

COLLEGE WOMEN'S ULTIMATE



RESOURCES MANUAL

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About This Project

Michelle Ng

I had been playing ultimate for just over a year when I was voted captain of UC Berkeley in May 2005. I could barely throw a forehand, five of our best players were going abroad for the fall season, and my co-captain had been playing for about six months longer than I had. I had captained the boys' varsity baseball team in high school, but dealing with an emotional team of girls was not something I had much experience with. To state the obvious, I had no idea what I was doing. I went home from that team meeting and immediately did three things—I bought *Ultimate Techniques and Tactics*, signed up for summer league, and begged my way onto a local club team. I spent the next three months immersing myself in every form of ultimate I could find.

The season that followed was one of the most challenging and rewarding seasons I have ever been a part of. While the season ended with two heartbreaking losses in games-to-go, I have been on few teams as tight-knit and supportive as the 2006 Pie Queens. I also learned a lot about myself as both a player and a leader.

I went on to play for the University of Texas Melee the following year, losing in another game-to-go, which motivated me in a whole new way. I threw away plans to do graduate research abroad to captain the team in 2008, helping lead the team back to Nationals, including a dominant run at South Regionals where no one scored double digits against us. The 2008 college season was an emotionally charged one, with more downs than ups, but I learned more about myself as a leader than I have in any other single season.

I am now captaining my third season of club ultimate. Every single captaining experience has taught me new lessons and has made me wish I could somehow capture everything I've learned in a "how-to guide" for younger captains. Learning by doing can get you so far, but for me at least, learning from my friends and teammates has gotten me further than would ever have been possible on my own. It's also made me realize how much more I have to learn.

As a young player, I idolized leaders like Gwen Ambler, Chelsea Putnam, and Miranda Roth, who all led college and/or club teams in my region. I had fantastic coaches like Joanne Adamkewicz, Nathalie Guimard, and Cara Crouch, who challenged me to no end. And last but not least, friends like Pooja Shah and Courtney Kiesow pushed me to be a better captain with their endless commitment and dedication to their own respective teams.

This manual is not by any means intended to be an authoritative guide on how to be a better captain. It is, however, a collection of articles from people who have played, coached, and captained at the highest level of this sport. These people have generously donated their time to participate in this project, and we all hope that you, as the next generation of college women's ultimate players and leaders, continue pushing our sport to the next level.

Thanks for reading and thank you for everything you do for our sport as the coaches, captains, and leaders of your various college teams. I'm sure you don't hear this nearly often enough, but your hard work and dedication are much appreciated.

Acknowledgments

Michelle Ng

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family for all of their support. My mom and dad have been my biggest fans, from letting me go to grad school to play ultimate to flying to College Nationals to watch me play in lieu of forcing me to go to graduation. My brothers, who spent endless hours shagging fly balls while I took batting practice growing up, graciously made the transition to my new sport, tagging along with me to pickup and running down my errant throws when I was trying to learn how to throw a forehand. I love you guys.

INTRODUCTION / INSPIRATION

Why Play Ultimate?

Alisha Kramer

"Ultimate is a refreshing reminder of what sport was meant to be, and on a rare occasion, still can be."
—Howard Cosell

When I think back on the time I have spent playing ultimate frisbee, a few words stand out more than others when characterizing my experience: joyful contentment, supported challenges, embracing community. There is something serene and powerful about playing ultimate, which I believe comes from an emphasis on the development of a player's mental game. It is this seamless interweaving of the individual's preparedness and the coming together of the team as a whole that enables me to maintain my inner, meditative zone while channeling the intensity and drive of the team.

In approaching my sixth year of playing ultimate frisbee, it is so clear to me the ways in which ultimate—the sport, the people, the training—has influenced my life, undoubtedly, for the better. A gymnast and a basketball player, I was convinced to play ultimate my freshman year of high school by an upperclassman (to whom I am forever indebted). Little did I know Paideia High School had already left one of many everlasting impressions. It started on the playground in sixth grade. Our gym teacher, who to me will always be the father of my ultimate experience, Michael Baccarini, introduced me and my friends to a circular bit of flying plastic. My group of eight friends took to the game playing everyday on the wood chips of our playground. We even gave ourselves the name "the ultimate people." But ultimate swung in and out of my life with no real continuation (to make a bad pun). It was not until high school that I really began to move downfield, and I guess I can say it just flowed pretty naturally from there.

I was one of those players who was gifted with athleticism but plagued by an inexplicable inability to complete a pass. I remember my mom asking me, "Alisha, you are such an athlete, why in the world can't you throw?" Good question, mom. Thus began many freezing throwing sessions with Michael Baccarini on the perpetually yellow fields of Python Park during the freezing preseason winters of Atlanta, Georgia. This is yet another reason why ultimate has found a permanent spot in my heart; there is always a coach or teammate who is willing to and enjoys helping you out whether you need serious help with throws (in my case), a training buddy to run stadiums with, or a friend to toss with on a beautiful day. The ultimate teams that I have had the privilege of being a part of have been the most supportive, fun-loving, and dedicated communities, and I am sure many would agree with me. In my application to the U.S.A Junior National Team I wrote, "I am pushing myself to my absolute limit of physical and mental endurance because I know all of my teammates are doing the same, and we are all doing it for each other."

What do I value above all else about ultimate? It is without a doubt the people and the community. I cannot help but feel an intense outpouring of warmth and love for all of the teammates I have played with on the field and those I trained with off the field. But the amazing aspect of the sport and the defining feature, which I believe distinguishes it from all other high school sports are the friendships that are made with the opponent.

Now as the captain of Georgetown University's the Huckin' Foyas, I see how quickly new players take to the sport in the same way as I did. The community, the spirit, the simple love of the game work their magic every time as I see college women discover the joy of playing ultimate. So why should we cultivate and grow women's ultimate? It seems pretty obvious to me. When my teammates at Georgetown say, "If only my high school had had an ultimate team...." I could not agree with them more.

BLU Magic (UCLA's Story)

Jamie Nuwer and Alex Korb

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The UCLA women's team started out with all the components of a teenage sports movie. They had a Las Vegas blonde who wore make-up to practice, a girl with a turban, a stoic Russian gymnast, a Southern belle with a Texas drawl, and a contemplative superstar. They were scrappy and athletic, running and tossing like they were playing soccer or basketball. They didn't know how to stack or cut, or even how to throw. Luckily, three experienced graduate students soon joined them, including a former Stanford captain.

As a first year team, Bruin Ladies Ultimate (BLU), with eighteen rookies and only three veterans, reached the game-to-go at Regionals, and missed out on Nationals by two points. During their season they qualified for the highly competitive Stanford Invite and beat some of the country's best squads. While BLU didn't make Nationals, their experience provides some helpful insights that will benefit almost any new or existing team.

Any school can field a good team, just by doing the things that good teams do. Being a great team requires a considerable amount of luck, a particular alignment of stars, but being a good team requires only hard work directed in the proper fashion.

The first step is recruiting. Early on you want as many people as possible; you never know who will turn out to be the next superstar. Go to the freshman activities fair, set up a cool website, post fliers. Make practices fun and challenging, and people will come back with friends.

Emphasize fundamentals: throwing, catching, and running hard. In the fall spend some practice time on throwing to supervise the freshmen's fledgling forehands. Encourage everyone to throw frequently outside of practice; remind them that throwing is fun.

In December, UCLA drove down to San Diego for their first tournament as a team. They won decisively against other new teams, and lost some close games. They also experienced their first loss to Claremont (#19).

Becoming a good team is a decision to which the whole team must commit. Before the spring season starts have a team meeting to discuss goals for the season. Get a coach if you can, and choose leaders whose views are consistent with the team's goals. UCLA chose to emphasize positive attitudes, having fun while remaining competitive and continuing to improve. They aimed for a top three finish at Regionals. They adopted a training schedule of three mandatory practices per week plus a track workout. Several good players ended up dropping out, but in building a team dedication is more important than skill.

Track workouts are essential. As a team sweats and struggles together, they grow stronger physically, mentally and as a team. Work hard from the beginning of the season. Many teams don't get inspired to push themselves until April. By then it's too late.

Attend as many tournaments as possible. BLU attended eight tournaments from January to May. Not all schools have these opportunities in the winter, but they can play in more fall tournaments.

Early in the season place less emphasis on winning and more on playing well and improving. BLU didn't always win, but always played hard. You won't always win the game, or the point, but there is always the possibility of winning the moment. Focus on the moment and the rest will fall into place.

At New Year's Fest, on the sun-baked fields of Tempe, Arizona, UCLA lost repeatedly but continued to learn from their elite competition. Late Sunday morning they took half against Colorado (#16), but lost 13-15.

The next weekend, at the Stanford Invite Qualifier, they battled through eight games to face UCSB (#20) in the game-to-go (to the Stanford Invite). They had already lost to the Santa Barbara in pool play. In their ninth game of the weekend BLU came out strong, and after a tight defensive battle pulled away to win.

As the season progresses maintain focus and intensity. Keep practices well organized. Do drills that focus on skills the team needs to work on, and give individual feedback. Run hard.

Good teams have strong sidelines that talk and help out and cheer. Intensity on the sidelines keeps you in the game. Even if you don't feel excited or confident, just pretend and it will come. UCLA came in to the Stanford Invite as the 16 seed and their sidelines kept them close against MIT (#5), and Penn St (#35). The sidelines made the difference in the pre-quarters against Brown (#14). As a thick Palo Alto fog lifted, so the sidelines lifted BLU to a 10-7 lead. The sidelines held them steady as Brown mounted a comeback, and UCLA won by one at the time cap. They finished the tournament in 11th place, tied with Claremont.

Towards the end of the season resist the urge to cram in a lot of new information. Trust that the players know enough and review. You don't have to know everything to do well in the College Series; you just need fundamentals, conditioning and a desire to leave your hearts on the field.

BLU finished third at sectionals. They lost to Claremont by three, beat UCSB by six, and played very well against an impressive UCSD (#4). Both BLU and Claremont lost to UCSD 13-5.

For the next two weeks practices remained intense. Then UCLA tapered the week before Regionals to a light-hearted, costumed, practice on Friday. After practice the team discussed the excitement and anxiety that everyone felt. The possibility of the season ending is a tough prospect to face. Talking about it relieves some of the stress.

At Southwest Regionals the top two teams advanced to Nationals. UCLA lost to Claremont in pool play 10-7, and to UCSD in the semis. They beat Arizona (#56) and then faced Colorado in the backdoor finals. As the wind picked up BLU went down a break, but battled back to go up 9-7. Colorado tied the game at 9s, but BLU endured and won 10-9 at the time cap.

Now only Claremont stood between UCLA and Nationals. Claremont, coming off a bye, went up 4-1, but UCLA managed to take half. After halftime, Claremont scored three quick goals to go up 10-8 as the soft cap went on. BLU dug deep and tied it at 10s. Claremont scored. BLU received the pull and flowed up the field. Just outside the endzone a tired thrower attempted to connect with a tired receiver and the disc flew just out of reach. Turnover. Claremont marched down the field to the layout grab for the score. Season over.

BLU cried and hugged and drove home disappointed. The next day they gathered at the practice field to eat strawberry shortcake and throw. As the days passed and the sting of losing decreased, they scrimmaged and played Frisbee golf, and realized that losing the game-to-go isn't losing everything.

In any group of athletes there exists the potential for a good team. No matter how hard you work no one can guarantee you a spot at Nationals; there is always some amount of luck. But, with the focus on improving and playing well you can uncover the magic in the team, and that will stay with you forever.

From Marmalade to Full On Mêlée (University of Texas' Story)

Amanda Berens

Many of us in “developed” ultimate communities may not remember how it all began.

This article takes a look back on how one women’s college ultimate program started and progressed. The story will not be an exact “how to” but it should bring up some milestones consistent to many women’s teams in their quest to become an elite program.

Our team (University of Texas Mêlée) started like many others- first as a single woman playing on the open college team, and then four or five women who would join with other half teams to participate in tournaments. The team of four eventually became a team of eight by picking up girlfriends of open players, girls who had crushes on the open players, and the random passerby who happened to find the sport interesting. I was maybe the 6th player on the team and of the first category. Other well-known players such as Nazish Waliany (her “hot TA” told her about the team) and Cara Crouch (just randomly interested) started around the same time.

To get from eight to fourteen took some work: recruiting at the university gym, hanging fliers, hosting beginner clinics on a patch of grass in the middle of campus. To say we had a full fourteen may be an overstatement. Our team that year included a player who had never cut her hair in her life and wore it down and untied to the back of her knees, and another who only wore black jeans, chains, and black slip-on Vans when she played. So the next question was, how do we become competitive? How do we take this group of ragtag bookworms and transform it into a legitimate women’s ultimate program? Here were our steps:

Step One: Men- You can’t live with them, you can live without them. It was a dark and dreary day when the captains of our university’s open team, then called Slut, told us that they no longer wanted to be organized together as one club under the University’s RecSports Division. Rather quickly, they started making separate travel arrangements and no longer included us in their scheduling and budgetary plans. We had to get organized; we wrote our own by-laws (required by the University), elected officers to run different aspects of the team, and arranged our own tournaments and fundraising events. We made major headway that year with recruitment and attended our first ever flying tournament. Separating from our men’s team was entirely necessary for organizational purposes, but more importantly for our own psyche. We learned how to support and depend on each other as a team and garner energy and motivation from the inside, instead of out.

Step Two: Learning to compete on the field. Competing is a more complicated issue for women than it is men. I was lucky in that all of my years on Mêlée were very constructive and loving, but this brought certain behavior to the field that may have delayed our growth. We were a bit too supportive (i.e. downplaying our aggressiveness) and nice (i.e. apologizing for making contact). Other teams have the opposite problem where a disagreement or jealousy and competition on the field are taken off the field. This can lead to the degradation of personal relationships important for team trust and growth, and eventually to the breakup of the team. Due to a succession of good coaches (Mary McDowell, Kid Hammond, Scott Berens) and involvement from the simultaneously developing women’s club program, Mêlée started to grow up. By my last season we had learned how to compete against each other at practice at our highest level, without unnecessary drama.

