SEASON I · 2026–27 · UNDERWAY SINCE SEPTEMBER 29

Ohio Founders League

America's first statewide collegiate entrepreneurship league. What it is, how a season works, and where we are now.

Kevin Mackey, Founding League Commissioner · Founders League Institute

Ohio's best student founders leave. The League gives them a reason to stay.

Every year the strongest student ventures in Ohio graduate into somewhere else's ecosystem. A pitch competition rewards one afternoon and then ends. The Ohio Founders League is a season: eight months of building in public, scored on what founders actually do, with a statewide stage and real capital at the end of it.

A season, not a pitch night.

Register

Ten minutes. Founders do not pick their stage. The League places each venture from what exists today and compares it with ventures that started at the same stage.

Post weekly

One Weekly Update a week: a short update, follow-through on what you said you would do, and three key metrics. Missing a week never costs points; it just earns nothing.

Move up

Seven stages. Each ends with a stage review: a League official reviews the venture's six proofs together before it moves up.

Compete

Six weeks of league play from January 15. An independent Selection Committee names 36, 12 per region, for three Regional Championships. Selection Sunday names the final ten. One State Champion on May 19, 2027.

Season I, and where we are today.



The season opened on September 29, 2026. We are in Practice, October 1 to January 15: founders and Scouts are registering, with no cutoff and no selection. Season One League begins January 15, 2027, when league play opens to the full field.

$575,000 in non-dilutive capital.

$500,000

To the State Champion, crowned live on May 19, 2027.

3 × $25,000

To each Regional Champion: Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland, March 9 to 11, 2027.

No equity, ever

Prizes are grants. The League takes no equity, warrants, revenue share, or any other interest in any venture.

Scored on what founders do.

Traction Score

One scoring system, the matrix: seven stages by six lanes. Founders earn points by finishing challenges, posting a Weekly Update, and reporting revenue. Every point lands in a lane, and the six lane totals add up to the Traction Score. A League official reviews each stage.

League Scoring

Independent judges, six published criteria, each a Conviction Ranking from 1 to 10. The six criteria are the six lanes of the matrix. The Selection Committee ranks the record; championship panels rank the pitch. Scouts are not part of the score. No crowd vote decides money.

The whole campus plays.

Founders

Any undergraduate or graduate student enrolled full time at a founding university, or a graduate within the past 12 months if founded while enrolled. Student-led, majority student ownership. Any type except life sciences in Season I.

Scouts

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni pick five ventures and score the points those ventures earn. No money involved. Scouts publish profiles so founders can find help.

Campus leads

One per university. Registers ventures, reaches out to self-registered founders, reviews, and keeps founders reporting. Every step logged in MyCampus.

Ten founding universities.



Ohio State, Case Western Reserve, Cincinnati, Dayton, Miami, Akron, Baldwin Wallace, Bowling Green, Youngstown State, and Tiffin. One leaderboard across all ten.

What a founding university gets, and gives.

GETS

- Lasting recognition as a founding member of America's first collegiate entrepreneurship league
- Statewide visibility across a season of coverage
- A recruiting and fundraising story for leadership
- A seat on the University Advisory Council
- A reason for its best builders to stay in Ohio

COMMITS TO

- A $5,000 annual founding membership fee
- A campus lead
- Getting its strongest ventures registered and reporting
- In-kind support: event space, marketing reach
- Amplifying the announcement and the season

The platform: three portals, one leaderboard.

MyVenture

Founders: dashboard, Weekly Update, Your Matrix, leaderboard, and a searchable directory of Scouts who want to help.

Scout

Portfolio, Find ventures with every venture, its score and momentum, profiles, intros, messaging, and the Scout leaderboard.

