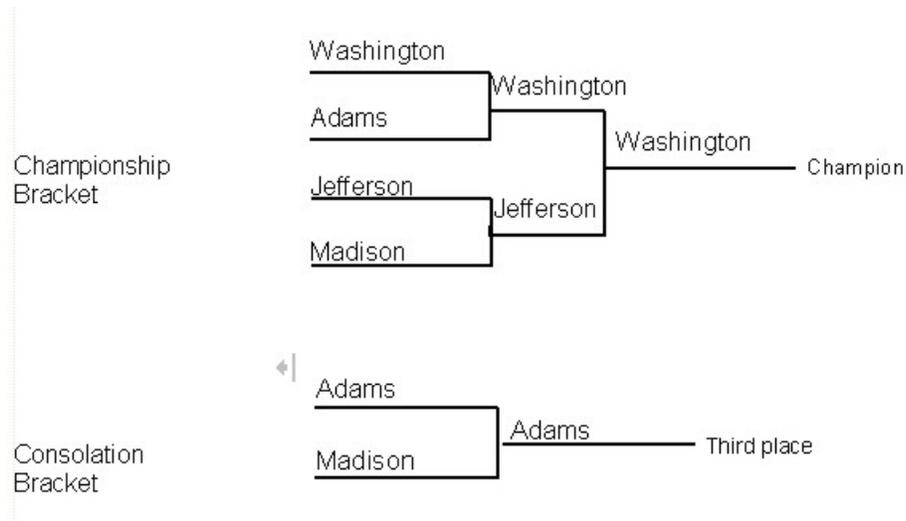
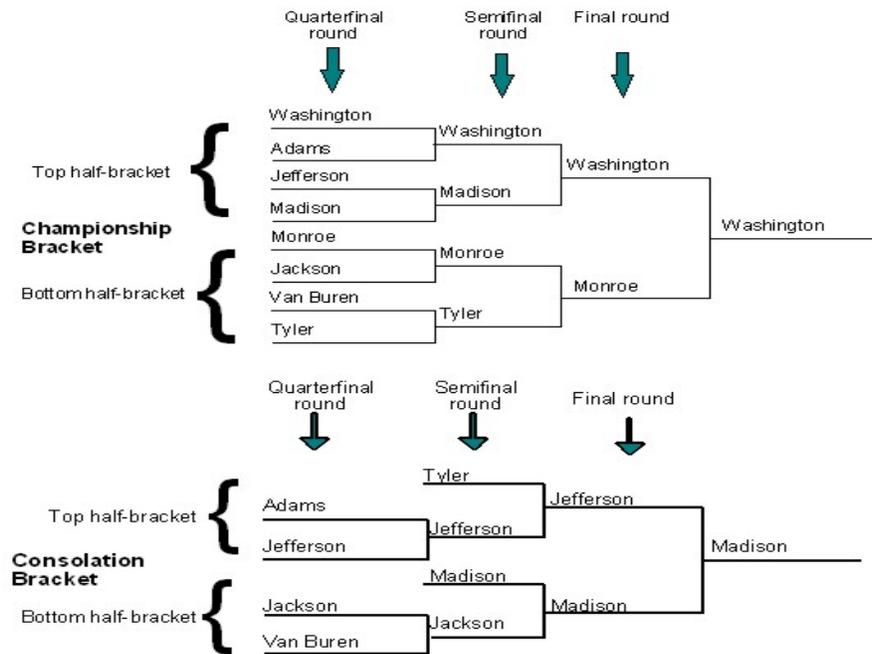


Suppose that Washington defeats Jefferson, and Adams defeats Madison. In this weight class, Washington will be the champion, Jefferson second, Adams third, and Madison fourth.



The following example of a completed eight person bracket is used to illustrate a few other items.



Note that the round before the final is the "semifinal." The round before the semifinal is the "quarterfinal."