Step Three: From team to established program. Mêlée continued to elect organized and capable new captains who strived to be personable and welcoming to new recruits. As the number of interested young players grew, making cuts became the natural next progression. Captains and leaders had to learn to make cuts without letting friendships or non-friendships falsely color their observations of each player. It is a learning process and the selection method is continually evolving and improving. Now, the University of Texas has a consistently competitive A team and skill-fostering B team. The Mêlée graduates, as well as alum from other Texas universities, feed the all-Texas

women's club team, Showdown. Veterans from Showdown are involved with M     and SkyU (Texas A&M) as coaches, trainers, and fans. The entire Texas college/club system has graduated into what I call an established program, similar to the Emory/University of Georgia/Ozone and Berkeley/Stanford/Fury systems. Being an established program does not mean that our club and college teams will never have a bad year, but simply that we are here to stay and will consistently be nationally competitive.

From Team to Program (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's Story)

Lindsey Hack

In the fall of 2004, UNC-CH had approximately 40 interested players come out to "tryouts." By October, only 20-25 remained on the team. What happened to those 15-20 players? Where did they go? Why were they not playing for Pleiades?

In the spring of 2002, UNC-CH earned a bid to the UPA College National Championships in Spokane, Washington. This was UNC-CH's first appearance at Nationals and they advanced to quarters. UNC-CH would not return to the UPA College National Championship again until 2008. The program would again return in 2009, improving on the 2008 performance. 2010 looks favorable to return to the National stage again, even after losing >50% of the 2009 roster. How is this possible?

PROGRAM

Teams will come and go, programs are forever.

In the fall of 2005, Pleiades began the quest to form a B team. It was evident that many, many young women were coming out to be a part of something meaningful and were disappearing in the fall. The best explanation we could come up with was lack of opportunity for play. If only one team exists, and only seven people play on the field at a time, how can a team really take 40+ players? Truth? It can not. The young women that came out to try ultimate recognized this, could not find their niche, and continued on elsewhere. Forming a B team became the answer to this problem, but we wanted to make sure that the idea that we were a program, not two separate teams, stuck.

Over the past few years, where a B team has existed, we have tried to do the little things that actually are quite huge to demonstrate we are a program. We operate under one listserv, our B team is also named Pleiades, we make attempts to invite both teams to social events and at tournaments both teams support one another. Now even though we have made extraordinary attempts to remain one program, there have been a few times where the B team has felt like the A team has left them behind. And, it never fails that an intervention is necessary because the B team threatens to go its separate way and players on the B team that are ready for the A team swear to stay with the B team. So, we meet and find ways to make sure we are connecting with each other again, and it is essential that those players who are threatening to stay on the B team understand the consequences of their actions as much as it is important that players on the A team do not develop an elitist complex.

The B team was created to give opportunity for play for all women. If we have a player who is good enough for the A team, but remains on the B team for a reason that is controllable, that player is taking away play time from a B team player that needs it. And, we just do not mean points, but also position. There are some B team players that were placed on the B team because although they were good enough to play somewhere on the A team, they needed to be on the B team to get the touches. On the A team, it would have been difficult for them to develop simply because of lack of touches on the disc and level of comfort with the disc is crucial to developing a young ultimate player. Therefore, if we have B team players staying on the B team longer than they should, they are taking away that opportunity for those types of players to develop as they are taking their touches.

Playing competitive sports helps create strong female leaders. In the co-ed environment (school, sports teams, etc) it is difficult for some women to find their inner leader. Not all women, but some. The single sex sport environment gives women the opportunity to develop that trait like no other sector in our society. That is one of the reasons why it is so important to create this opportunity for play for women at the collegiate level.

Our A and B teams buy into that and play ultimate to be a part of our program. I believe because we have maintained a program attitude, instead of two teams, we have experienced continued success.

Our B team allows individual and team develop for young players who would have gotten lost on the A team, possibly never developed their disc skills, and worse yet, left the team before realizing their potential. Since we have developed this B team, it does not matter how many players we graduate from the A team because the program is strong and does not rely on a few players. Therefore, I believe, UNC-CH women's ultimate is here to stay.

Out of the Cow Pastures and into Glory – A Lesson in Self-Confidence (UC Davis' Story)

Alicia Barr

The year was 2004, the setting was the UPA College Championships Women's Final. On one side we have Carleton College: a consistent powerhouse in the game of ultimate, and the home of superstar and Callahan winner Miranda Roth. On the other side we have UC Davis. Wait, who? At least that's what everyone else was thinking. In the previous 14 years of ultimate, UC Davis had made exactly 1 appearance at College Nationals. Only 3 of those women were still on the team, and they were all freshman at the previous trip. Most teams at the tournament had probably never heard of UC Davis. Yet at the end of the day, UC Davis came out on top as National Championships.

It would have been easy to be intimidated by the sheer grandeur of the tournament. All of these top teams from all of the country – most of which we had never played – many with previous National titles of their own. But here we were, a bunch of “country bumpkins” from the agricultural powerhouse known as UC Davis. We often practiced on the “Dairy Fields”, on which if the wind was just right, wreaked of cow manure.

The reason we were able to come out on top was simple. We believed in ourselves. It would have been easy to come into the tournament and just fold on the first day with all of the pressure and excitement. However, we stuck to fundamentals. We knew our offense was solid – we didn't come out on top of the Northwest Region for nothing. We also believed in all of the hard work we had put into conditioning and defense. The game is all about running, catching, and throwing. We know if we continued to put those three all together like we had the rest of the season, we would be fine.

We also did our homework. We knew what players to watch and what had made other teams successful in getting where they were. They say the game is 95% mental, and nowhere is that more true than at Nationals. However, just because you haven't been there before doesn't mean you can't be mentally prepared for it. You know who's going to be there, and you know how they got there. More importantly, you know how YOU got there. Go into each game with a solid plan. Know what players you need to have smart defensive match-ups on. Know what kind of defenses they are going to throw at you, and what your offense needs to do to be successful against those. Also be ready to throw that plan out the window if things aren't working. Always be ready to come back to the three fundamentals: running, catching, and throwing. Sometimes that's just what you need to get you back into the groove.

Especially if you are a young team, or a relatively new program, you will find yourself in many new and unfamiliar situations. You can't let that intimidate you. Whether it's a new tournament site, new weather conditions to play in, a team that you've never played before, it doesn't matter. The game still comes down to three things: running, catching and throwing. Believe in yourself and your teammates, and the work that you've put in to get you to where you are. In the end, an ultimate field on a cow pasture is the same as an ultimate field at Nationals, or anywhere else. It's the same size, it's most likely on grass, and you're surrounded by the same teammates that you've been running and throwing and catching with all season. It really can be that simple.

The Gritty Culture of a Small Team

Susan “Batch” Batchelder

Grit

At the turn of the century, I attended a rural, isolated school, not so unlike the one you might attend right now. Let’s put this in perspective. At the beginning of my college tenure, practices were laid-back, coed, and didn’t require shoes. The idea of a “track workout” didn’t occur to us and a B team wasn’t close to an option. I played many tournaments savage with at least one woman that didn’t understand the force.

After college in Vermont, I moved to the Bay Area, a frisbee mecca. I joined a club team and realized how different college ultimate was for many of my teammates. Coaches? B teams? Dynasties? Track workouts? You didn’t hang out with the men’s team? You didn’t go to the parties?

I could list many traditions and experiences that made my college team so wonderful, but replicating that magic isn’t my intention. Streaking and wearing pink isn’t for everyone, but I do want you to realize the potential you have at your disposal. I could write pages on subbing or fitness or recruiting, but that isn’t what sets you apart as a team.

Your culture is what sets you apart. Stanford may have world-class coaches and a C team, but ladies, you’ve got something else all together. You make your team happen and you scrap things together with ingenuity, luck and creativity. This may seem a heavy burden at times, but there is a beautiful byproduct of your efforts. I call it grit. I call it scrappiness. I call it heart.

Don’t forget it.

Nurture it.

Feed off of it.

You have this brand of girt, this dirt under you nails that only comes from making your team happen yourself. You and your teammates have committed to getting seven beautiful, ragged women on the line to run their butts off. This is what ultimate is all about.

You may not have endless resources at your disposal. Please don’t bemoan this. Rather, relish the fact that you have so much grit under you fingernails, gathered while creating your team, streaking the quad, and getting layout blocks.

Invite your opponents to think you need a manicure, for it is with those very hands that you will surprise them with hand blocks, huge grabs, and warrior hearts.

VISION / GOAL SETTING

Leadership Fundamentals

Sarah “Surge” Griffith

When I graduated, I left the incoming captains at Michigan with a “captain’s guide,” which contained an approximately monthly break-down of administrative tasks, a list of important contacts, and four main points of general guidance. Basically I approached it from the perspective of things I wished someone had told me in my first year as captain. These included the following:

1. Be organized – I cannot stress this one enough. If everyone knows what to expect well ahead of time, you not only save yourself a lot of time sorting through excuses, but you show your team that you’re reliable. That is absolutely essential for team cohesiveness.
2. Be consistent – Get your leadership on the same page before you bring anything to the team, and keep the voices on your team in sync with each other, whether that’s multiple captains, a coach, veteran players, etc. Inconsistency will invite issues with focus, respect, and commitment.
3. Keep the lines of communication open – If your team doesn’t feel like they can talk to and trust you, you’ll have a very hard time earning respect. Stay in especially close touch with newer players, as they often need help transitioning to the workload, or lifeload, of college, and making them feel as important as they are will go a long way toward helping you to establish not just a team, but a program.
4. The team is your mirror – It seems to me that an organization is often a slightly diluted image of its leadership. So if you want 100% commitment from them, you better be 120% committed yourself. It also means that if you feel there’s a problem on the team, it’s always a good idea to examine yourself first.

If I were going to add to those today with a more in depth list, I would suggest that you do these things as well:

5. Develop leaders underneath you – While you may have the ultimate responsibility for what happens with your team, you’re not going to survive if you try to do everything yourself, and you’ll alienate some very valuable team members. Identify strengths in your teammates and coordinate a way to use those abilities to their greatest extent. Growing young leaders will also provide the program with continuity, and not leave your leadership starting from scratch every year.
6. Set expectations high –
 - First, don’t be afraid to make your team work very, very hard. I know it’s often really difficult just to get numbers for young women’s teams, but I feel strongly that what actually makes people happy is to work hard at something. This is also the best way to recruit and retain athletic rookies. Fun and intensity aren’t mutually exclusive, and being part of a team that challenges itself gives people a sense of importance and connectedness.
 - Second, expect a lot of your team off the field. I’m talking about the mental and interpersonal aspects of your teammates. *Always* value character over talent. Work ethic, reliability, and coachability are the type of big picture traits that will breed program success, not just team wins.

Finally, and most importantly:

7. Lead with your heart – You’ll never have the kind of success you want if you don’t absolutely love your teammates for whoever they are and make every effort to know them to the core. If you’re passionate about what you’re doing and you let it show, I don’t see any reason you should be afraid to screw up sometimes, because you will, but your teammates will trust and respect you regardless.

Goal Setting, Leadership Styles, and Creating Ownership Among Your Players

Mia Iseman

You might think that your college team will never be a national contender. I felt the same as a freshman at NYU in '04 when we had about 10 women total, three of them graduating. I became captain my sophomore year, and we didn't even make Regionals. Two years later, the NYU Violet Femmes placed 9/10 at Nationals. I know, wtf?!

At NYU, and perhaps at your college as well, the best leadership style to recruit, retain, encourage, and praise fellow players is an approachable yet extremely honest one that rewards commitment to the team with whatever most players desire. Team goals must align with that overall reason for playing and will change as the team changes. For instance, NYU is in the middle of one of Manhattan's busiest locations, and it lacks what most colleges have in abundance: a campus, Greek life, and athletics. Simply put, it is hard to make friends. So, when I first became captain it was clear that anyone who committed to the team was not doing it just to stay in shape or learn a new sport. They enjoyed the company. We focused on providing a fun, healthy experience for our new friends and worried about the rest later. Standard operating procedure at NYU was always to follow the first week of practice with a party with the men's team so as to, eh hem, form stronger bonds within the ultimate community. Even if someone didn't possess much athletic ability, they were accepted and treated just like anyone else. I suggest taking the same approach for any new program. Why would someone want to play this new and different sport at your college? Try to keep rookies hooked by catering a little bit towards that underlying motive. At NYU, it meant more socializing. Maybe at your school it means more gym time, more practicing, or more scrimmaging local teams.

It is important to have a meeting where you explicitly state team goals that are challenging yet achievable, specific yet supported by the majority of the team. I had a unique experience of captaining three of my four years in college, so I got to help form these different goals each year. In 2005 our goal was to save the team from disintegrating, and so we focused on team bonding and recruitment. Gym buddies, throwing between classes, parties, etc. all helped get people on board. We also made sure to get a good faculty sponsor so that we could start developing a healthy relationship with the Club Sports Department. By 2006, we had found ourselves two coaches who made a huge difference in our development as a team, and so our goals no longer focused on forming a community. We were antsy to improve athletically and make a name for ourselves. We had a team discussion / vote to determine that our goal would be twofold; we would make it to the second day at Regionals '06 and make it to Nationals '07. By having two goals, we left room for celebration after achieving the first and hunger for achieving the second. We often and intentionally referred to these goals. To not accomplish them would be crushing, so everyone put in even more time and energy, all for a three-day tournament twenty months away. To make the goals more immediately important, we needed plenty of short-term goals - goals for each tournament, each day, each game... heck, each point! Short-term goals help everyone focus and lead to positive energy when they are accomplished. If you don't accomplish them they help the team as a whole learn to overcome failure like a true athlete. Shake it off, chin up, reassess, move on. Win or lose, the short-term goals were just baby steps to our overarching long-term goals.