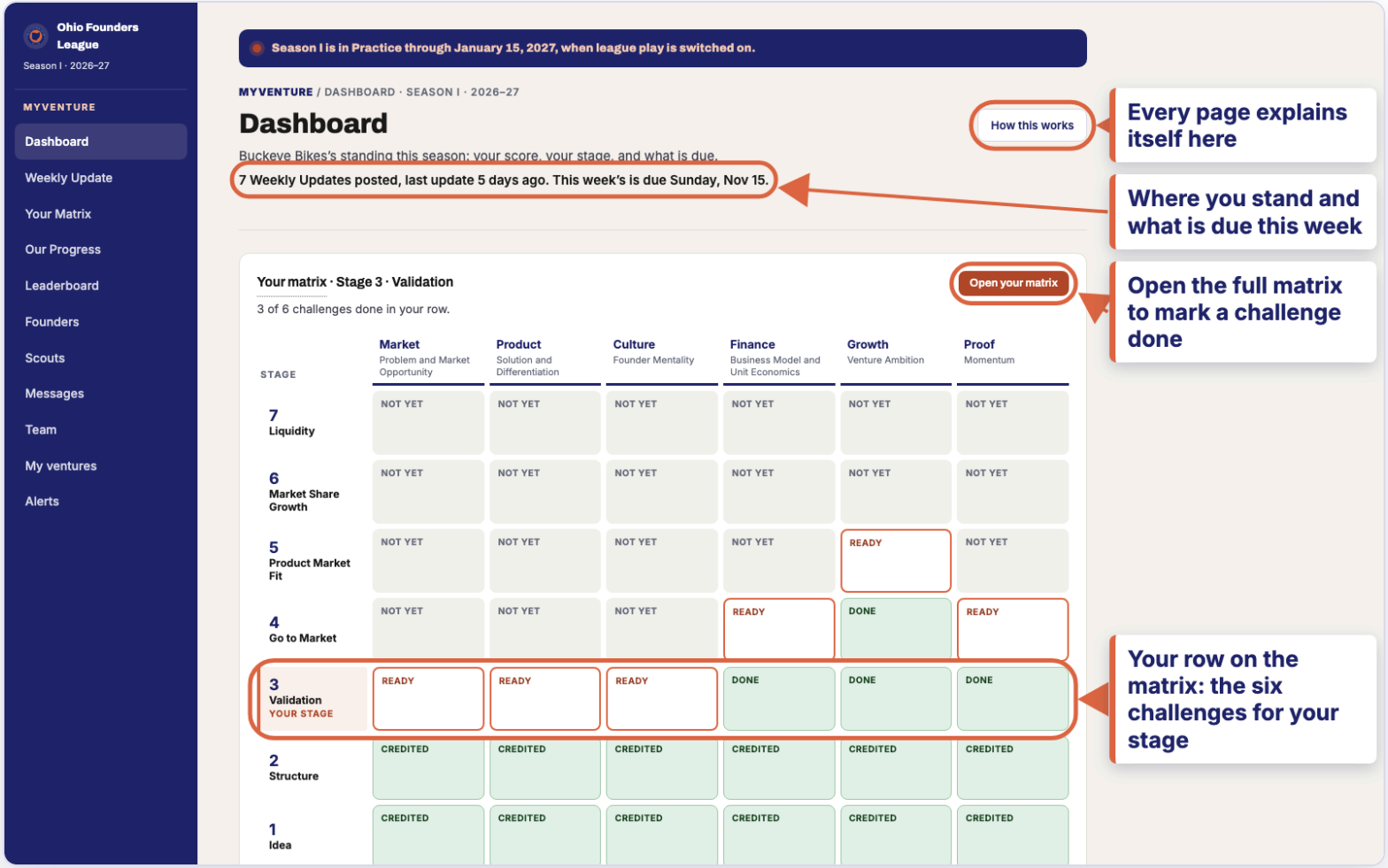
MyCampus

Every venture from the university, the outreach workflow, the ventures the campus stands behind, campus Scouts, and campus points among the ten.

Guides, printable playbooks, and narrated walkthroughs for every role are at ohiofoundersleague.org/learn.

