Building Engaging Meetings on Digital Platforms
Designing Virtual Icebreakers

An icebreaker is an activity or game designed to welcome and start-up conversations among the meeting participants. Icebreakers create an interactive environment where attendees can get to know each other, learn about the objective of the meeting, and be able to engage deeper and contribute more throughout the meeting. However, not all meetings have the same objective. Use these guiding factors when designing your virtual icebreaker.

1 **Purpose**

Establish a purpose: Ask yourself what type of tension or environment are you trying to break? Are you introducing people to one another for the first time? Are you bringing people together from different teams or backgrounds within your League?

2 **Define**

Define your goals and objectives: Do you want people to learn more about one another or is there a specific objective you have in mind? For example, do you want to encourage people to brainstorm creatively about a problem or solve a specific problem?

3 **Comfort**

Game plan on how to help people feel comfortable: Your icebreaker will only meet its goal/objective if everyone feels they are in a safe environment to participate. Are there any obstacles that would prevent a participant from participating? Avoid activities that might potentially offend participants. Information can get "lost in translation" and humor is not universal especially in digital spaces.

4 **Time**

Timing will make or break your icebreaker: How much time do you have to spend? Do you want your icebreaker to be a quick 5-minute check-in or a more substantial activity? Consider the objective of the icebreaker and your participant's workload. Remember digital fatigue is real! Realistically how long can you maintain a certain level of engagement and participation?

5 **Technology**

Consider Technology: Establish your icebreaker format. Do your participants need to have video capabilities or will voice capabilities be enough to participate? Remember some participants may be camera shy, have poor internet connection, or only have access to one type of technology. Lastly, ensure your participants have the correct digital meeting invitation with detailed instructions.

6 **Frequency**

Choose your frequency: Is this icebreaker a one-off activity or is it a permanent feature in your meeting? Will you change the objective and format of the icebreaker each time? Are you going to use the same facilitator to lead the icebreaker or assign it to a different team member?

7 **Prep**

Always Prep in Advance: Decide how much information you will need to provide to participants beforehand? Is the icebreaker a surprise and there is a surprise element to it? For example, does your icebreaker require your participants to bring a personal item?