Captains and coaches play a huge role in accomplishing your team goals and keeping the team motivated. Coaches can help by delivering most of the "negative" news and taking on tasks that illicit emotional responses, such as cutting players, forming A and B teams, subbing, and handling dissenting players (of course all with captains' input). That way, any type of negative energy is not directed at a fellow player but at a coach. You're less likely to hold a grudge against someone that is not playing, volunteering their time, and only trying to help. If you can't find anyone to coach your team, captains should be prepared to take on "the drama" that can come with those tasks. Make sure to praise players that don't get much PT and stress the important role they play at practices; without them the team wouldn't be where it is, even though they don't get much glory on the field.

Honesty is an important trait in a good captain. If you don't know what's going on, don't pretend you do. Have confidence, and ask for help. Have fun, try and put people at ease, praise as much as you criticize, and laugh with your team. Apologize if you make a mistake. Put things in perspective for yourself, and don't hesitate to put things in perspective for others. "I know you are having problems with your playing time, but you haven't been at the last three practices, and you've had some turnovers. Take some time to reassess. We need your help from the sidelines." Keep things positive, but if you feel strongly about something, don't be afraid to let the team know you are upset. However, never say "you" in reference to the rest of the team. "We are dropping everything we touch" sounds like someone upset with the team's play. "You are dropping everything you touch," sounds like the team sucks but the captain is awesome. Always remember that you're just another member of the team. A member that does a hell of a lot of work. Good luck!

How to Structure Your College Season for Success

Cara Crouch

Every team is different; personnel, work ethic, geography, and other factors all play heavily into your interpretation of the following steps. Also, this plan is not ideal for your program if are overly concerned about rankings and win-loss ratio. My advice is to not focus on these things and instead focus on your team peaking when they need to.

Steps:

1. **Set 3 team focus points.** Focus points are different from goals, and should be very basic aspects that are **not** dependent on skill. For example: aggression and quick movement. Neither of these focus points are related to skill level; they are attainable from the top to the bottom of your roster and, most importantly, can be controlled no matter what the score is. Consider your weaknesses as a team when developing these points of focus. Lastly, reiterate often but do not wear them out. Don't use them in practices, but pull them out at the beginning of every game at a tournament.
2. **Set a specific and attainable goal.** Reiterate often in subtle ways. Be careful not to beat the goal into the team's head because if it seems you are not on track to attain the goal it can be very discouraging to the delicate and vital confidence of your team. One way to prevent this is to make the goal an improvement based goal instead of a placement or final standing goal.
3. **Plan your season** (tournament schedule) according to where your team is on the spectrum of program development (newer vs. older program) and skill development (lots of new players vs. mostly experienced players). The exciting thing about college teams, as opposed to some club teams these days, is that the personnel often changes drastically from year to year and every college team has rookies that they need to develop. So that makes planning a season different every year, challenging, and exciting! The basic guidelines below are for a team with a basic core of experienced players and a medium-high number of rookies.

Season:

▪ **Early fall: Skills**

- a. Practices- basic skill development for rookies (vets can always use a review too, but throw in a few more advanced concepts to keep them interested and challenged), introduce 3 focus points, but do not use them too often during practices.

▪ **Mid/late fall: Stretch comfort zone**

- a. Tournament/s- equal playing time, focus is not on trying to win games but instead on individual skill & team and concept (team offense) development, no definition of roles yet (this is a great time to give vets permission to go outside of their comfort zone, play roles they aren't used to, take more throwing risks, etc.).
- b. Practices- continue advanced skill development and start to build mental and physical toughness (lots of one-on-one drills, tough fitness exercises involving discs).

▪ **Early spring: Lose with a purpose!**

- a. Tournaments- go to 1-2 tournaments to play teams that are better than you (if possible), reiterate focus points throughout, start to define roles but not at expense of gaining valuable experience for middle-lower tier of roster (keep subbing very open).
- b. Practices- a great time for in depth team concept development (zones, team D, etc.), continue higher level individual skill development, scrimmage more experienced local club team players (play people that are better than you and learn from them), make sure overall team attitude stays positive and confident during this time.

▪ **Mid spring: Win**

- a. Tournaments- go to winnable tournaments to raise team confidence, further definition of roles, tighten up subbing rotation, continue to reiterate focus points.
- b. Practices- hard physical and mental toughness exercises, continue to tweak team O/D concepts, pump confidence into team.

▪ **Late spring: Crush**

- a. Tournaments- should be physically and mentally peaking for whatever part of series is likely to be hardest for your team (sectionals, regionals, nationals), delineation of roles is clear, tight sub rotation, continue to reiterate focus points.
 - b. Practices- perfect team O/D concepts, avoid burnout!
- 4. **Play together in the off season.** Club, pick-up, crazy savage tournaments against guys, goaltimate, whatever. Just do it!

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

UPA Resources for College Teams

Anna Schott, UPA Membership and Sport Development Manager

The UPA website is a great place to visit for brand new college teams, well-established programs, and any college team that falls somewhere in-between. Many of the resources available to college teams have been consolidated onto one page, found at <http://upa.org/sportdev/collegedev>. Whether you are a veteran leader on your team, or an incoming freshman just learning the sport, you will definitely want to check out this page and get familiar with the various resources that the UPA has to offer. Below is a quick summary of some of the resources listed and linked to from the College Development page.

UPA Championship Series- College Division. While you may be familiar with what the UPA College Series is, have you ever had a detailed question about the requirements for participating in the series? This link takes you to the page where you can find out all of the nitty-gritty details about the UPA College Regular Season and the UPA College Series. Have a question about uniform requirements? Want to know how to roster your team for Sectionals? Need to find out if the UPA has received your registrar-approved roster? This is your page!

College Team Development Kit. This kit is a must have for brand new teams, as well as a great resource for teams that have been around awhile. The kit costs \$50, but with several DVDs, discs, cones, rulebooks, posters, the team development manual and many more items, the value is much much higher. The manual and posters are also available for free online in pdf format. Also, brand new teams who order the kit and participate in the UPA College Series are eligible for a rebate on their kit! See the website for details!

Rules of Ultimate. It is always a good idea to have at least one “rules buff” on your team. Point your team towards this link and encourage all of your players to get to know the rules of the game. In addition to the full 11th edition of rules, you can find rules FAQ’s and detailed explanations of some of the more complicated rules of Ultimate.

Uniforms, Discs and more! From this page, you can find links to UPA licensed merchandisers as well as information about ordering rulebooks and discounted discs.

Tournament Listing. Be sure to check the “where to play” page of the UPA website often to find tournaments and other people playing Ultimate in your area. If you are hosting a tournament, posting your event on this page is a great way to let other teams know about your event.

Women’s Ultimate. This links to a page that lists various resources geared towards promoting and developing women’s Ultimate. Check out the women’s clinic kit program- your team can get materials to host a clinic that will help build women’s Ultimate in your community. Does your team have a coach? The coaching clinic rebate program offers a rebate to female coaches and to anyone coaching a women’s or a mixed team.

Grant Program. If your college program has an idea or a plan to develop college Ultimate or Ultimate in general, you can apply for a grant from the UPA to help put your plan into action. This website has important information about the grant program including instructions for applying for a grant and important application deadlines.

Score Reporter.

- **Tournaments and scores:** If you are hosting a tournament, the score reporter is a great resource for creating and publishing your tournament format, reporting scores from the event, and publishing the event details for attendees. If the tournament organizer has allowed access, you can report your team’s scores for the tournaments you attend.

- **Your team page:** On your team's page of the score reporter, you can view your teams results from all of the events you attending that year. You can also list your team's roster, contact information and website.
- **Rankings:** Check the score reporter throughout the spring to see how your team ranks compared to other teams across the country!

Event Sanctioning. Apply to sanction your tournament, league or practice with the UPA and get great benefits such as general liability insurance, discounted merchandise, affiliation with the national governing body and more! UPA College Regular Season Events are all UPA-Sanctioned Events!

These are just a few of the resources listed on the college development page, be sure to check out <http://upa.org/sportdev/collegedev> to find more ways that the UPA can help your team become a great college team!

Recruiting and Retaining Athletic Rookies

Lauren Casey

The following are some strategies we have used to identify, recruit, and retain athletic new players:

1. Organize pick-up games at events early in the school year. Volunteer to run a game at pre-freshman events to get on the radar of prospective students early. Get a game on the orientation week calendar. More athletic people gravitate towards active events, even if they don't think they're in the market for a new activity. Solicit emails at these games and follow-up with info about the program and the practice/tryout schedule.
2. Talk sports with potential recruits. We usually man a table at activities fairs or club sports info sessions. We often bring a disc and throw near the table or have film showing to draw them in. We like to talk to them one on one about their past experiences with sports to get an idea of what they're looking for, and let them know about our program. It's a chance to tell them about the ways their skills will apply to ultimate or ask them what they're looking for with respect to continuing their athletic career. A lot of people who don't know the sport might not know how ultimate is (or is not) compatible with their talents and goals. Obviously, we also encourage inexperienced women to come try the sport too since a big recruiting pool is key, and plenty of relatively inexperienced women have turned out to be fantastic players.
3. Encourage existing players to seek-out athletic women outside of formal recruiting events. Dorm-mates, friends, classmates, etc. have all been common existing relationships drawn upon for rookies. Existing relationships are often good for retention too, as these people know more about what the commitment entails. Also, it sounds a little absurd, but even approaching women at the weight room has worked in the past. Through several of these strategies, we've managed to pick-up ex varsity athletes looking for the opportunities our program can offer.
4. Don't make early practices too easy. You want to appeal to the athletes that want to be challenged. Put sprints in the practice plan. Design drills that aren't too skill heavy, in which new players can compete with experienced players...huck drills, defensive footwork, etc. Scrimmage a lot. Athletic players are usually looking for practices that make them work. Of course, it's important to create a non-intimidating space for learning (especially throwing) skills by making drills do-able. Just don't shy away from physically challenging practice elements as a result.
5. Invite rookies to off-day workouts. We encourage vets to plan off-day lifting and running workouts and to invite tryouts to join. Again, make it clear to the type of players who want a structured team environment in which to push themselves physically that they can find it in ultimate.
6. Develop personal relationships with all of your prospective players. Encourage or require vets to be responsible for a handful of new players. Check-in with them to see if they have questions or frustrations. Follow-up when players you are interested in don't show up for several practices in a row. We've found it helpful to identify what individuals are looking for early on, and to tailor practices to those goals.
7. Host invite only practices with veteran players and A team tryouts. Weeding the size of practice down to only returning players and the most serious rookies often helps elevate the quality of play. Athletic tryouts may be happier to realize that they will be pushed by everyone at these practices.

Recruiting and Retaining Athletic Rookies

Amanda Berens

A captain or veteran college player should always keep an eye out for a recruiting opportunity. This can be a proactive *intentional* approach such as setting up tables in your University's mall, or the opportunity can happen *by chance* via conversation about Frisbee with a friend or a classmate. You need to be ready to talk up Ultimate and your team under both recruiting scenarios. I will give examples of some recruiting opportunities and how to respond in more detail below. The end of the article will focus on retaining athletic rookies and balancing the committed and not so devoted players.

The Intentional Approach

Recruiting should be a major part of your team's pre-season programming. You should assign an entire committee of three to four people to it and make your intentions clear from the start. Specifically, decide if you want to recruit any able and willing body because your team is new and low in numbers, or decide you can use more discretion and go for specific targets such as height or past experience in competitive sports.

Aside from the obvious recruiting techniques such as setting up tables and handing out fliers, try to think about where you can find your target audience. Set up two or three throwing clinics in highly exposed areas of campus. Make an off-season intramurals basketball team and invite your competitors to an Ultimate practice. Contact the women's soccer club and ask them to pass your team's information on to girls who don't make their team. In general, if you are after athletes, advertise where you will find them (gyms, tracks, student athlete dorms).

By Chance Recruiting

This is the type of recruiting you have to be on your toes for. For example, when you are switching out of the squat machine with an athletic looking girl, ask her what sports she used to play. Ask her if she misses competitive sports and tell her about Ultimate and all the fun traveling and tournaments. If you are in other organization outside of Ultimate, bring up high school sports and find out who played varsity basketball or soccer. Develop a bit of a friendship (usually not hard when you have something in common like sports) and tell her about how much fun you are having playing Club Ultimate. The worst you can do is scare her off with your enthusiasm, but if she can't handle a bit of excitement then she may not be a good fit for Ultimate anyways.

Retaining Your Recruits

Once you pick up these new girls make sure you have a good plan for retaining them. Be cognizant of which rookies need a bit more nurturing and personal attention and which do best when they are thrown in to the group and challenged. And though I strongly believe every member of the team is important and valuable, do be aware of the couple few that you know have the athleticism and competitive drive to play a big role in the future years for your team. It helps to check in with your rookies to see how things are going. If you really want to keep a certain player, be flexible with her. If she wants to try certain roles on the fields let her. Or if she can only make it to one practice per week, don't give an ultimatum. If she's as good as you think she may be she will come around. (One of the best players in the country, Cara Crouch, decided to practice for a play instead of come to Ultimate practice for a month during her first spring season and she obviously turned out more than fine).

This brings us to the sensitive issues of perceived favoritism or allowing certain players more lenience than others. The reality is that in a competitive sport (if your team is or is striving to be competitive) there will be some un-balanced treatment. A player may miss a couple practices but get to play more because she is still needed on the field. As a captain, it is an incredibly difficult job to manage and a fine line to walk. You'll have to figure out your net gain or loss. If this not-so-committed teammate is an excellent individual player but has a negative impact on the team moral, you may have to cut your losses.

Recruiting and Retaining Athletic Rookies

Michael “Whit” Whitaker

The biggest risk with athletic rookies is that they will not be able to use their athleticism at early practices and experience success. Early practices can often be slow and frustrating as new skills are taught, huddles go far too long as concepts are explained, and good scrimmages are nearly impossible to realize due to a lack of throwing skills throughout the team. With Kali, we used a couple of tricks to try to keep athletic rookies engaged in early practices.