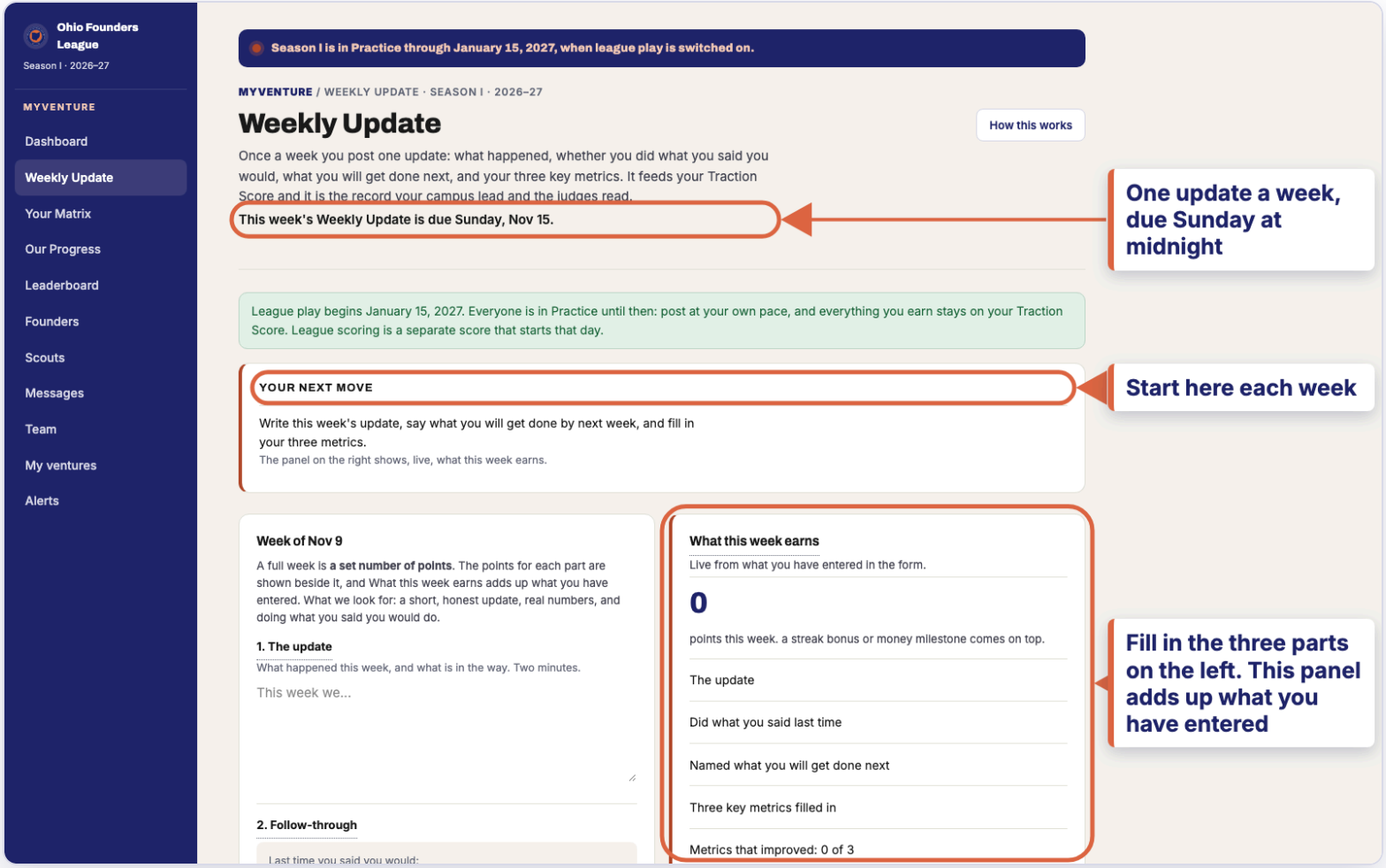
MyVenture: the founder's dashboard

What a founder sees on signing in: where they stand, what is due this week, and their row on the matrix. Every page explains itself.