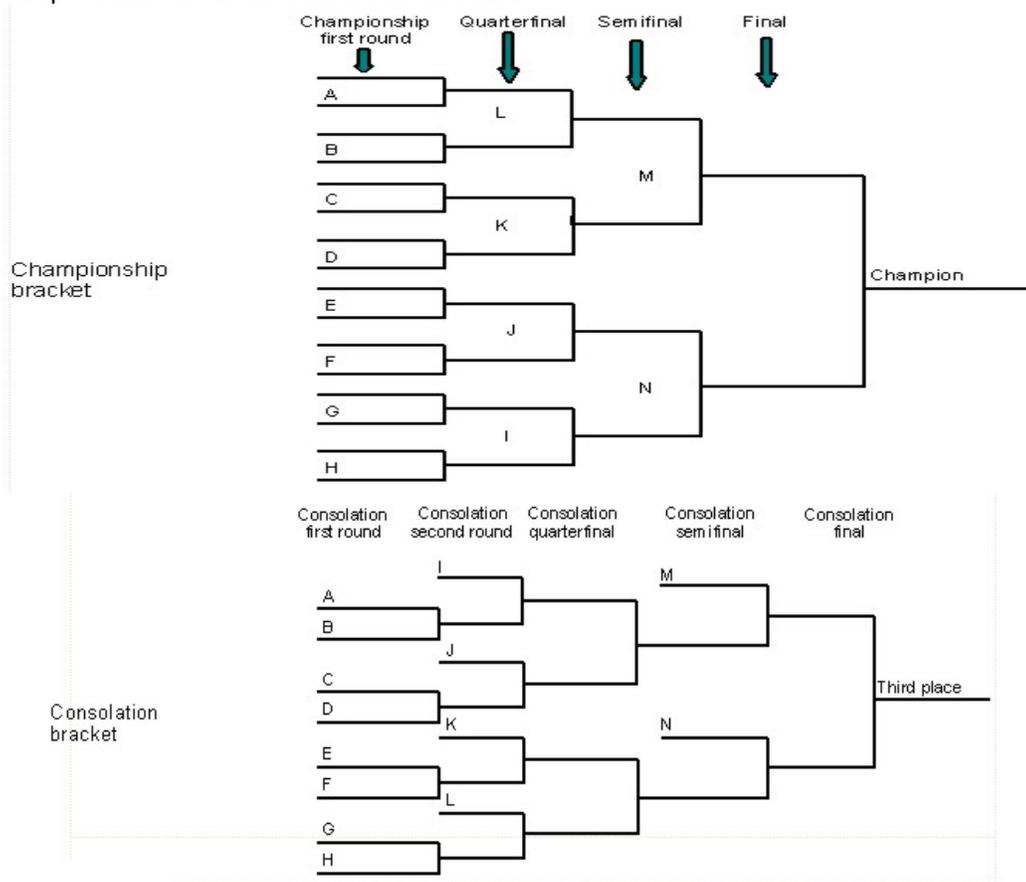
Note that in this bracket the losers in the championship first round (in this case, the quarterfinal round) drop straight down to the consolation first round. However, the losers of the championship semifinals cross in the consolation bracket – that is, the loser of the championship semifinal in the top half-bracket drops to the consolation bottom half-bracket. The championship semifinal loser in the bottom half-bracket drops to the top half-bracket in the consolation semifinals.

Contestants cross in the consolation brackets at some point in order to avoid the possibility of a competitor wrestling the same opponent twice in the same tournament prior to the consolation finals.

The round in which the cross occurs varies depending on the chosen format for a particular tournament.

The following diagram of a sixteen person bracket illustrates crossing in the quarterfinal round. Note that in this example, the loser of match "A" in the championship bracket drops to line "A" in the consolation bracket. The loser of match "B" in the championship bracket drops to line "B" in the consolation bracket, etc.

The loser of match "L" in the championship bracket (in the top half-bracket) drops to line "L" in the consolation bracket (in the bottom half-bracket). Loser at match "K" drops to line "K," etc. Since this bracket crossed in the quarterfinals, no cross is done in the semifinals - loser of match "M" in the top bracket drops to line "M" in the consolation bracket.



## Seeding

The process of entering or "planting" contestants on the brackets to start the tournament is referred to as seeding the tournament. When the bracket has been drawn and all the contestants have been assigned their starting position in the championship first round, the bracket can be said to have been "seeded."

Seeding can be done by the luck-of-the-draw; that is, the wrestlers can be positioned on the bracket in a random fashion to start the tournament.