First, we would start the initial practice with a veteran's scrimmage to show the rookies what the game is supposed to look like and to let them see how athleticism is incorporated into play.

Second, and more importantly, we separated “athletic” drills and “skills” drills during the early practices. For example, we would run defensive drills, huck drills, or offensive flow drills with only coaches or good veteran throwers throwing. The goal is to have athletic rookies rewarded when they do something correctly with their legs and not to be frustrated (or confused) because they don't get the disc due to poor throws. After each athletic drill, we would do a separate drill that was focused purely on throwing techniques to allow all rookies to work on throwing skills where they were free to make mistakes without ruining the flow of the drill. It is absolutely critical to allow rookies to experience the athleticism of ultimate without having a lack of throwing skills diminish their fun at early practices.

Finally, we always tried to end practices with drills that would let athletic / competitive rookies succeed. For example, we would run huck drills with defenders where they have a chance to show off their athleticism against another player or run a few sprints to let them display speed compared to the rest of the players.

Fish Discs = Brilliant

Andy "BOFA" Sammons

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What are the best ways to get new players involved on a college team?

The most unique thing UC San Diego does to keep new players involved revolve around what we call the "Fish Dance." Every first year, or "Fish" as we call them, is given a Squid name at a naming ceremony that happens a month into the season. Their name is written on the annual disc, and presented to them in front of the other first years, and the current team. The first years are expected to have their disc with them at all times during the first quarter. If they are seen without their disc by another team member, they are asked to sing and dance to an embarrassing song to the tune of "I'm a little tea pot," with the last line being "Huck it to me baby, and I'll lay out!" At that point in the song they lay out onto the ground, wherever they are, wearing whatever they're wearing. If they go to the dining hall, they are expected to have their disc with them. If they go off campus to the movies, they are expected to carry their disc with them. There are even stories of freshman being seen in Tijuana clubs with their fish discs. As a freshman, I was busted only once, during Thanksgiving break, while at college night in my Bay Area hometown. I had my disc in my car, but didn't figure I would see anyone 500 miles from UCSD. Of course I ran into two fourth-years, who had me do the dance in front of my high school friends who had no idea what I was doing, laying out onto the bricks in front of the local Starbucks. It was pretty funny, and made for a good story when I got back to the team.

The idea is to make sure they have a disc in their hand, and if they see an older team member who asks if they have their disc, and they do have it, they can get a couple of minutes of throwing in between class, or wherever they are. I threw everyday my first quarter because I always had my disc with me. I also figured out how to spin a disc on my finger and could practice switching grips from forehand to backhand and vice versa, because my fish disc was always in my hand. It gets teammates throwing and talking outside of practice, and helps give the team exposure to new freshman who see people with discs in their hands.

Carrying a disc everywhere they go really helps get ultimate in the front of their minds because if they go outside their dorm in their first quarter of school they need to make sure they have their disc, and hopefully gets them throwing on their own time, outside of practice.

What sorts of drills/practice formats have been successful in introducing the sport, as well making it fun?

Understanding that a first year player will likely not have disc skills or strategy knowledge is important. Asking them to complete throws in the first few months of playing this new sport may frustrate them, as they probably still haven't figured out the mechanics, or developed the confidence to throw upfield to a cutting receiver.

What new players can bring to the team is their athleticism. People who seek out a sport to play in college will probably have a sports background, so many will have no trouble translating that previous sports experience to running down and jumping for a huck, or hustling on defense.

Catching also comes quickly, so we would design drills early on that allow them to demonstrate their athleticism, and didn't require them to complete throws, or require much in the way of strategy. Some drills like this may be the "Huck Drill," where we have the first, second, and third years make two lines, (offensive and defensive) where the offense gets a slight head start down the field. These lines mimic an offensive cutter in the stack, and his defender. There is also a line of throwers positioned roughly 15 yards away, which should simulate the distance between a handler, and the back of the stack. The idea is to have the fourth years throw a huck, and have the younger players run it down, under defensive pressure. The offensive cutter starts whenever he is ready, and as soon as he goes, the huck is thrown. This is a great way for first years to show off their speed, jumping ability, and aggressiveness.

Another drill that is very easy for first years, is what we call the "Go To" drill. In this drill, there is a line of older players, who are throwers about 20 yards away from a pair of downfield cones, ready to throw what would be in-cut style throws. The two downfield cones are in line with the thrower line, and separated by about two to three yards. The line of defenders starts behind the further cone, and we have one offensive player. The offensive player runs away from the thrower, and towards the defensive line. Once he gets to the front cone, he makes a 180 degree cut, touches the cone and cuts back towards the thrower. Once he touches the cone, the defensive player is allowed to move, so you have an offensive player cutting towards the thrower, with a defensive player hot on his tail. The thrower puts up a soft throw to space, and the offensive cutter and his defender fight for the disc. Once the disc has either been caught, or D'ed, the disc is returned to the thrower, and the defensive player now becomes the offensive player. He runs back away from the thrower, towards the line of defenders, and the drill repeats.

This drill is great, because again, you let the young players show off their speed and aggressiveness. This drill also showcases laying out, because you have a soft throw to space with two players running full speed to get it. When we first show this drill as an example to the first years, we make sure to have the guys with the biggest layouts in the example to show the first years how awesome getting a layout D can be. We then make a ton of noise when the first years layout during the drill. It makes them feel good, and it's easy to get excited about making a huge layout grab or D, especially with an entire team cheering you on when you make a great play.

What off-field things can you do to make being on the team a priority for a new recruit on the fence about committing?

First years need to showcase athleticism first and foremost. Secondly, we look for players who are willing to learn, but a player's athleticism is definitely the biggest factor in determining if he will make the A-team. Disc skills and strategy can be taught, but there is no substitute for a natural athlete.

Getting the Most out of the Fall Season for Second Year Players

Michael "Whit Whitaker

Second year players need to be seriously challenged during the fall season in order to improve their level of play. There are a couple of simple things you can do to help facilitate this:

1. Give each second year player a specific skill to work on improving. Make it as specific as possible (e.g. developing an around backhand break). Give only one skill at a time and let her work on it for a little while before suggesting a second skill. General directives to "get better" or "work on your throws" are pretty much useless. Second year players don't know what to work on independently so give them very specific instructions and then send them off to get reps working on it.
2. Put your second year players in small sided scrimmages (4 v 4 or 5 v 5) and have them handle with rookies downfield. Let them make mistakes trying to learn new skills.
3. Let your second year players explain some drills/teach rookies. Tell them ahead of time that they are going to be teaching a concept so they can prepare but then step back and let them instruct rookies (say on good cutting technique or how to clear). They may come to you with questions at times, but you'll be amazed by how much more your second year players retain when they are forced to articulate what they are doing on the field to others who are new to the game.

Getting the Most out of the Fall Season for Non-Rookies

Amy Chou

The fall is more than a time to teach rookies how to play ultimate. It's also a low-pressure environment for non-rookies to improve. This can be an invaluable time to try new positions, hone fundamentals and generally advance your game (work on breaking the mark, shutting people down on D, decision making, etc.). I don't believe there is any college player out there who doesn't have some fundamental skill they can hone or something they can learn to do things better, faster, more consistently or when it counts.

Non-rookies can set a big specific and measurable goal for the fall and smaller goals for themselves that either vary by practice or tournament. Some examples would be:

- I'm going to only throw break mark throws this game.
- I'm going to have zero drops.
- I'm going to work on never being broken.
- I'm going to work on forcing my girl out and still beating her deep to get the d.
- I'm going to make good decisions.

The fall is generally a good time to just make mistakes and learn from them.

Commitment

V.Y. Chow

We all play ultimate because it is fun and we enjoy competition and teamwork. We don't get paid to play this sport and in fact, it costs us quite a bit of time and money for travel, tournament fees, uniforms, cleats, field rentals, and whatnot. But there is a common misconception that being serious and committed can take the enjoyment out of the sport or require too much time.

Teams at all levels often have difficulty getting their players to be committed - practice attendance, workouts outside of practices - and to be focused during practices and tournaments. More often than not, this can be attributed to fuzzy expectations. At the outset, discuss and determine the team goals and translate that into what type of team and individual commitment is required to reach those goals. Once that has been determined and agreed upon by the team, the leadership of a team usually sets the tone for maintaining that commitment level. Trust, respect, and accountability start from top.

Practices that are focused, well planned, and executed demonstrate that the team leaders/coaches respect the time and commitment of the players. It isn't that different from work or school. Classes are always more enjoyable when the professor has thoughtful lesson plans that are engaging, challenging, and rewarding. Work is much more fun when there are clear expectations and goals. Players will not take practices seriously if they are run ad hoc and without short- and long-term goals in mind. This is also applicable to designing training programs outside of practices. Realistic expectations are often confused with what people want to do as opposed to what people can and will actually do. A focused and organized two hour practice is far more beneficial than a meandering, lack luster three or four hour practice. The same applies to workouts - a couple targeted 60-90 minute workouts are far better than 2 hour workouts 4 days a week. Approaching workouts and practice planning with professionalism will in turn make the players treat the training and practices with professionalism.

How you play and act during practice determines how you play in tournaments. Athletes dream about getting into a 'zone' and playing out of their heads. But there is no magic switch to turn on your intensity and fire whenever you need that extra intangible; it is a learned and practiced mental strength. If your team can learn to be focused during practices, then it will be easier and less stressful to be focused and competitive at tournaments. Some simple ideas to help people focus is to have a hard start time for practices and tournaments. If practices run from 8:30pm to 10:30pm, then tell people that means cleats on ready for anything at 8:30pm and that practice will absolutely end at 10:30pm. This means get to practice earlier, say 8:00pm, to cleat up, chat, hang out, catch up with your teammates. But when 8:30pm rolls around, it's all business and the rest of the day and all your worldly troubles disappear. That might mean gathering the team together and having everyone think about their day, their issues, and then visualizing letting everything go, or it could be a 5-min round the circle vent-fest. It doesn't matter what approach is taken, but what does matter is getting your team to start developing their mental focus and toughness. It is also important to always end practice at the appointed time. Being respectful of your players' time and commitment will help them manage the rest of their busy lives.

At the end of the day, we play because we love the sport. Professionalism, commitment, and disciplined training and practicing reward individuals with getting the most out of themselves and the game. Nothing is more rewarding and fun than a team and a player achieving their best.

Getting People to Commit

Jamie Nuwer

Much of this topic overlaps with starting a new team. A few basic things need to be accomplished before you can expect people to make a commitment to the team. First, your team needs to create overall goals for the season. This should be done as a group so that people are more likely to buy-in to the goals and the team. While it is certainly possible to guide this discussion and inspire people to buy-in to your goals as a captain or coach, it is much better if the team comes up with the goals as an interactive group. If everyone has their chance to speak up then members will feel included. Feeling included is the beginning of a team.

Once goals are set as a group, you need to find out how much time people want to put in to the team. I recommend laying out a couple of options then having the team decide. For example:

- Competitive option: 8-10 hrs of practice a week plus a conditioning workout and at least 5 tournament weekends vs.
- Social group option: practice 2-3 hrs/week, social event weekly, several for-fun tournaments vs.
- Some mixed option of the two

It is important to emphasize the seriousness of this decision at the team meeting. If the team elects a certain option they should be prepared to commit to that option for the rest of the season. Make sure to moderate the meeting in such a way that as many people as possible buy-in to the time commitment level.

Truth be told, some people may not like the team decision. Some people may quit. If their participation in the team is very important, consider setting up an individual meeting with them to talk about their frustrations or lack-of-commitment. You may be able to get them to buy-in with a little more persuasion or appealing to their ego. Before making this meeting, consider whether their personality or neediness may be a detriment to the team as a whole.

Once you have people committed at the beginning of the season you need to work on retaining them throughout the season. Making the team a fun experience and doing things that make everyone feel included will help retain people. Examples are social events, fundraisers, and team discussions about decisions that come up throughout the season. Individual check-ins with each player midway through the season will help to figure out how people are doing with the commitment level. It will make them feel important to the team if you tell them things they are doing well, things they could improve on, and the role they will be playing as the season progresses.

If a player starts to miss practice or stops engaging in team activities, then talk to that person one-on-one and see what is going on with them. Often times the reason they have been missing practice has nothing to do with the team. Reaching out to that person can help them feel appreciated and needed as part of the team. It is likely they will feel even more a part of the team because you helped them when they were having a hard time. They will likely return to practice once their issue has been resolved.

In general try to stay fun and positive. Handle difficult situations one-on-one and give leeway to those who need and deserve it. If you inspire people with your attitude and your own commitment, your team will follow.

THE BASICS

Fundamentals to Focus On

Amy Chou

Throwing: Andy Lykens taught me that it is important to stress proper throwing form (elbow away from the body, step out, get low, snap from the wrist) from day 1 instead of just letting rookies do whatever they want to get by. It might take them longer to learn their throws, but hopefully they'll spend less time re-learning them.

Catching: Equally important is catching. Stress attacking the disc when you catch – keep your eyes open, lean-in, hands out, don't stop or slow down and catch the disc as soon as you can.

Running: Depending on the athletic background/ability of your players, you may want to spend some time on proper running form.

Cutting: Before you even get to how to set up and time your cuts, you should focus on planting (getting your weight low to change direction as quickly as possible).

Marking: Shift your feet, not lunge with your arms. Keep your hands low, it is surprisingly easier to move them up than it is to bring them down (gravity doesn't help).

Reading: This is something that seems hard to teach, but repetition seems to help and also breaking it down so that first you are just throwing outside ins or inside outs for them to read, then mixing it up, then adding defense. Emphasize jumping to catch the disc at the highest point possible (arm should be fully extended).

Defensive positioning: Choosing what you want to take away with your body and how close of a buffer to have to the person you are defending. Work on defending and taking away the open side while still being able to make a play on the break side. Footwork and agility drills can help.

