

2026 DELTA CHI BRACKET CHALLENGE CHAPTER PLAYBOOK

This guide is designed to help chapter leaders and student participants successfully, plan, promote, and run their chapter's Delta Chi Bracket Challenge (DXBC). Use this as a step-by-step reference throughout post-tournament wrap-up.

WHAT IS THE DELTA CHI BRACKET CHALLENGE?

The Delta Chi Bracket Challenge is an national philanthropic event that combines the excitement of ESPN's The Big Dance with fundraising for [the V Foundation for Cancer Research](#). 100% of your donation helps the V Foundation fund the best and brightest scientists to accelerate Victory Over Cancer® and save lives.

WHY IT MATTERS

- You're raising money for pediatric cancer research
- You're creating fun, visible engagement on campus
- You're competing alongside chapters nationwide



Photo by:
Roger Winstead



HOW THE CHAPTER-TO-CHAPTER BRACKETS WORK

In addition to individual brackets, the Delta Chi Bracket Challenge includes chapter-based competition that puts chapters head-to-head throughout the tournament.

WHAT ARE THE RED & BUFF BRACKETS?

- Chapter's are placed into Red & Buff brackets similar to a The Big Dance style tournament
- Advancement is based on chapter fundraising performance, not basketball picks
- As the tournament progresses, chapters "advance" when they raise more than the chapter they are matched against
- Think of this as fundraising The Big Dance, where your dollars raised move your chapter forward

HOW ADVANCEMENT WORKS

- Each chapter starts in either a Red or Buff bracket (this will be the same division that your chapter is in when we give awards in the late spring/early summer)
- At designated checkpoints during the tournament
 - Fundraising totals are reviewed for accuracy
 - Chapters with higher totals advance to the next round
- Brackets continue to narrow until a Red & Buff Champion are crowned!
- Delta Chi IHQ Staff will update brackets regularly and share progress on social media and online

Note: Chapter advancement is based ONLY on fundraising totals, not basketball picks

WHAT YOUR CHAPTER SHOULD DO?

- Treat each matchup as a mini fundraising push
- Share messages like:
 - "Help us beat [Chapter Name] this round!"
 - "We're \$200 away from advancing, donate now!"
- Celebrate every advancement publicly on social media and in chapter communications
 - Be sure to tag the V Foundation (@thefoundation), Facebook (facebook.com/thefoundation) and TikTok (@thefoundation)

YOUR CHAPTER'S GOALS

- Before you begin, decide on what success looks like for your chapter
- Recommended goals:
 - Increase number of chapter participants
 - Increase on campus involvement
 - Raise money for the V Foundation's Dick Vitale Pediatric Cancer Research fund
 - Increase visibility of Delta Chi on campus

Tip: Write your chapter's specific goals down and share them with your executive board and members

KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PHILANTHROPY CHAIRMAN (OR EVENT LEAD)

- Serves as the primary organizer
- Tracks registration and fundraising
- Communicates timelines and expectations to chapter

TEAM CAPTAINS (OPTIONAL BUT ENCOURAGED)

- Recruit participants
- Promote the challenge in small groups
- Help keep excitement high throughout the tournament

TIMELINE: WHAT TO DO & WHEN

This timeline aligns directly with what Delta Chi IHQ will be sharing on social media during the challenge so how you promote this event will then align with your chapter's actions and what members and supporters are seeing nationally.

JANUARY – LAUNCH & AWARENESS

Theme: Tip-off for a Cause

Your Focus: Build excitement and understanding before brackets open.

What your chapter should do

- Announce your chapter's participation at a meeting or on social media
- Begin talking about why Delta Chi partners with the V Foundation
 - Focus on our shift in donating all dollars raised to the V Foundation's Dick Vitale Pediatric Cancer Research Fund
- Here's an excerpt from the V Foundation website that you can use to share how we support our partnership" to the following:
 - Since 2006, The Delta Chi Fraternity and the V Foundation for Cancer Research have worked together to fight cancer. Recognizing the prevalence of cancer among its own communities and the urgent need for research and cures, Delta Chi has raised more than \$2 million for the V Foundation to date. Delta Chi's fundraising efforts currently support the Dick Vitale Pediatric Cancer Research Fund at the V Foundation, helping to advance innovative childhood cancer research.

In total, the V Foundation has awarded over \$107.4 million in pediatric cancer research grants to the nation's top scientists. The V Foundation was founded in 1993 by ESPN and the late Jim Valvano, legendary North Carolina State University men's basketball coach and ESPN commentator. Valvano's "Don't Give Up...Don't Ever Give Up!"[®] spirit is alive now more than ever. With continued support, the V Foundation will continue to accelerate Victory Over Cancer[®] and save more lives.
- Plan at least one on-campus kickoff or visibility moment

How this connects to Delta Chi IHQ

- Delta Chi is publishing kick-off content and emails
- Early awareness helps your chapter stand out once registration opens

FEBRUARY – RECRUITMENT & EDUCATION

Theme: Get in the Game

Your Focus: Drive sign-ups and make participation feel easy

What your chapter should do

- Share the registration link weekly
- Promote the bracket your chapter belongs to (Red or Buff) to create some internal competition
- Use chapter meetings to walk members through how to sign up