However, it is generally recognized that seeding the bracket refers to the process of assessing the strength of each of the contestants before the bracket is drawn, and assigning positions on the brackets based on the adjudged relative strength of the contestants. The wrestler who is determined to be the strongest competitor on the bracket will be given top seed. The wrestler who is determined to be the second strongest will be given second seed. Third best will be given third seed, etc. This is done in an effort to configure the brackets such that the anticipated strongest wrestlers will meet each other in the final rounds.

One could rank each wrestler on the bracket and assign seeds accordingly. In practice however, for a typical bracket with 14-16 competitors, perhaps only the top 4 to 6 wrestlers are "seeded" and the remaining wrestlers are placed on the bracket in a random fashion. As the term is generally used, a competitor is said to have been "seeded" when that competitor has been ranked and placed on the bracket according to his/her "seed." The remaining competitors on the bracket who have not been ranked are said to be "unseeded" and are placed on the bracket in a random fashion.

The person or group of persons who determines seeds for a tournament (and thus, draws the brackets) varies from tournament to tournament. Seeding the tournament is commonly done by the tournament director and/or his/her designee(s). Sometimes a "seeding committee" is used. Tournament officials may conduct a "seeding meeting" some number of days before the tournament such that representatives of the participating teams may gather and determine seeds (and thus, positions on the bracket) by group consensus.

What criteria are used for assigning seeds? The National Federation (the rule book organization) has no officially established criteria for assigning seeds. Criteria vary from tournament to tournament. Generally recognized criteria include...

- Returning champions at the same weight class are given top seed.
- Head-to-head: If wrestler "A" has already defeated wrestler "B" sometime in the past, wrestler "A" can be considered for higher seed than wrestler "B."
- Common opponents: If "A" has defeated "B," and "B" has defeated "C," then "A" can be considered for higher seed than "C."
- Previous tournament placements and overall record.
- Coaches vote.
- Qualifying tournament performance: For example, in West Virginia High School wrestling, the regional tournament is the qualifying tournament for the state tournament. Results of the regional tournament determine the seeding for the state tournament. In the first round of the state tournament, regional champs are always paired with regional 4th place finishers from another region, and regional runners-up are always paired with regional 3rd place finishers from another region.

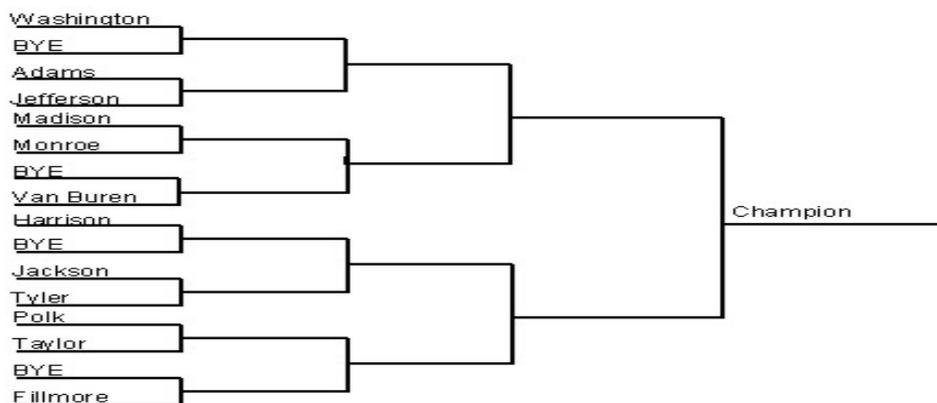
The following bracket illustrates the bracket positions to which each seed is assigned.



## Byes

Rarely are there exactly 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 competitors on a bracket. A bye is defined as the position of a participant in a tournament who advances to the next round without playing.

Suppose that a bracket has 12 entries. The result is that there will be four contestants who will not have a first round match. Those four contestants will be said to have received a bye.



Byes are assigned by criteria established by the tournament director, by mutual consent, or by luck of the draw. Often, available byes are given to the highest seeded wrestlers.

The obvious advantage of drawing a bye is that the contestant is automatically advanced to the next round.