Teaching Fundamentals

Kayla Burnim

The following article is expanding on the following two facts:

- 1) You can't be an advanced player without a solid grasp on fundamentals
- 2) You can always get better at the fundamentals

The fall is a great time to focus on individual skill improvement. This season is generally used on the college level for introducing new players to the game. The majority of teams tend to get so caught up in this, they forget that it is a perfect time for the returning players to take some time and focus on their fundamentals while teaching the new players.

I like to break up skills into pieces, deconstruct them, so that when I teach, I can look for the failure modes and correct those. When a skill is deconstructed, all the little steps it takes to execute it effectively can be arranged into groups, basic components, intermediate, advanced, and sometimes expert.

For the purpose of this article, we are going to use the backhand as the main example. Breaking this skill down into groups you get:

- Basic components: snapping your wrist, stepping, and the follow through
- Intermediate: hand positioning (IO/OI), level of release (waist, high, low), position of your body between both your feet to maintain balance, bending your knees effectively, follow through
- Advanced: use of your obliques to generate torque, dropping your shoulder, the transfer of weight to your throwing foot and how it effects the type of throw you are making (i.e. pull, break, short pass, etc).

When you're working on the fundamental at practice, make sure everyone is focusing on some individual component in their skill. As a captain, you can either generically say "rookies are working on wrist snap, and vets are working on hand positioning", you can give your players something individual to work on, or you can give them a list of components and let them choose. It is helpful to take a few minutes and walk around while everyone is throwing backhands and watch each player and give them a 15-20s summary of things to improve. Not only does the player benefit from the individual attention, but it is helpful for the captain/coach to get experience critiquing and knowing what to look for.

With all of these skills, it is helpful to take game/practice video and have people watch themselves. As awkward as it can be, seeing how you actually move gives you more information than anything else. If this isn't possible, many of the stationary tasks can be preformed in front of a mirror, which will also do the trick.

Other fundamentals and their main components:

Throwing - looking good (form)

Catching - catch first, throw second

Marking - maintain balance

Cutting - cut deliberately, dancing is for hardwood

Pivoting - real fakes

Person defense - dictating

General tips:

- Start off slow, you don't want to overwhelm the player, no matter what level. It is hard to focus on more than 2 things at once when performing a task.
- Build good habits early. It is a lot easier to teach good habits than it is to erase bad ones, and re-teach good ones.

- Think about why you're telling someone to do something, it is much easier to understand what needs to be changed if you know why.
- Never encourage bad habits. As females especially we tend to say "good job" even though it wasn't. Try words like "that's better" or "you're getting it" instead.
- Try to equate the task with something they already know. For example, the pivot foot in ultimate is the same concept as the one in basketball. Most of your athletes come from other sports, use this to your advantage.
- Know how to teach the same skill in many different ways. I'm an engineer, so I tend to be more inclined to use physics to teach, which doesn't work for everyone.

Fundamentals To Focus On

V.Y. Chow

Strong fundamentals are the basic building blocks of winning teams and great players in any sport. Thus, developing good fundamentals from the outset is essential for younger players and teams. But sometimes we forget that fundamentals are really just the simple things and we often focus on things that are too advanced instead of a gradual progression of skills.

For example, for any offense to work, everyone on the team must be able to throw and catch. Simple enough, but many teams work on all types of sexy throws (breakmarks, hucks, and overheads), but don't spend enough time on the basic 10-yard forehand and backhand. Why the 10-yard forehand and backhand? Because the mechanics that a player learns will translate to the rest of her throws. It is akin to learning how to shoot a basketball. If a player can consistently make shots underneath the hoop then she has developed a myriad of tools at her disposal: the hand placement, the windup, the release, the stance, the fine motor skills, and the hand-eye coordination. Only then will she move onto reverses, hooks shots, fade-away and turn around jumpers, and whatnot. If everyone on your team can throw a confident 10-yard forehand and backhand, then your team will always be able to reset the stall count and give your offense another chance. So start with stationary throws and once everyone is confident, throw to a moving player.

Once everyone has learned how to throw the 10-yard forehand and backhand, the next step is to focus on throwing to different targets on the O-players body (different sides of the body, different heights). Once again, start with stationary players and then progress to throwing to a moving target. The ability to throw to a particular side and height of the body provides the receiver with a huge advantage – the D-player will always have to get around the O-player to make a bid on the disc. The 10-yard pass might seem absurdly basic but it is actually quite a difficult throw to master because the margin of error in time and space is much smaller than throwing a 30-yard throw. Thus, if everyone on your team can consistently throw it with accuracy and precision, your offense will be unstoppable.

Teaching how to play defense can get complicated very quickly particularly when talking about footwork, watching the hips of the O-player, and triangulating with the thrower. One of the best defensive players to ever play the game, Bill Rodriguez, had a great coaching tip - throw everything out the window and strip it down to the bare bones. Just focus on staying close to and on the proper side of the O-player. Forget trying to think about where the disc is, whether to front/back the O-player and forget about footwork. The most basic yet effective defense is to shut down the open side and instead of your D-players over-thinking how to do that, just tell them to be aggressive in their movements to corral their O-player by doing whatever they possibly can to stay on the correct side of their O-player. One task, one idea...instead of three different things to focus on will make it that much easier for your players and your team to perform.

Keeping things simple even when teaching 'fundamentals' is a difficult task. The route to simplicity is to strip everything away and make things as easy as possible for people to think about – one basic concept and then slowly build on that one idea. Just think if every player on your team could reset the disc and play open-side D...

Fundamentals to Focus On

Meg Hofner

In a game time situation, you don't have a mulligan on a dropped pass or an errant throw. The pace of a game is quick and many times a rookie team can become discouraged when playing a more vetted team taking away the show. That is why it is important for any team, especially a team with newer players, to focus strongly on the fundamentals during their training. Then in a game-time situation, because the basic concepts are more engrained in the players, any on-field adjustments are more easily made.

Practice the fundamentals – throws. One thing that works for practices is if the team has a veteran or someone has a friend on another team that is particularly good at tweaking minor mishaps in a person's form, ask them if they are willing to help out at multiple practices. If that person adjusts your players' grip or form a little, their throws may turn a little sporadic, but keep encouraging them. Remind them not to fall back to their improper form. Muscle memory takes some time but is lost very quickly if one reverts their form. You want your players to learn the right way, not "get by" the wrong way. Getting these fundamental throwing aspects down can help later in their training when they are learning to throw with more power and accuracy. Try these throwing sessions early in the fall season to spark interest, and again in the spring season to keep people honest!

Practice the fundamentals – catches. The difference in the score is the difference in the number of turnovers of each team. So work on your player's throws, but really work their catches. Schedule various drills in practice that get your players used to catching in all situations. Have drills where they catch one handed, drills where they must catch 100 or so with no drops, drills with defense, and drills where they are catching when they are tired. Repeat these throughout the season. Ones that have catching goals are good because they teach valuing the disc, and though sometimes frustrating, are really good ways to get everyone working toward that one goal.

Practice to your players strengths, but work on their weaknesses. For example, if a player is a great deep but uncomfortable with dump passes, get them practicing tight situations in drills and scrimmage of dump situations. Though it would be nice, not every one of their game-time catches will be in the endzone, and you want them to be just as comfortable throwing or dumping the disc as they are catching it. Typically you may find that the players' weak points show up in groups: handlers not as good with downfield cutting, or deeps not as comfortable throwing after a catch, so you can always find people during practices to form a drill. In early season games switch up these people's roles on the field some to give them more opportunities to be in those situations and gain their field awareness.

In a game – play to your players strengths when the games get tough. Let their weaknesses be a minor threat on the field. And make sure your vets are aware of those weaknesses so that they can help out in those situations. But not to the extent that it discredits all their ability. A handler shouting at a rookie who isn't as comfortable with the disc is not going to calm them down but rather hype up the defense to play tighter. Make eye contact with the thrower and give them a good cut that is just as sure as a cut you would give a vetted player. Having, or at least making it look like you are having, confidence in the thrower is the best way to keep them confident in their throw. That is why you work on those weaknesses during practices, so that in a game time situation – though it might not be their strongest throw, it is still one they can do.

In a game - keep everyone active in the game and let them know that anyone can comment on what they see happening on the field. Is one person outmatching their defense – give them the disc more. Is one person continually getting matched up on someone they can't keep up with – that person should speak up and look for switches if it happens again. Most importantly, the sidelines can see what no one on the field can really see: the whole unbiased picture. The input they can give can help players see what they may be missing on the field. Always remember constructive criticism though,

else an observant piece of advice might be rejected as an unkind remark. The more eyes actually focused on the game, the more minds working to help your team win it.

In a game – don't fall stagnant. If your man offense is getting shut down, switch to a horizontal offense or even just have some various set plays to use. If your team is not as well versed in multiple offenses, even just switching for a few points may be enough to throw off the groove the other team had been setting. The same goes for your defense: throwing in a zone point or two, even on a no wind day, may sometimes throw off the flow of the offense.

All these are not sure-fire guarantees that you will win a game, but they are definitely guides that practiced and implemented often, become second nature 'easy fixes', leaving you and your team the chance to expand your knowledge and experience of the game to higher levels. Fundamentals are essentials, not just game time graces. And the only way to get better at something is to practice it. When it is practiced, it becomes engrained, and then game time can be spent focusing on how to win and not how to throw.

Building Blocks

Kira Frew

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What is crucial for my team?

1. Good Leadership. That means having captains and coaches that display good work ethic, motivation, great field skills and a positive attitude. I find that the players on the team often emulate the attitudes of the leadership and it is important for these attitudes to be hard working and positive. Having a coach is crucial for a team's success. Coaches are important in being able to bring out the best in every player on the team. Coaches are crucial during tournaments where strategies have to be adjusted on the fly and it is often hard for players on the field to realize where adjustments need to be made. It is also crucial to have a coach to call lines and deal with scoring and time-caps so the captains and all the other players can focus on their own game. It takes a lot of pressure off of the captains when a team has a coach.

2. Strong fundamental disc skills (throwing, catching) and good fitness. Since most college teams only practice about 3 days a week, it is really important for players to get in extra throwing and workouts outside of practice. We always preached on UBC that practices were a time to improve team strategy and team skills and not a time to work on individual fitness. Tournaments like NW Regionals and Nationals are a strong test of depth on a team. It is crucial that everyone has a strong fitness base and fundamentals in order to be able to use everyone as best possible throughout these grueling tournaments. I think it would be very difficult to win either of those tournaments without having contributions from your entire roster top to bottom.

3. Good defense. Championships are won on sound defense. When you are on defense, the other team is expected to score. Messing up this expectation by getting D's and scoring your defensive points will win you games. With that in mind, when on offense if you turn the disc over you need to get it back since it is your job to score your offensive points. Make man-on-man defense a priority at practices.

What motivates your players?

It's hard to generalize what motivates everyone on the team. I think everyone finds different things that motivate him or her to become a better player. I think the biggest motivation for players is seeing individual and team improvement over the season. It is a big motivation for a team when they are able to reach small goals throughout the season. This might mean beating a team for the first time in multiple seasons (ex. when UBC beat UCLA this year) or it might mean making semis in a pre-season tournament when the furthest you've made it is quarters. I found that the biggest individual motivation for me, when I was playing with UBC, was to always consider my one-on-one match-ups that I would encounter throughout the season. There were certain players that you develop friendly rivalries with and I would use these players to motivate me to go outside and throw in the rain when I didn't want to or go for an extra run when I didn't want to. I wanted to win my one-on-one battles and in order to do that I had to make sure I was pushing myself to be a better player than those that I knew I would be matching up against. You only have 5 years of college eligibility, so it is important to find ways to motivate your team and yourself in order to make every season count.

What is your biggest hurdle in a specific year towards reaching your team goals?

During any given year, I found that the biggest hurdle in reaching our teams goals was commitment. The UBC ultimate team does not receive any funding from our school so commitment to the team requires a lot of out of pocket funding. Considering that the team travels to the USA 5-6 times per year, the season can end up being incredibly expensive on the players. This year the UBC team never had more than 70% of their team at any given pre-season tournament mostly due to financial reasons. I strongly believe that any tournament is equal to at least a month worth of practices and there are a lot of things that you learn at tournaments that cannot be learned at practices. To constantly be missing teammates from these learning experiences becomes a big hurdle in trying to

improve and reach your goals as a team. Along with financial commitments, it is often hard to get players to commit when the real reason that most people are in college is to get an education. A lot of players find it hard juggling ultimate and school and we often find that players start to skip practices around midterm exams and at the end of term when assignments are due and finals are coming up.

How to Hold an Effective Mark

Dominique Fontenette

"Hold your mark!"

The ability to maintain an effective mark is fundamental to developing a winning team defense.

We ultimate players tend to be inspired by a bit of glamour. We spend hours of time perfecting our less practical hammers, we cheer in awe of diving catches, and we congratulate layout blocks. But how often do we truly appreciate the value of the unsung held mark? Michael Jordan made a conscious effort to help his teammates reach their own potential. He is quoted as saying, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships." Holding your mark is all about teamwork.

One of the most valuable defenders on the field is the player who can hold her mark. Imagine if one defensive player prevents an entire offensive team of players from getting the disc on half of the field. This one marker gives her downfield defenders an enormous advantage by allowing them to increase their intensity of coverage in this smaller portion of the field. In a domino effect, now an open-side throw and cut becomes a significant challenge. The stall count gets high and the offense is forced to throw to a covered cutter. "Bam!" The downfield defender gets the layout block and now they are off to the races. The marker was the crucial foundation that gave her downfield defenders an optimal situation to get a block.

Here are a few tips on how to hold an effective mark.

The mark starts with a calm state of mind and a mission to simply hold the mark. We do not aim to get glorified hand-blocks. Instead, we trust our downfield teammates and understand that our mark will lead to delayed gratification of a downfield defensive block. We suppress the urges of impulsivity and remain disciplined.

Once the mind is prepared, now we position our bodies properly. Bend at our knees (not at the back) and stay on the balls of our feet. Remember this is an active mark and not a place to rest. We are the gates to the castle and nothing should get through us. Keep our arms and shoulders forward (approximately ten degrees in front of the plane of our chest). Keep our hands low and elbows slightly bent.

