contests between teams from the same conference are avoided.

Laxpower.com:

The OGLA has been using laxpower.com as the basis for playoff seeding for several years and while it is a widely-used standard, consumers are often confused as to how it applies. To find the laxpower.com rankings, type www.laxpower.com into your browser. Click on **Girls** from the menu bar at the top and then choose **Oregon** from the list of states. You will see a page title Computer Ranking with a time stamp that shows when the last update occurred. Note that this is Eastern time, not Pacific. You will see all the Varsity teams in the state ranked from 1 to 40. This is NOT the laxpower.com ranking used to for qualification or seeding of playoffs as it is based off the first column of rankings title Norm PR. This column takes into account games played against non-OGLA opponents and is also based on data elements that have no real bearing on the relative strength of teams within Oregon. The correct index to study in determining where your team is ranked in titled Reg In. This only takes into account games where OGLA teams play OGLA teams. Unfortunately, there is no way that we know of to reconfigure the display output so that the Rnk on the far left corresponds to the Reg In column and not the Norm PR column. Therefore, figuring out exactly where your team sits requires a bit of analysis.

There is quite a bit of interesting information about the laxpower.com methodology that is accessible by clicking on the title links or visiting the Frequently Asked Questions page. Put simply, laxpower.com uses a statistical methodology that seeks to minimize the aggregate error that is implied when comparing actual game results to the **margin of victory** predicted by the difference in the laxpower.com index score. At its most basic level, if team A is ranked 10 points higher than team B, then A should win vs. B by 10 points. If team A only wins by 5, then the model was approximately 5 points of “error” and A’s rating might be adjusted down, B’s rating adjusted up, or both. However, keep in mind that all of the other results involving A and B must also be taken into account as there is a tension between any adjustment resulting from a single game and its impact on the error of all other games. An adjustment made as a consequence of a single game should not increase the total error in the system. The truth is that every result potentially has an impact on every team’s ranking as the implications of any adjustment based on the game must actually be evaluated in terms of its implications for all teams and all games. As a team’s index score is adjusted throughout the season, all of its past games are re-evaluated in light of its evolving power ranking and this has implications for everyone else’s rankings. Let’s say that early in the season, Team C hasn’t really faced a tough opponent is ranked very high. Let’s say that Team D plays them closely and loses by 2 and sees their ranking rise. If in the next week, C loses by 10 to moderately-ranked E. It is likely that both C and D’s rankings will plummet. D does not get credit for hanging with a highly ranked team because the model always re-evaluates in terms of its current scoring of teams, not its past.

There are many nuances to the model that the truly interested can dig into, including the way home field advantage is taken into account. However, the key insight that can be shared is the importance of the 10-point margin. The laxpower.com system will not reward a team for winning by more than 10 and will not penalize a team for losing by more than 10. This means that if your team is ranked 20 points higher on laxpower.com, they do not need to win by 20 to effectively hold their ranking. All margins above 10 are ignored. However, if you are ranked 20 points higher and you only win by 8, your ranking may well go down. There is no perfect system and sadly the use of margin of victory creates situations where teams that have a game well in hand still have starters playing late in the game to try to ensure they win by 10. Please understand that this is a behavior that the rating methodology selects for, even though it may not be totally consistent with any of our desires for the best sportsmanship.

As we get closer to playoff time, the OGLA can publish rankings based on Reg In and virtual playoff seedings that will make it easier to see where all the teams stand.