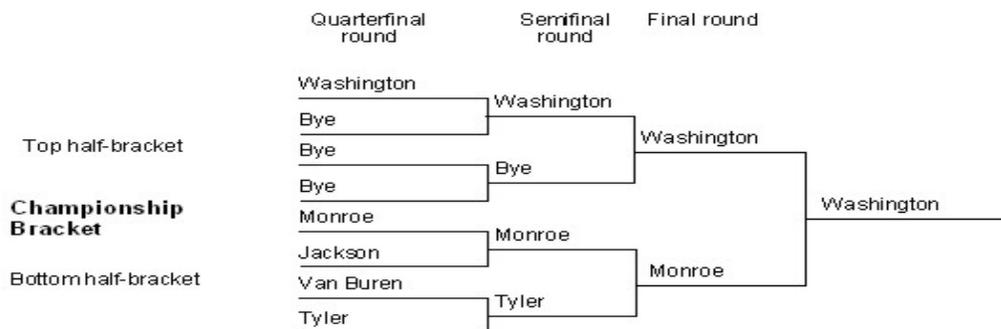
The potential disadvantage of drawing a bye is this: in tournaments in which team score is kept, the wrestler drawing a bye loses the opportunity to score bonus points for his/her team by winning a match by fall, technical fall, or major decision. The wrestler is awarded advancement points for the bye provided he/she wins the next match after a bye; however, there are no opportunities to score bonus points for the bye since there was no match wrestled.

This is the reason that accepting the bye may not always be the best team strategy, and that in some tournaments byes are assigned by luck of the draw.

Byes should be evenly spaced out in the brackets among the quarter and half brackets. The rule book states "there shall be no byes after the first round of competition in both the championship and consolation brackets," and that "no quarter-bracket or half-bracket shall have more than one bye in excess of its paired bracket."

This may sound confusing. This proviso is best illustrated by the following example. Suppose that an eight man bracket is drawn containing seven contestants, with one bye in the top half bracket. Two wrestlers who were originally on the bracket are scratched (that is, they were originally entered on the bracket but end up not wrestling because they didn't make weight, were ill, or for some other reason). These two wrestlers happened to be in the top half-bracket.

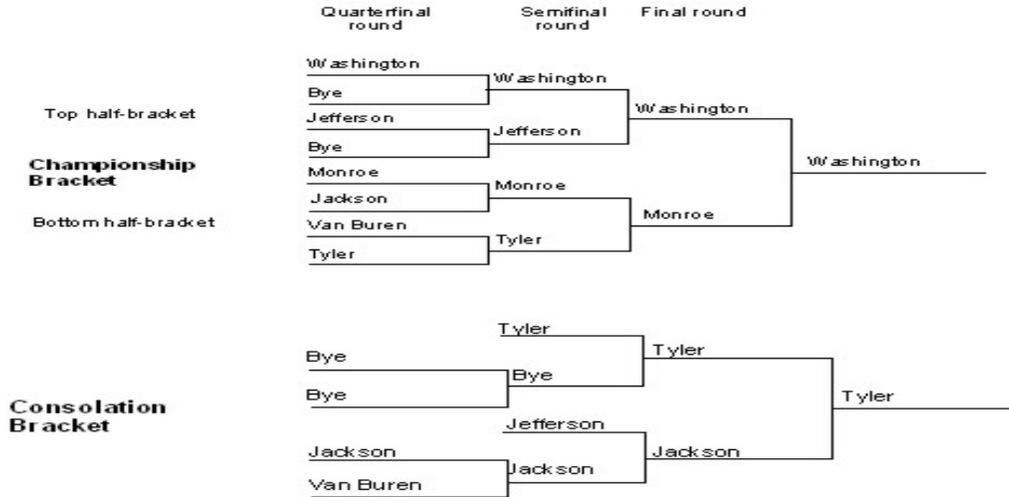
Rather than re-drawing the entire bracket, the scratched wrestlers are changed to byes for the first round. The end result will be an eight position bracket containing five wrestlers and three byes in the top half-bracket.



In this extreme example, Washington has advanced to the finals without having wrestled anybody.