Now that our body is positioned we need to maintain our center of balance. This also takes discipline. The movements we make are only small shuffles and hops. Our arms make quick movements with rapid recovery back to baseline positioning. We avoid taking large lunges with our legs or long swiping motions with our arms. These motions are often in response to the throwers fakes and leave our marks vulnerable for breaks.

With regards to spacing, experienced throwers love close marks because it is easy to step around or through the mark. Less seasoned players tend to get flustered when marked closely. Try different spacing to see which works best for that particular thrower. Also, know which throw each particular offensive player likes. If there is time, study the player you will likely be guarding. Know what she likes. If we know she likes the high-release backhand throw when the count gets high, we shift our right arm slightly higher in expectation of preventing that breakmark throw.

Know the mark. Nothing is more frustrating than when a marker forces the incorrect way. This opens up the floodgates for the offense and makes it often impossible to recover. When the tournament days get long and hot, and the mental fatigues sets in, know the mark. Have the sideline repeat the mark, ask teammates, do whatever we have to do to know the mark.

And last of all, we have to practice it. Practice it like we practice our throws and our catches. Practice it like we practice our end-zone offenses or our hucks. Practice it until it feels natural.

Attention paid to this often-neglected skill will payoff seven-fold. An effective mark can devastate an entire offense. Play to our team's defensive potential. Learn how to hold our marks.

PRACTICE PLANNING

Planning an Effective Practice

Jaime "Idaho" Arambula

Nothing drives me more nuts than attending a practice that's not thought out. Watching captains or coaches scramble for drill and warm up ideas in the parking lot or while people are cleating up is the bane of my existence. Having the professionalism of an efficient, and well thought out practice is essential for keeping the attention of the players.

If you're the type of coach that has a very strict warm up, it's important to only lead these warm-ups the first few weeks before passing that duty on to one of the captains or veterans of the team. The warm ups should have an allocated amount of time just like the drills to keep on schedule. My personal philosophy is that a solid warm up should be no more than 15 minutes. Anything longer is technically a 'work out'.

As a coach, I think it is absolutely essential to have your practice plan a day before practice; more importantly to have weeks worth of practices done so that you can lead into what is coming later in the week, or make adjustments based on venue, and weather.

There is one thing that I feel is the most important aspect of making practice effective: NO DRILL IS LONGER THAN 10 MINUTES. Losing attention and focus during a drill is the same as not doing the drill at all. 10 minutes in a non-competitive drill is all you can ask of your standard college student attention-wise. That's not to say that you can't do another drill with the same objectives, which I also think is very important.

The things that I feel make my practices most effective are:

- Concise focused warm ups
- An outlined practice plan that is listed minute-to minute
- Optional alternative drills on hand that allow for some flexibility of the practice's objectives
- A 10 minute cap on drill length (non player v. player drills)

Lastly, I think that it is necessary to pause the drill or scrimmage when the focus drops to realign player, and coach, attention. This is the key to keeping away from the 'sleepwalk syndrome' that will quickly erode the purpose of the drill-to-game conversion of skills.

Here is an example of one of my practice plans:

1st practice of season-- a little more time allocated for introduction to concepts

7:30 Warm up

- On line—slow (toes / heels / active march / jackknife march / airplanes / Frankensteins / sumo / side sumo / active calves)
- On toes—bouncy (calf jumps / quad jumps / side knees / front kicks / back kicks / butt kicks / wall slides/ Karlinskys / Jerry Rices / backward Jerry Rices / drop squats / front shuffles / back shuffles / stride backpedal 70% / stride backpedal 80% / sideshuffle shuttles then sprint x 3 / repeat / backpedal sprint backpedal sprint in 40 yards)

7:50 10 minutes of throwing-- talk about all drills today that will be done every practice. Today's drills are to get a feel for athleticism, throws, speed etc.

8:00 Hollywood squares 70% max / footwork / talk about importance/balance/prevent injury

- Sideshuffle / sprint / cutback
- Sprint- z cut
- 270 degree turn
- Sideshuffle 3 point

- 8:15 Catching-- four lines. TEACH JAB STEP-- slow for now
- 1st time- pancake catch
 - 2nd time- alligator catch
 - 3rd time- right hand
 - 4th time- left hand
- 8:30 Breakmark drill-- THROWING TO STRONG SIDE. NO BREAKMARK. Teach the move to open up marker. Focus on stepping out, hitting reciever in stride, and no backward shots. FLAT. Talk about chopstop and going to disc hard.
- 8:40 Water break-- talk about basic offense-- horizontal stack. Rails / primary / secondary-- attack points-- clearing lane.
- 8:45 Primary / secondary drill-- one thrower (me) primary / secondary / marker. I can hit either one. Talk about complement cutting / assuming it's caught.
- 8:55 Quickly talk about marking-- words...force flick / force backhand. Objectives-- not getting beat. What to do downfield-- field awareness.
- 9:00 Gametime-- 7v7. Have alternatives ready for short field. Mini / big box / 4 vs. 4 endzone
- 9:20 Conditioning-- 4x40 relays with teams-- run with heart/cheer teammates. 5 minutes of throwing while tired.
- 9:30 Cooldown

Running Practice

Kayla Burnim

Planning and running practice is deceptively hard. One thing I find helpful is to establish a few ground rules designed to keep your team focused and on track. This is something to sit down with your team yearly, and brainstorm as a team, that way, players will buy into them. The one that I recommend the most is:

Once your cleats are on, you are on team time.

Socializing can occur before and after cleats are on, but once those shoes are on, it's ultimate.

Practice Itself:

Having a set outline for practice is extremely helpful. It not only lets everyone have a basic idea of what is going on, but it can be translated into tournaments. In my mind, practice is set up like this:

- Warm up - should be the same every time, and at tournaments
- Intro drills - to get your body used to ultimate motions, and your hand eye coordination warmed up
- Focal drills - each practice should have a purpose, and it is great to share this with the team
- Simulation games - scrimmages, small scrimmages, etc, should highlight the focal point from the drills
- Cool down - often overlooked but incredibly important, this should consist of both a cool down jog and some static stretching
- Core - ESSENTIAL, not only for the mechanics of ultimate, but for injury prevention, try to work your abs and lower back equally

Warming up for a tournament should be the same as for practice. Try to choose drills that warm up all the fundamentals of your game so you are not performing them for the first time in a game.

How to choose focal points:

I like to outline the season before it starts. Making a rough sketch of the season lets me know how much time we have to work on skills so I can hit all the major points. I like to teach individual skills before team skills. Very frequently, the focal points of practice are dictated by the tournament the previous weekend or the one in the near future. Be flexible when planning practice. It is also a great idea to ask your teammates if there is something specific they would like to work on.

Note on the purpose of practicing:

Practice isn't just for learning individual and team skills and getting in a good workout, it is for expanding your skill as a player and your skill set as a team. Practice is for taking risks with things you've been working on (i.e. trying hucks) but it should not be done at the expense of a competitive atmosphere. When outlining a practice, think about keeping people constantly out of their comfort zone. If this is done throughout a season, their comfort zone then increases, and with that, so does confidence.

Commit to Having Valuable and Engaging Practices

Chelsea Putnam

Having been a 5th grade teacher for the past five years I have learned something in the classroom that is extremely valuable and can be brought to the practice field: if you don't find a way to engage your students (players) then you might as well not try and teach them. In my experience with ultimate, this is so true. I think a very important question to ask yourself is what is the purpose of practicing? It is so much more than simply just to practice skills or scrimmage. It is about building camaraderie, learning your teammates tendencies on the field, clocking the hours together, working hard, and getting on the same page with your teammates.

My philosophy about practice is that it should be the place you work your hardest. By organizing your practices to be the place that is the most competitive, most exhausting, and hardest mentally, you are gaining a huge advantage over your opponents. There is something amazing about running sprints at the end of a brutal practice and pushing your teammates and bonding over it. It certainly makes you a stronger team. It will bring you an untouchable confidence when you are standing on the line for double game point at Regionals and you look down the line at your teammates...and you know your team absolutely has what it takes to win.

So how do you make this happen at practice...

1) Be upfront with your team about your practice philosophy - we are here to become stronger physically, mentally, and most importantly, as a team. To do this it is going to take commitment and hard work from everyone on the team.

2) Agree upon ground rules for practice (here are some that my teams have used)

*Once practice starts, the only thing you focus on is our team.

* We will be efficient: Water breaks - all water bottles are at half field, you drink while the captains explain the next drill. Food break (if you have a long enough practice to have one) - you eat during a chalk talk or discussion about practice. If it is time to bring it in after a drill - you jog. The idea is that your practice time is sacred and usually the only time you have your whole team there and focused, so utilize every minute.

* If there is a disagreement - it is dealt with off the field.

* Give 100% effort - it sounds simple but it is so important that everyone is committed to working hard.

* Even if you are injured you are expected to be at practice and be actively involved from the sideline.

* People are expected to warm up before practice starts (for some people that is running, throwing, or stretching). Once practice starts we will do an active warm-up as a team and focused throwing, but if you need more than that to get ready, you arrive early.

* Do not question drills or sprints - there is nothing more frustrating than being a captain and spending a long time planning practice and having your teammates complain and nitpick about it. Allow teammates to give feedback or input about practice, but this should not occur during practice.

3) Make it fun! No one plays ultimate (that I know) because it is a job. If people are enjoying themselves then your practices will be 100% more effective. You can absolutely have fun and make it competitive too. Examples would include relay races, competitive team drills, tag in the endzone, and

funny ways of choosing your teams for scrimmages (oldest vs youngest, local vs not, handlers vs cutters).

4) Make sure your practices are balanced. We practice so we can get better as a team. Sometimes that means learning new skills, sometimes that means practicing skills, and sometimes that means applying it to a scrimmage situation. Early on in the season it should be at least 60% learning new skills and practicing them. When you are working on a specific skill make sure your drills match the skill you are focusing on. As the season progresses it should be more about practicing skills in real game situations and scrimmaging. I really like scrimmages to have a purpose. Our team likes to play games to 5 with a focus. Examples would be double score (focusing on your endzone O), transition game (where you get 2 points if you score within 4 passes), a zone game, or having a certain force. By doing smaller scrimmages it helps people stay focused and you can work on a specific skill. With that being said, I definitely think it is valuable and important to also include full scrimmages in your practices as well.

That was a lot of information to throw at you. The bottom line is that the more efficient, fun, and effective your practices are, the better your entire team will be. Practice is the place to work your hardest because come game time, you certainly won't regret it. Good luck!

Efficient and Effective Practice

Lou Burruss

From the beginning to the end of my career as a player, almost every practice I went to followed the same basic structure: warm up, drill, scrimmage, sprint. There are some real advantages to this plan, but some big disadvantages, too. The main advantages are familiarity and simplicity. It is an easy practice to run and everyone knows what to do, so minimal time is lost figuring out what is going on. On the down side, you can only focus on one or two skills. Another drawback is that scrimmaging is an incredibly inefficient use of practice time. Fun, but inefficient. In this article, I hope to lay out some of the basic skills of running a practice as well as the advantages and disadvantages to various techniques.

The first and most important piece is to have a plan. Write your plan down on a scrap of paper and tuck it in your sock (or pocket if you're a coach.) Remember, every minute you and your co-captain spend discussing what you are going to do is a minute 18 people are standing around doing nothing. (There are always times when something comes up unexpectedly and you have to talk. I'd recommend partner throwing 20 forehands, backhands and overs. This will buy you five or six minutes.) Be a slave to the clock. Keep practice moving by setting a time for each section. When you get there, move on to the next thing. It is better to leave people hungry to do more than to have them work beyond the point of focus. That said, it is important to be flexible. It is a bit of an art to know when to move on and when to stay with something for a couple extra minutes. Pay attention to the focus the players are bringing to a drill. There is a particular attention people have when they have got a drill and are in it. This period usually lasts about five minutes. After these five minutes, you can feel the focus and attention wane. Try to end the drill just before this happens. It is also helpful to build in extra stuff to a practice. At a typical Oregon Fugue practice, we will try to do about five things an hour during the main (post-warm-up) portion of practice. I'll plan a three hour practice to hold about 15 things, but expect to get to twelve of them and have to jettison three.

I am a big believer in short drills, repeated often. I had a change of heart while researching NBA practice schedules. They were incredibly fast paced and no drill lasted longer than ten minutes! Of course, as professional players they know, understand and are trained in each drill, but I have used eight minutes as a guideline ever since. If you are teaching a new drill, double the time and expect that all people will get the first time is the rotation and motion of the drill. Only on the second iteration will people begin to acquire the skills targeted by the drill. This second iteration could come later in the same practice or the next practice. It should come quickly to provide reinforcement. Wait too long and you will be teaching the drill from the beginning again.

Tied into this idea is repetition across practices. If you are only running a drill eight minutes, you are not getting a lot of skill out of it. It is through running the drill again and again that you gain the skill. Expect to run a drill five or more times before you begin to see the results. Another nice thing you can do for reinforcement is drill-play-drill-play. For example, do a marking drill and then play mini and focus on marking. Then drill zone exchanges and scrimmage while playing zone.

I am also a believer in efficient drills. All too often I see a drill where three people are in action while seventeen people are watching them. There are benefits to big drills, mostly related to team unity, but they are incredibly inefficient from a skill development standpoint. Scrimmaging in particular is detrimental to development of new players. They need touches to improve and in a scrimmage a new player will be limited to 2-3 touches an entire practice! Break your team up into groups of six-eight (depending on the drills that day) and run through the drills in those groups. Your touches per person per practice will increase dramatically. Another great thing to do is play mini (3 on 3 on a small field.) Your rookies will get 2-3 touches in thirty seconds; when you're playing threes, there's nowhere to hide.

Practice time is precious, so use it wisely and efficiently. Have a plan and wear a watch. Run a lot of short drills to maximize focused time and to target a number of skills in a single practice. Drill and play in small groups to maximize touches per person. Good luck and have fun.