How this connects to Delta Chi IHQ

- Social channels are highlighting how to join, why it matters, and prizes
- Your chapter promotion reinforces the same message locally

“DON'T GIVE UP...
DON'T EVER GIVE UP!”[®]

TIMELINE: WHAT TO DO & WHEN (CONTINUED)

MARCH – TOURNAMENT MONTH & ENGAGEMENT

Theme: The Big Dance Meets Meanings

Your Focus: Keep energy high and fundraising visible

What your chapter should do

- Host watch parties for Round of 64 or Sweet 16
- Share fundraising updated (ex: We've raised \$X so far!")
- Post photos and tag @DeltaChiIHQ and @thefoundation using #DXBracketChallenge

How this connects to Delta Chi IHQ

- Leaderboards and Red & Buff brackets are updated regularly
- Campus events give Delta Chi visible proof of impact

APRIL – CELEBRATION & STEWARDSHIP

Theme: Champions On & Off the Court

Your Focus: Keep energy high and fundraising visible

What your chapter should do

- Share final totals and thank participants publicly/through socials
- Highlight what the fund support through the V Foundation

How this connects across chapters

- Winners and totals are announced across Delta Chi platforms
- Strong stewardship builds momentum for future participation

HOW TO GET PEOPLE SIGNED UP

Make participation easy and visible.

BEST PRACTICES

- Use one clear registration link or QR code
- Table in high traffic areas
- Offer help sessions to get people to register
- Walk new participants through how the brackets work

The easier it is to sign up, the more participants you'll have



CAMPUS & CHAPTER ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

VISIBILITY

Kickoff event or bracket draft party

- Host during a chapter meeting or study hours
- Bring snacks or pizza and walk everyone through registering together
- Project the registration page on a screen during a meeting to help members sign up

Tabling or pop-up visibility

- Table for 1-2 hours in a high traffic area around campus with a QR code that links to the Bracket Challenge signup page
- Use a simple sign: Delta Chi Bracket Challenge – Benefitting the V Foundation, The Big Dance for a Cause – Scan to Join

Sidewalk chalk or flyer blitz

- Chalk short phrases like: “Beat Cancer. Build a Bracket.” Support the V Foundation or “\$10 = Big Impact”
- Post flyers with a QR code in approved campus locations

Social media takeovers

- Run a one-day Instagram story takeover showing:
 - Members building brackets, Fundraising totals climbing, Countdown reminders

SOCIAL EVENTS

Watch parties for major games

- Host in the chapter house, a lounge, or common space
- No formal programming needed - just food, games on TV, and a donation reminder

“Bracket Busting Night”

- Pick a high-upset game day
- Offer a small prize for the most “busted” bracket or biggest upset pick
- Use it as a reason to re-promote fundraising

Halftime fundraising push

- During a watch party, set a 15-minute fundraising goal
 - Example: “Let’s raise \$100 for the V Foundation before halftime ends!”

Mini teams meetups

- Encourage small groups (AM classes, Mentor groups, members with the same major or who play on the same sports team)
- Each mini-team sets a shared fundraising goal

INCENTIVES

First “X” number of people to register get:

- A chapter t-shirt
- Free food at the next chapter event
- Shoutout on social media

Small rewards for top performers

- \$5 coffee gift card
- Choice of icebreaker at chapter meeting
- Bragging rights

Chapter-specific leaderboard

- Weekly recognitions for:
 - Most money raised, Most donors recruited, Biggest fundraising jump

Tip: Recognition often motivates more than expensive prizes.

STORYTELLING & IMPACT

Don't just talk about brackets, talk about why this fundraiser matters.

WAYS TO SHARE IMPACT

- Post about how much money you've raised so far
- Share who the V Foundation supports:
 - Cancer is the leading disease-related cause of death among both children and adolescents
 - Of the National Cancer Institute's \$7.3 billion budget, less than 5% of it is directed to pediatric cancer
 - Private funding through organizations like the V Foundation has become a critical component of pediatric research support
 - The V Foundation has awarded over \$107 million in pediatric cancer research grants
 - The good news is cancer research is working! Since 1970, the cancer death rate has declined by 70% in children and by 63% in adolescents
- Highlight past success & participation
- Celebrate wins (big or small)

IMPORTANT DATES (MEN'S THE BIG DANCE)

Selection Sunday: March 15, 2026

First Four: March 17-18, 2026

Round of 64: March 19-20, 2026

Round of 32: March 21-22, 2026

Sweet 16: March 26-27, 2026

Elite Eight: March 28-29, 2026

Final Four: April 4, 2026

National Championship: April 6, 2026

TRACKING SUCCESS

Keep track of your progress throughout the event:

- Number of participants registered
- Total dollars raised
- Chapter engagement, participation and attendance
- Social media reach or interaction

Regular check-ins help you adjust strategies in real time

FINAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Start early and communicate often
- Make it fun and low-pressure
- Celebrate participation, not just winning
- Remember the purpose behind the event

You're not just running a bracket challenge; you're creating an experience that reflects Delta Chi's values.

Questions? Reach out to Emileigh Cockrum (ecockrum@deltachi.org) or your Officer Success Manager at Delta Chi IHQ for support.