## Bye Brackets (Con't)

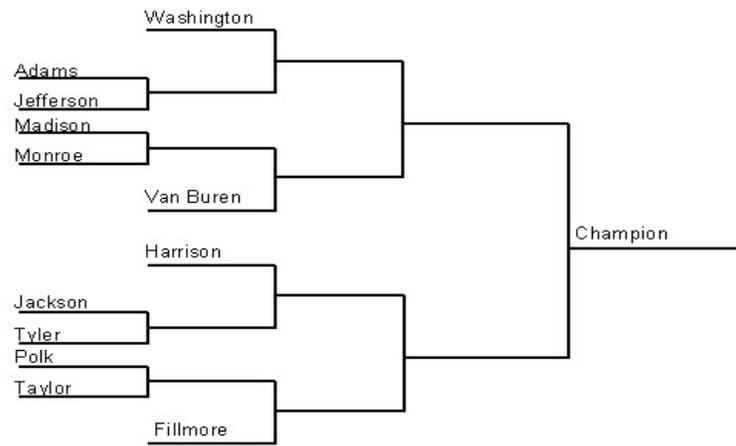
Consider this example where two byes are placed in the top half-bracket, and none in the bottom half-bracket.



In this case, the problem occurs in the consolation bracket: The two byes drop to the top half of the consolation bracket, and the result is Tyler getting a bye into the consolation finals.

In actual practice, in many open tournaments the "non-balanced byes" problem is left uncorrected. In a youth tournament where there may be 50 or more brackets to adjust as a result of scratches from the tournament, there may simply not be enough time to re-draw all the brackets and start the tournament on time. The tournament director may choose to redraw and balance the brackets (and risk delaying the start of the tournament), or the director may leave byes as they occur and accept the quirkiness of the outcomes.

The following bracket illustrates another point. This bracket is the same as the one above showing four byes in the first round. The only difference is that the "bye" matches in the first round are not depicted and those wrestlers who received the byes are simply advanced to the next round.



This bracket depiction may be referred to as a "12 position bracket." In reality, it is nothing more than a 16 position bracket with the bye matches eliminated. This depiction may be a bit neater representation of the bracket, particularly in tournaments in which team scores are not kept. However, this depiction may raise questions regarding awarding points for byes in tournaments in which team score is kept. For this reason, many tournament directors stick to the practice of drawing brackets for 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, etc competitors, indicating byes where they occur.

## Pigtails

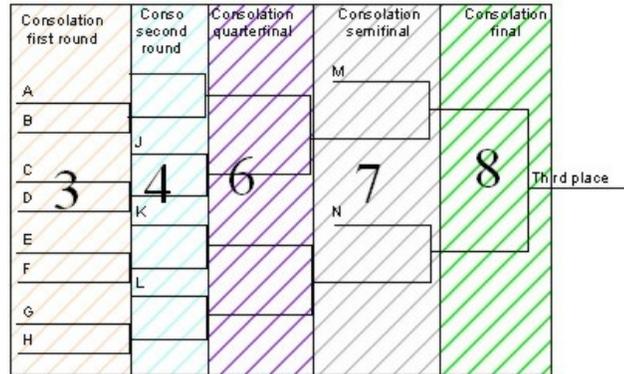
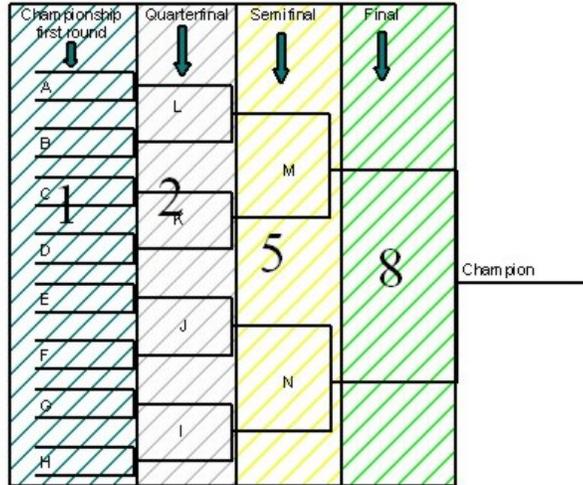
A "pigtail" match is a match which is appended to the first round matches. For example, if there are 17 contestants to be entered on a 16 person bracket, the 17th wrestler may be "pigtailed" onto the bracket.

The bracket illustrated above could be referred to as a 12 position bracket, or it could be referred to as an eight position bracket with four pigtails.