How to Plan and Run an Effective Practice

Ben Wiggins

You want to run practices that improve your team as much as possible. Luckily, you already have everything you need. Grab your toolbox and throw out everything that looks like 'intelligence', 'motivational speaking' and 'creativity'. Having a field and discs is useful, but not strictly necessary. Make sure that you have time, energy, patience and a 3x5 index card before you begin.

A day or so before the practice, you should start with the following planning...

1) At the top of the 3x5 card, write the date and time of the practice in the top-left corner.

This helps me to keep the practice in perspective, and realize that this is just one practice, but it might be a tenth of our total practice time, so we can get 10% of our growth here.

2) On the top line, write "Goals:".

Here, we are going to put the 2-3 skills that you want to improve during this practice. Write these at the top of the card. We'll use these statements to guide everything else that we'll do in this practice, so it's important to pick something that is going to be useful. Fundamentals, any successful team will tell you, are almost never overpracticed. If your team drops every third throw, then 'Catch more effectively' should probably be at the top of your card for most practices...there is no amount of 1-3-3 super-special zone that you can do that will replace the benefit you will take from better catching. We, like any elite professional team or a team of middle-school soccer players, can internalize 2-3 important points per practice. Roughly 1 per hour. I'm serious about this...I've practiced on teams with nuclear physicists and concrete pourers and football players and sociologists. Brains don't matter...we aren't trying to teach our brains, 'cause our brains don't play Ultimate. Our feet play Ultimate, and our hands play Ultimate, and they learn about 2-3 points per practice. Overloading your feet with information is one of the few ways that a practice can be hurting your team!

For example's sake, let's say that you want your team to A) Mark more effectively to prevent break-side throws, and B) Dump and swing effectively and earlier in the stall count. If we could do those two things significantly better after just one day, that would be a pretty awesome practice.

3) On the second line of the card, left side, write in the starting time of the practice and write 'Bring it in, announce goals for the practice'. On the third line, write in a time 3 minutes later and write "Warm-up". On the fourth line, after some amount of time that works for your team (anything more than 20 minutes is excessive and probably is more of a workout than a warmup) write "Water". Having a short water break between warm-up and your first drill is a great way for people to focus, remove themselves from the rest of the day, and do those last little things like putting on a knee brace that somehow tend to take 10 friggin minutes if you don't give people a little time for them.

4) On the bottom line of card, write in a time about 3 minutes before the end of practice, and write something like "Recap of team goals, cheer, done". On the second to last line, write in 'Cooldown and Stretch' about 10 minutes before your recap. These things are important for a team that wants to compete in a grueling sport for a long season. Flexibility helps strength and endurance. Cooldown periods help muscle growth, injury prevention, and give people a chance to talk when their minds are still racing with Ultimate...it leaves them wanting to come back to the next practice, which is very important. There's your motivation right there, and you didn't need to give a speech or anything. Writing in these parts at the end of practice ensures that you don't shortchange them (and thus, you don't shortchange the machine-body you are building!).

That was the simple stuff. Now, to focus on our goals we'll need to develop our drills.

For each focus point, we want to build in steps. First, we'll isolate the skill so that we can practice the basic footwork and movements. Then we'll add in decision-making in a structured and simplified environment. Lastly, only after we've had a chance to try these, we'll add in live play and all of the associated complications. This lets our bodies, which are not as smart as us but much more effective, learn from a progression. Throwing people into a live drill, before they have had a chance to learn the

necessary skill, is like throwing them into a hockey game without a stick. It isn't fair, and you shouldn't be surprised if they mentally give up on the skill (or start trying to stab people with their skates).

Let's use our marking example. We want to defend the break side, meaning we need to:

- Move our feet to take up space and avoiding fouling throwers
- Prevent the most usable throwing points without lunging, and
- Watch the disc/core of the thrower instead of their eyes

Now, you'll notice that I didn't use the word "Don't". All of these goals are phrased positively, to encourage our bodies to take on a particular action. You should use the word "Don't" when you want your teammates' bodies to freeze up and take no action. Note: There are very few times that inaction is something good on the Ultimate field. We want dynamic, fast, quick-responding players that are always alert. "Don't" is a reset button, and you should include it in your goal-based directions when you want a mental shutdown. Sounds silly when you say it that way, huh? If you've given yourself time and you have the patience, you can almost always find a way to phrase a goal positively.

So, Drill 1:

3 person marking drill, with 3 variations marking 3-5 times each variation

- Var 1: With arms or hands to work on moving feet (D wins if reaches stall 4-5)
- Var 2: Trying to prevent all throws under the hands/arms (D wins if the throw is a high one)
- Var 3: Full marking, mental focus on watching eyes/core to prevent the first throw attempted (D wins if turnover or throw is prevented entirely).

Sounds easy, right? If this is your first time doing a drill like this, use some of that valuable patience and let people take their time to understand the drill itself, which is confusing if you haven't ever done it. Great teams do not instinctively understand drill formations...they eventually master the skills of the drill. If your players have done a drill like this, they can definitely go through these variations in 5-6 minutes in groups of 3.

If you tell players what is a "win", "loss" or "tie" in most of your drills, then the competitive aspect can be fun and useful in defining success. The first time you do it, it sounds very do-or-die...which can be stressful. Try to do it as often as you can if you have players that respond well to this. Usually, you'll have at least a few players that habitually will ask or remind you about these benchmarks if you forget.

Drill 2: Adding decision making to the fundamental movements

2 line marking drill, with the next person in line talking to the mark

Now that we have our fundamentals learned or even just warmed up, we can make some decisions. One decision you could work on is listening to the sideline help to take away certain throws. If the player behind is calling out 'no inside' and 'no around', the D's goal is to avoid being broken on the called side. A break on the uncalled side is neither a win nor a loss for the thrower or marker (though it is a loss for the talking helper!).

How many reps does each person need? You can either determine the time the drill takes by making an educated guess of how many reps you want, or you can set a time and give everyone as many reps as fit into the time. Either way works, don't overthink it too much, and feel free to extend time if the basic points aren't being met! This is where patience is huge.

Drill 3: Now, with live game action

4 lines on the sideline, 2 offense and 2 defense. O cuts until they receive the disc from a designated thrower. D should discuss the mark beforehand (or, for a higher level drill, only once they start playing D!). The D goal is to stop the live-side cuts with the defender, and stop the break mark cut (and maybe the huck as well, depending on how you are marking) with the mark.

Now, THAT'S a great progression! End this part of your practice plan with a little bit of time to recap the basic points of marking, and (if applicable) remind people of successes that they had and if this is a drill that you are likely to do again.

And definitely take that water break before you move on to the next mental topic. 2 minutes is often plenty. Whatever you write on the card, stick to it...this will help eliminate the 10 minute water break that plagues Ultimate teams and kills your time and practice flow.

How do you know when to extend a drill, or discussion, or even a water break? One way is to have enough experience that you just know. The other way, which works just as well, is to ask. Ask! It sounds simple, but asking in the middle of a water break "do we need a little more rest" is a totally acceptable way to find out if you do, in fact, need a little more of a breather. Many captains think this makes them seem weak, or that they don't know what they are doing. In reality, it shows your team that you care and that you value their opinions, and you want them to do well in practice (rather than you want your practice plan to work well). Budgeting in extra time for every drill is smart.

In following practices, you should come back to that same progression. Maybe next time instead of 5/15/10 minutes on the three drills, you'll spend 2, 10, and 18 as you master the easier steps. Perhaps the next practice after that you come in with a 4th, higher level drill...or you change some of the basic drills to demand more, or to focus on cool stuff. Eventually, large parts of these progressions will be closer to or include real game-play or situational reps of 7 vs. 7. View it as a progression, and don't be afraid to give time or step back when the fundamentals seem rusty or forgotten.

So, now you've got a practice plan with a start, a progression or three, and a good finish. You want to scrimmage, don't you? Here are a couple of thoughts:

- 1) Know your focus going into the scrimmage. Put a minute or two into your plan to bring both teams together and decide that, for example, we want to focus on defense and marking in this scrimmage. This gives players and angle from which to approach the scrimmage. That's good for the super-motivated, who are trying to think about too much. It's also good for the overworked and unfocused players that are having trouble keeping their head out of homework or a relationship and in the game. This could be their entryway. This also helps create goals with which both teams can win by reaching goals, even if one scrimmage team dominates the score...thus a sense of accomplishment for the losing team at least about the focal points of practice. This helps avoid the fugue of post-practice, where all some players remember is the final score of the biggest scrimmage (and forget everything else, good and bad).
- 2) Come back to your focus. Stopping a scrimmage to check in on goals is almost always worth the time. I like to plan Scrimmage Part 1, then 'Re-Focus and Assess' for 2 minutes, then back on the line for Scrimmage Part 2. Hard work followed by assessment plus team involvement is a nice path towards improvement.
- 3) The biggest time waster in a scrimmage is talking on the line and waiting for a pull. Not only will your body ask you to rest more than you need, but your big talkers will talk, a lot. Even if they say something great, they'll only be saying it to 7 people on the team, and message never spreads well. If you can eliminate this time, it is usually worth it. Plus, playing at a faster pace in general makes you more ready for tournaments.
- 4) A nice way to structure a scrimmage with 21 players is to run 3 teams of 7. One team plays offense 5 times in a row, so they can develop some flow and focus on a certain issue. This also forces the offense to play tired. The defenses rotate every-other, so they are always fresh to chase the pull and play with some intensity. The scrimmage pace stays high, and everyone gets an equal number of chances on O and D. You can run this format with one-possession per point (so only the offense has a chance to score) or 1 per team, or full points. In tough conditions and/or with lower level offensive

teams I like to count score for these games by total yards gained: 1 point per yard and double-points for a goal-scoring possession.

The last thing to add into your practice plan is conditioning. I'm convinced that a large part of the benefit we take from conditioning is in seeing our teammates work hard and give their effort. Conditioning does not have to be brilliant, it just has to be reasonable and challenging. It could be groups of 3, with 2 on one side of the field and one on the other, running relay 40s. This works well, and there are a million variations. 1 or 2 variations per practice is plenty, or else you might spend more time describing the conditioning. The simple stuff works. Pick a reasonable and challenging number, and stick to it. One "Don't" for you as a conditioning planner: Don't change to raise the number at the end. This ends up sort of punishing the people that ran all out on the pre-announced number of sprints, and it subconsciously tells them to save something on their sprints in future practices.

In front of you now you should have a 3x5 card with a practice plan written out. The reason we write these out a day before practice is to give or email the plan to at least some people on the team for editing. This helps bring good ideas together, and people tend to buy in to practices more when they have a chance to edit...even if they don't give any editing help, they are now at least partially responsible for the practice plan. This a good thing. Very few good practice plans are written on the way to a practice, or in the hour before a practice. Coming to practice with a thoughtful plan shows your teammates that you care enough to put in the time for them.

If you have time, patience, and energy...and a pair of cleats...go buy a stack of 3x5 cards.

INJURY PREVENTION / FITNESS

Fitness and Injury Prevention

Jamie "Idaho" Arambula

Ultimate is a weird sport where you can get a very eclectic mix of people from different sports across the board. (I did track and boxing before my career started.) Because of that there are very different approaches to what people think regarding fitness and preparation for a college ultimate season.

What may not be obvious to everyone is how closely linked fitness and injury prevention are. In a perfect world, there would be one cookie cutter method to fitness and conditioning where everyone would be physically peaking come Regionals, or Nationals. Unfortunately, this is the real world where injuries, and time constraints exist.

My philosophy to fitness and injury prevention is centered around the fact that think that muscle memory is a huge factor to success. My thoughts are that you are less likely to get hurt if your body has some recognition to what you're asking it to do. When someone has to stop to turn for a disc thrown behind them and they make the awkward stop and twist, people's bodies tend to say, 'Hey, what's this motion? I'm not used to this!', and then 'pop' something gives.

However if you can start from day one replicating the type of full speed direction change motions, SLOWLY at first, to teach the body the proper mechanics, then the chances are much less that you initiate a 'system shock'. This is an easy solution with footwork, reaction, and receiver scenario drills. Do some form of these drills EVERY PRACTICE so that by the time mid season arrives the body does them without thought. It's extremely rewarding the first time a player realizes that they've just 'dropped and chopped' without a second thought about it.

In drills, it's important to make sure that both defensive and offensive footwork is taken into account. Defensive footwork is much more tied into reaction, and those aspects can be added to footwork drills, then integrated into game-like drills.

I don't like to waste practice time with conditioning. I think any success oriented team needs to have separate conditioning hours, whether it's mandatory tracks, or pod-style workouts.

To get fast, there is no substitute for sprinting, both full recovery, sprint, and recovery- type running. I truly believe that 'ultimate shape' is really just a matter of how much time you take to recover.

Tabata style conditioning (sprint intervals 20 seconds on / 10 seconds off) is brutal but very effective. Also you can integrate footwork tabatas as an 'active recovery.'

Proper running form is the foundation for speed. It's nice to be given feedback or to run a set of 'sprint form progressions' to teach the habits that make sprinters even faster.

If you want to be super technical, you can split your conditioning workouts into 'on track', and 'in cleats' phases. Even more technical than that is to split into 'handler' and 'cutter' pods / groups to condition using the sprint length and recovery time to replicate your style of play.

After the mid-point in the season, I think it's useless to run 400 or even 200 meter workouts during conditioning. There is no point on the field where I replicate that sprint form, or time, so why would I allocate time to teach my body that, instead of sprint 30 cut back 10 sprint 30? The latter replicates the style of lane cutter running, and recovery depending on number of reps.

Even if some players do not have access to a local gym, I think it's important to have a weight or isometric type strength program with the objective of keeping the shoulders, knees, and ankles supported throughout the season, as a supplement to all the track work.