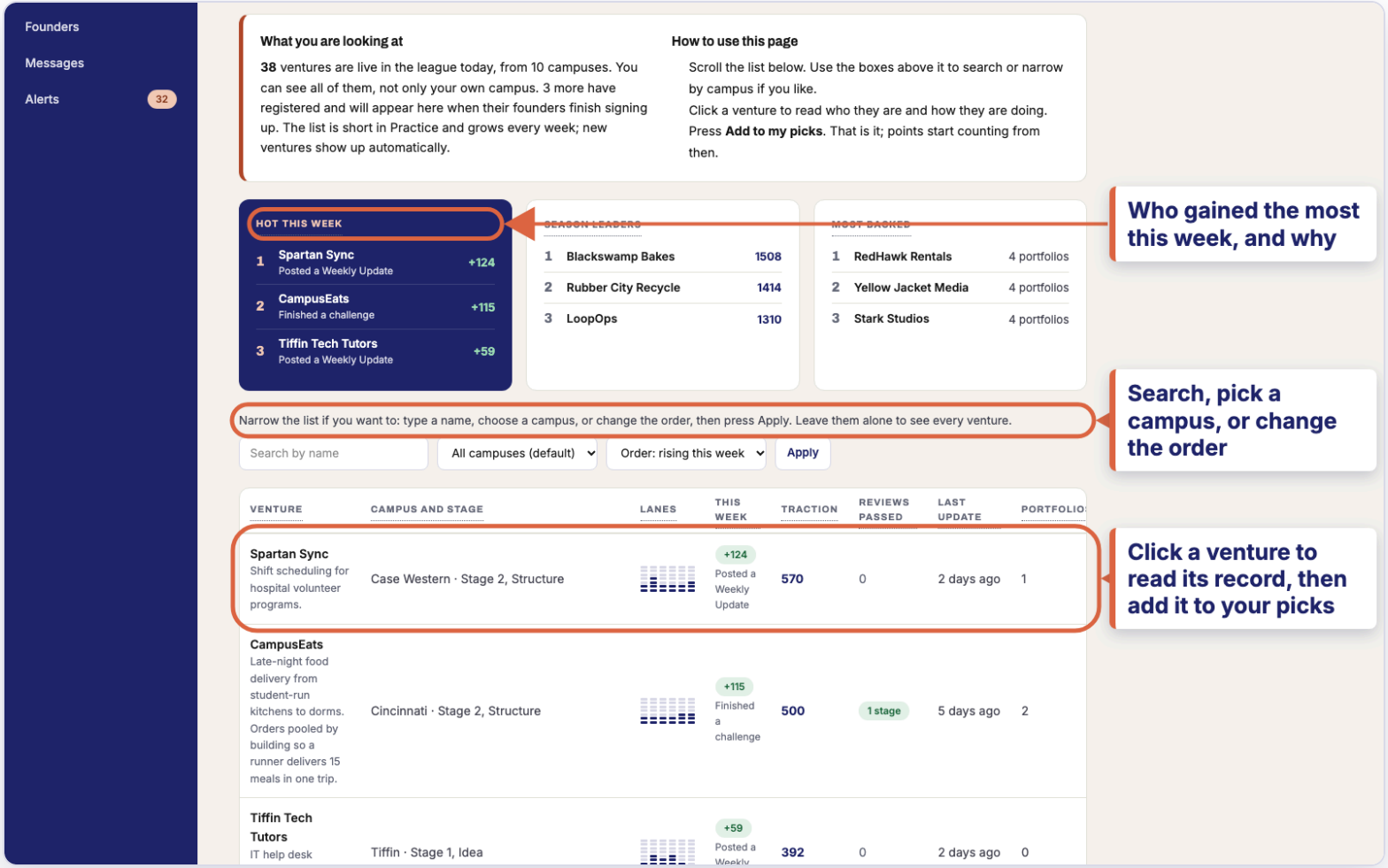
The Weekly Update

One post a week, due Sunday at midnight: a short update, follow-through on last week's commitment, and three key metrics. A live panel adds up what has been entered.