## Order of matches in a tournament

The order in which the various rounds are wrestled varies from tournament to tournament. One possible arrangement is depicted below:

- In this example...
- Tournament round
  - 1 - Championship first round
  - 2 - Championship quarterfinals
  - 3 - Consolation first round
  - 4 - Consolation second round
  - 5 - Championship semifinals
  - 6 - Consolation quarterfinals
  - 7 - Consolation semifinals
  - 8 - Championship and consolation finals

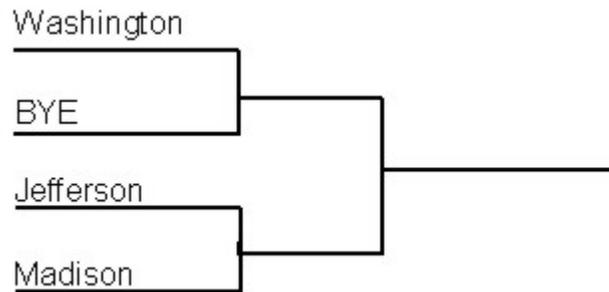


It is highly useful for tournament managers/scorers to keep careful track of the various rounds and the order in which they will be wrestled. For example, when results are received at the scorers table for the championship first round matches, this will generate pairings for both the championship quarterfinals (tournament round 2) and the consolation first round (tournament round 3) matches. If the bout cards for the next matches are filled out as results received, and kept in groups according to tournament rounds, it is much easier to keep things organized at the head table.

In addition, it is highly useful for the PA announcer to periodically announce for which round the "called out" matches are for. For example, if the PA announcer pages "On deck, Smith and Jones, consolation first round match," and it turns out that Smith has not lost a match yet, then it is immediately apparent that a bracketing error has been made and such error can be remedied before a bad match is wrestled. It is the tournament director's nightmare to learn near the end of the tournament that a wrestler has been "mis-bracketed" and has wrestled one or more matches in the wrong bracket.

## Round-robins

A round-robin is a tournament bracket in which every contestant meets every other contestant in turn. A round robin bracket is a modification of the tournament bracket made by mutual consent of those involved in the bracket. The National Federation rulebook makes no mention of round-robins in wrestling tournaments, and provides no rules for round-robins. As far as the National Federation is concerned, a bracket with three contestants would have one wrestler receiving a bye and advancing to the finals.



In practice, many youth/open tournament will convert brackets with 3 wrestlers into round-robins for the purpose of providing each wrestler with two matches for the tournament. If the above bracket were wrestled as a round-robin, Jefferson would wrestle Madison and Washington, and Madison would also wrestle Washington. (Three matches wrestled instead of two, each wrestler gets two matches).

It is quite possible for each wrestler to finish 1-1 on the day. (Washington defeats Jefferson, Jefferson defeats Madison, and Madison defeats Washington). In this event, how is the champion of the bracket determined?

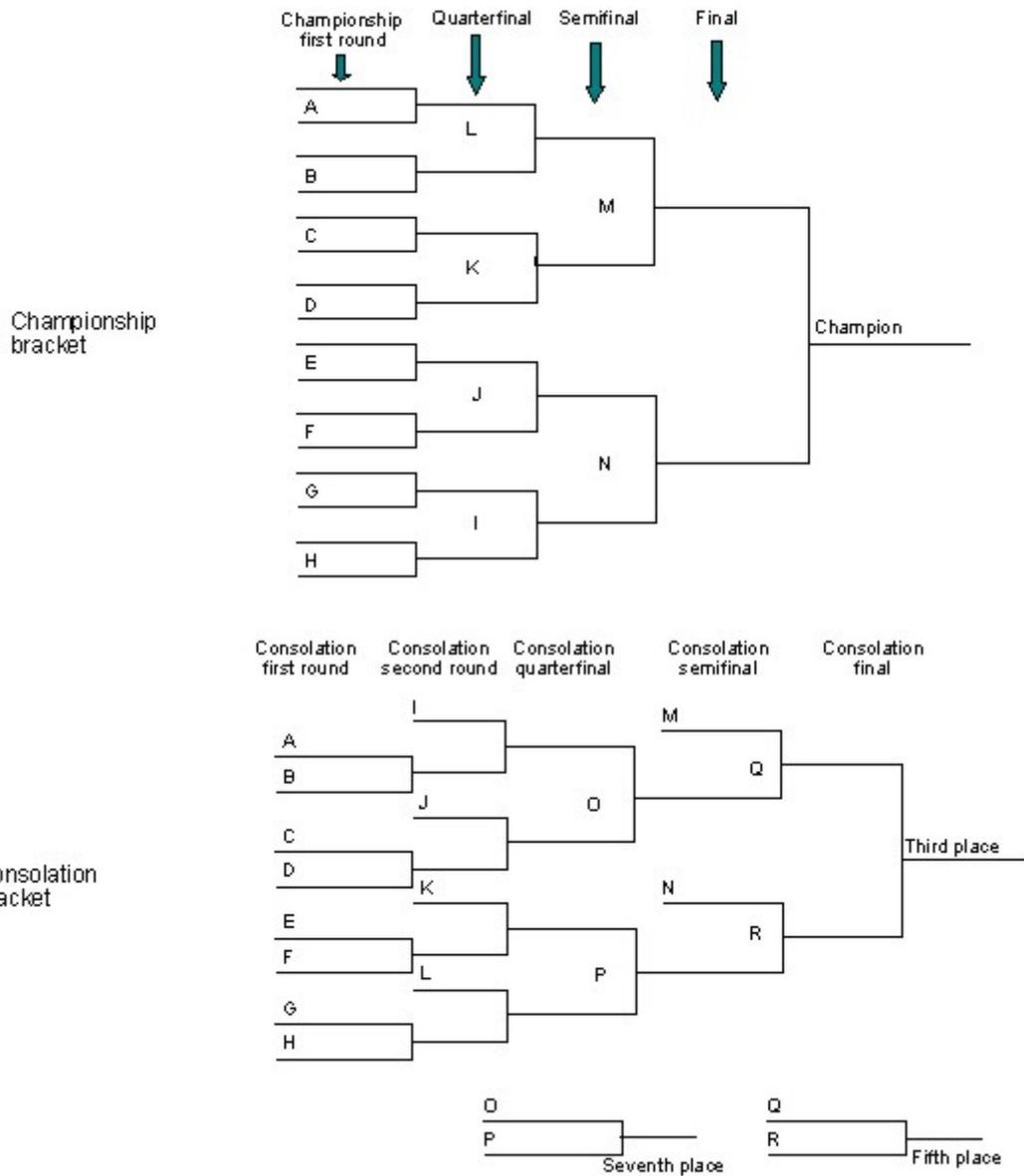
As noted, the National Federal rulebook does not address round-robins and provides no guidance in this regard. The prudent tournament director will have established criteria to decide results in round robins at the start of the tournament.

One possible set of criteria which could be utilized is derived from the National Federation rules regarding team-score tiebreakers in dual meets:

- The wrestler who has been penalized the fewest points for flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct will be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has won by fall shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has won by technical fall shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has won by major decision shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has scored the most "first points" on the day shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has scored the most points for near-falls on the day shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has scored the most takedowns on the day shall be declared the champion. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has scored the greatest number of reversals on the day shall be declared the winner. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has scored the greatest number of escapes on the day shall be declared the winner. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has been penalized the least for stalling on the day shall be declared the winner. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has been warned the least for stalling on the day shall be declared the winner. If still tied...
- The wrestler who has been penalized the least for any other reason on the day shall be declared the winner. If still tied...
- Flip a coin.

## Tournaments scoring six or eight places

Some tournaments will score six or eight places by adding additional matches in the finals such that loser of the consolation semifinals wrestle for fifth place, and loser of consolation quarterfinals wrestle for 7th place. Such bracket would look like this:



### Single elimination in the first (or subsequent) rounds

Some tournaments will specify that loser in the first (or subsequent) rounds are out of the tournament and that consolation brackets (or "double elimination") begins at a specified point in the tournament. This is done to accommodate a large number of wrestlers while keeping the tournament length to a manageable time limit.

The following bracket illustrates a 32 position tournament in which the first round in the championship bracket is single elimination - "first round losers out."