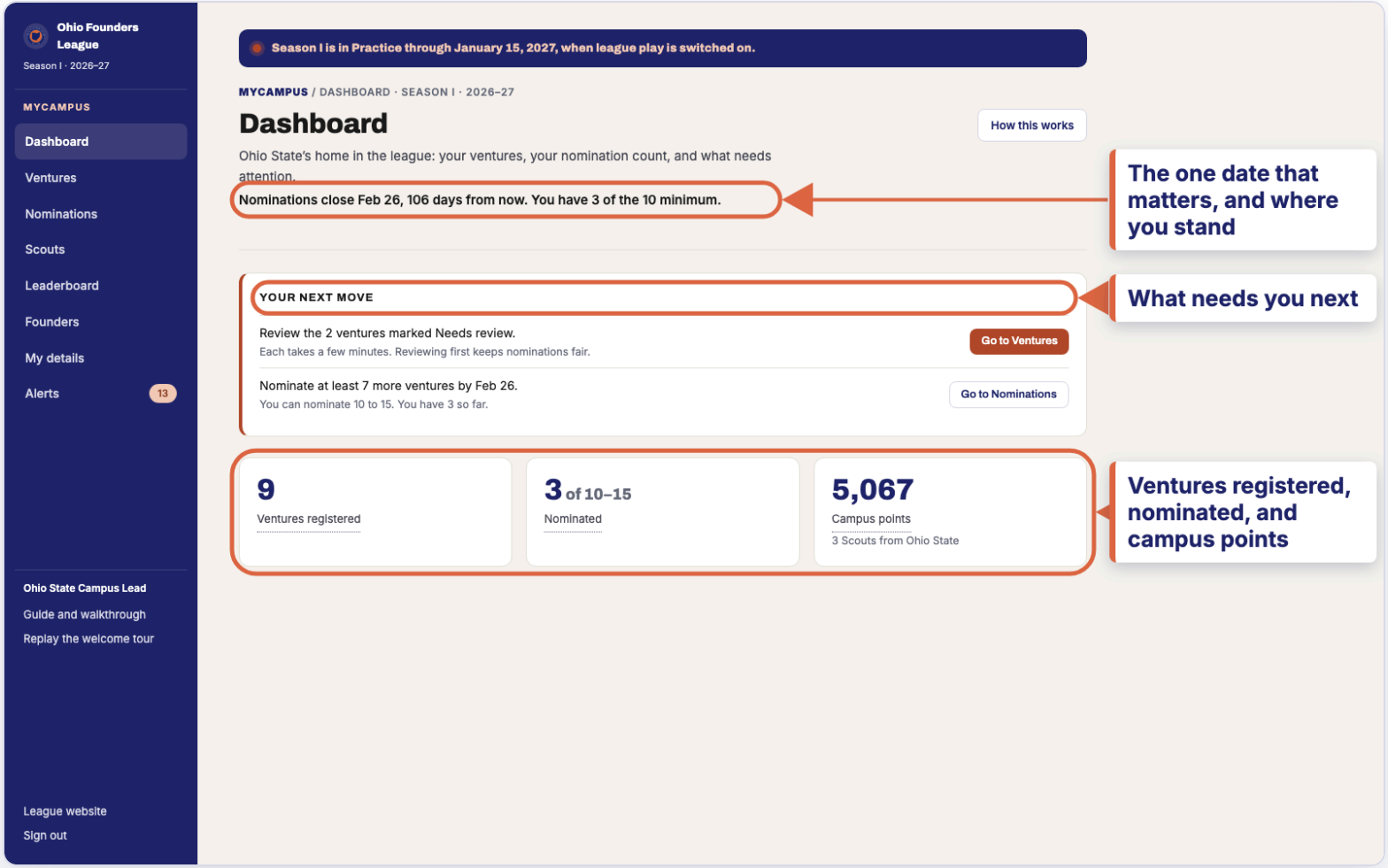
Scout: Find ventures

Scouts see every live venture from every campus, who gained the most this week and why, and can read a venture's record before adding it to their five picks.



MyCampus: the campus lead's dashboard

A campus lead sees the date that matters, what needs them next, and three numbers: ventures registered, ventures nominated, and campus points.



What happens between now and May.

Oct 1 to Jan 15

Practice. Registration and outreach. The record each founder starts now carries into league play.

Jan 15 to Feb 28

Season One League begins. Six weeks of live scoring and Weekly Updates. One update by February 26 puts a venture in the pool. February 28: the Selection Committee names the 36, 12 per region.

Mar 9 to 14

Regional Championships in Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland, $25,000 each. Selection Sunday: the committee names the final ten.

Mar 15 to May 19

The ten finalists build on. Scores freeze May 5. State Champion crowned May 19.

Get involved.

The season site
ohiofoundersleague.org

Founders: register
ohiofoundersleague.org/venture/register

Scouts: register
ohiofoundersleague.org/scout/register

Kevin Mackey · Founding League Commissioner · hello@ohiofoundersleague.org