In summary:

- Fitness and injury prevention are closely intertwined
- Muscle memory, balance, and reaction are important aspects to injury prevention
- Certain drills should be integrated into every practice/warm up in order to cultivate muscle memory
- Practice time is not conditioning time. A separate conditioning time is necessary to maximize full team meetings
- You can be faster by improving on body mechanics/running form
- Sprinting, and footwork drills with variable recovery, and reps will serve the players better than longer-than-ultimate type runs
- A supplemental strength program to keep shoulders, knees, ankles supported is never a bad idea

Developing a Team Fitness Plan

Deb Cussen

Ultimate requires many different types of physical skills and aspects of physical fitness: speed, agility, strength, power, and endurance to last not only through a long point, but through several days of a tournament. A fitness plan must incorporate these many different aspects of fitness, to encourage development as a complete player. It must progress over the course of a season to encourage peaking at the optimal time, i.e. an important tournament (regionals, nationals), while avoiding overuse injuries, overtraining, and burnout over the course of a long season.

Developing a fitness plan for your team involves determining the length of your season, number and timing of tournaments, fitness and/or team goals for performance at particular tournaments, and when in the season you want to peak. Taking these things into consideration will be helpful for determining the ratio of types of conditioning at a particular point in the season.

Types of conditioning, i.e. workout components:

- Cardiovascular Endurance
- Strength
- Speed Endurance
- Top Sprint Speed
- Power
- Quick Feet/Agility
- Flexibility
- Rest

Cardiovascular Endurance

This includes distance running, biking (road or mountain), swimming, or any other longer (at least 45-60 min), paced type of exercise. Building a good cardio endurance base during the off-season or early pre-season is good for preparing your body for intense training in-season (in practices and in other workouts), as well as helping your longevity in a tournament.

Once in season, this type of training can be good as a recovery workout to help work out tweaks & lactic acid. Or do shorter cardio work (20-45min) as a longer warmup before a strength or other type of workout. However, in season it is beneficial to limit the amount of longer, slower training you do. It can promote slow-twitch muscle fibers, which you don't use as much on the field. It also can inhibit fast-twitch fibers, which are what you want and need when you need to explode out of a cut or into the air to rip down that huck. Once in season, I generally avoid doing this longer cardio conditioning (>45 min) except for maybe 1x/week. Especially in season, make sure cardio workouts are complemented by plenty of speed & agility work to maintain and promote fast twitch.

Strength

Strength can be built with a good gym program or with a variety of body weight resistance exercises. Put a lot of focus on strengthening your core—the core is truly the source of your body's power. Having a strong core will help keep your movements efficient on the field, which can help with longevity, as well as help reduce injuries. The book "Core Performance" is a great resource. Be sure to strengthen all of the major muscle groups used in ultimate, especially quads, hamstrings, glutes, arms.

Don't only focus on major muscle groups though. Keep in mind that you want balance between opposing muscle groups and balance between the left & right sides of your body. Balance exercises (such as standing on one leg or single leg squats, lunges onto balance disc, squats on a bosu ball) promote balance between muscle groups and also can help protect joints (especially knees).

Try to get 2 workouts per week that are focused on strength work. Core and other strength work can be included in combination workouts other days of the week.

Speed Endurance

Being able to keep running and be fast even when tired can give you and your team a huge advantage deep into a long point or late in a tournament. Training for sprint endurance involves getting in longer distances at the track or on the field (>100 yds or m), with rest times set to allow for some but not necessarily complete recovery. Intervals are not done at 100% output, but typically at 70-90%. Someone once told me to pick a pace that you can maintain or go just faster with each rep. However, I like to push that limit and make sure I'm at full fatigue at the end of a workout (sometimes I add one more at the end of a workout and go all out til I can't hit the pace time).

Another benefit of these kinds of workouts is training your body to recover quickly between bursts of intense output. As you progress these workouts through the season, shortening the rest times while trying to maintain pace during the intervals will force your body to learn to recover faster.

Conditioning of this type should generally be done about 2x/week. It can be part of conditioning while at practice, or in a separate workout.

Top Sprint Speed

To train for top sprint speed, work shorter distances than those for speed endurance (< 100 yards or m) at maximum output. Rest times should be adequate to allow multiple reps at 100%. With these sprints, focus on getting to top speed in the fewest number of steps, and maximizing efficiency of movement. Finish the sprint all the way past the finish line--don't slow down early. Think of those last few steps as going hard to the disc--don't let your D sneak in front of you for the block, or get that run-through block yourself.

To improve start speeds, sprints can be shorter (15-20 yds). To work on maintaining top speed for longer distances, increase the distance. Increase the number of reps to improve your endurance at top speed, and to push you mentally—with a lot of reps, you have to focus every time and put in the same amount of effort every sprint. If you don't have a partner to run with to push yourself, use the clock and use your times to motivate. The Michelle Akers workout is a great one for getting in a lot of reps at top speed.

Power

Building power improves your ability to jump, dive, juke, change directions, and get up to full speed—generally be more explosive on the field. Training methods include plyometrics (jumping exercises), medicine ball/ballistics exercises, bounding, and stairs. Include at least a few sets of power exercises in a combo workout at least 2x per week.

Power exercises should focus on being as explosive as possible, generating the max amount of force in the quickest time. With jumping exercises, go for max height and/or distance. With stairs/stadiums, drive your knees and pump your arms. Besides being strong, be efficient in your movements. Don't forget about landings, too. Keep your ankles, knees, and hips from wobbling when absorbing impact.

Quick Feet/Agility

Improving agility will help with any direction change and starting and stopping quickly, making you a better cutter and defender and able to adapt to any movement on the field. There are many types of drills to improve this aspect of your game: agility ladders, quick feet drills, shuffling, carioca/grapevine, pattern running, etc. However you choose to work on this, your goal should be to minimize ground contact time, and maximize the number of contacts in a given distance. Like with top speed sprints, these can be done for shorter distances, with adequate rest for 100% output.

These types of drills can be done in practices as well as part of a combo workout. Try to get in at least a few drills at least 2-3x/week.

Flexibility

Stretching is really important also (although as younger players you may not feel you need it now—keep stretching). To prepare for movement as part of a warmup, stretching should be dynamic. Static stretching after a workout, when your muscles are already warm, is a good way to cool down.

Rest

Be sure to take rest time each week (at least 1 day) to let your muscles (and mind) recover from hard work the rest of the week. Don't forget that getting extra rest during the week before a tournament is important for feeling fresh and not fatigued.

Workouts outside of practice are a great time to get a lot of extra throwing in. One of the best ways to help a team is to be consistent with the disc even as you get tired. You have to practice throwing tired in order to be able to do this. When working out with a friend, try to get touches on the disc during rest breaks. Try to get a lot of different types of throws in at the end of workouts, including long throws. Focus on clean catches too. Go for 100 in a row before going home.

Workout Progression

I think it's important to recognize the progression of workouts throughout the season. Part of designing workout progression is to determine how much time you have to train before the season starts (pre-season workouts), how long your season is, how many tournaments you'll go to, and what your goals for performance are at each tournament during the season.

It is also important to think about team commitment time during a typical week. Weekends normally include tournaments or longer practices. How many and how long are your weekday practices? What kind of space and time is available per week for team or individual workouts? Conditioning can be included in practices. Workouts outside of practice offer focused conditioning in a shorter time period, and can complement the types of conditioning you are getting in practices.

In pre-season, before tryouts, the focus should be relatively higher in power/strength and endurance. It's good to start with building a cardio base and strength base, with most workouts focused on cardio (some longer time/distance as well as more intervals work) and strength work. Add in speed endurance work to continue to build a strong endurance level that will be beneficial during a game & through a tournament.

As you approach the main competitive series, workouts should increase in agility and speedwork relative to the other types. In general, speedwork and the more explosive plyos are tough on muscles and will break them down (somewhat) in order to build them back up stronger & quicker. As such, large amounts of these types of conditioning should be done when you are feeling pretty fresh and with adequate rest between sets. Smaller sets can be done when you're already somewhat fatigued or as part of a bigger workout.

You can combine different components into a single workout, to work in speed/agility while still training for endurance. A sample combined workout:

Dynamic warmup

Plyos (30 sec rest between sets): single leg bounds 2x10 each leg; tuck jumps 2x10,

Agility: 1 foot lateral movement 2x20 each foot; both feet lateral movement 2x20; base rotations (below); 4 point cone drill (below)

Speedwork: starts, 6x20 yds, walk back to recover. Change up starting position (each foot forward, face backward & turn each way, start on stomach)

Sprint endurance: stinkers (described below) 2 sets of 3, 1:30 rest between each stinker, 3-4 min between sets.

Do what you can to make workouts fun—when you are at practice or with a group, do relays or make games out of the exercises. Push yourself against the clock, and push each other to be faster and stronger. Working hard together builds team camaraderie and mental strength. Putting in the work before the season starts shows dedication and commitment to the team, and will help prevent injuries later.

Resources I use for training ideas:

- Past & current teammates, some of whom got ideas from Michelle Akers and the US Women's soccer team. Specifically, Vida Towne and Beth Wise showed me the value of fitness and training, and how much impact it can have on my play.
- "Core Performance" by Mark Verstegen, book and website www.coreperformance.com
- CrossFit: www.crossfit.com
- Exercise Prescription on the net: www.exrx.net
- "The Vision of a Champion" by Anson Dorrance (UNC Women's soccer coach)—the appendix has great training info
- UW "IRONDAWG" – training manual from UW men's soccer team

Following are examples of activities and exercises for each conditioning type.

FYI: web links may not be current, but exercises from "core performance" can be searched for on their website.

- **Quick Feet/Agility**

Goal: To improve reaction time, cutting ability, footwork, and movement on offense and defense.

One Foot Lateral Movement: works on independent foot movement
www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=3&id=546&o=eod

Both Feet Lateral Movement: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=93&wID=3

Base Rotations: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=3&id=548&o=eod

Rapid Response 2 inch Runs Forward:
www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=89&wID=11

Cross-Over Quick/Stabilize:
www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=203&wID=15

3-Hurdle to Acceleration: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=199&wID=13

3-Hurdle Continuous: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=3&id=539&o=eod

Squirms: 30 yds total, with a 360° turn at 10 yds & 20 yds. Turn different ways each turn. Goals are to turn in as few steps as possible, regain balance & straighten as quickly as possible after turn. Walk back to start between reps.

4 point cone drill: 1 central cone, 4 outer cones 5 yds from center at 3, 6, 9, & 12 o'clock. Start at 12 o'clock, go in to center and cut out to 3, back to center then to 6, etc. When you get back to 12, reverse direction all the way back around. Do this running forward, shuffling, backward towards center/forward out, etc. Rest ~90 sec between reps (or do as 3-4 person relay)

Mirroring: With a partner, practice reacting to each another. One person leads, changing direction at will, while the other tries to mirror. Can be done 2-dimensional by shuffling side to side only. Can be done 3-D, with shuffle side-to-side and running forward/backward. 20-30 sec on, rest 1 min, switch leaders.

Shuffle Sprints: Set up 3 cones in a line at 0, 5, and 25 yds. Shuffle side to side between the 5 yd cones for 10 sec. When 10 sec is up, no matter where you are between the cones, turn and sprint to the 25 yd cone.

- **Power & Strength (Plyometrics, Medicine Ball/Ballistics, Bounding, Stairs, weights)**

Goal: Improve overall explosiveness, power, and speed for sprinting, jumping, and direction changes. Improve first step.

20-minute Circuit Workout: Can be shortened to 10-15 minutes when part of a larger workout. Circuit sets can be modified as well; ideally they should take ~45 seconds. I typically do 5 pushups, 10 crunches (or some twisting/side-to-side abwork w/ med ball), 15 squats.

Bounding: Forward, Side-to-Side (zig-zag 45° forward each bound), Lateral (absorb & push off outside leg), Single Leg; Standing triple jump; Lateral Bound Quick Then Stabilize:
www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=116&wID=3

Stairs: Single stair (hit every stair, focus on quick turnover/fast-twitch); double stair (longer stride, drive the knee for power); single leg hops (switch feet every 3 steps, minimize ground contact by not absorbing)

Plyometrics: Squat jumps, lunge jumps, star jumps, ankle pogos, jumps over a cone (single & double leg; lateral & forward/back).

Sportsmetrics Jumping Program: designed to help decrease ACL injuries in female athletes. Good evidence behind it. www.scfpt.com/Education/Stealth%20Plyo%20program.htm

Medicine Ball/Ballistics: Some can be done w/ partners, some alone.

Squat to Press Throw: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=150&wID=15

Granny Toss Back Overhead: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=152&wID=11
Chest Pass:

(Standing) www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=3&id=490&o=eod

(Kneeling) www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=137&wID=3

Overhead Pass-Kneeling or Standing

Perpendicular Throw: www.coreperformance.com/exercise.php?p=1&s=2&id=144&wID=3

Multi-direction throw: throw with a partner to different sides, heights, etc. Can be done standing or kneeling.

If you want some good examples of weight exercises or routines, check out crossfit or the exercise Rx on the net.

- **Speedwork (shorter distances, adequate rest for 100% output)**

Goal: Increase speed, power, and explosiveness in sprinting.

Starts: 20 yard sprints, different starting positions (face forward, face backward & turn to each side, lying down, jumping, backpedal 5 yds then sprint forward)

Michelle Akers sprint intervals: take full rest allotted so you can sprint 100% every time.

Rest 2 min between each distance change

20 yd x 12 (30 sec rest)

40 yd x 12 (40 sec rest)

60 yd x 8 (1 min rest)

80 yd x 4 (1:15 rest)

For a heavier, stand-alone workout, do an extra 80 yd and add a set of 3x100 yd w/ 1:30 rest

- **Sprint Endurance (longer distances at 80-90% output)**

Goals: Increase speed, cardiovascular & muscle endurance. Improve recovery ability (decrease necessary recovery time). To be fast even when tired.

Stinkers: Stinkers x 4: set up a cone 50 yds from start line, to cone and back twice = 1 stinker. Do these as a relay in groups of 4, or if alone rest 1.5 minutes between each.

Graham Crackers: Running the perimeter of the playing field proper, 4 laps total. Start at a front endzone corner, sprint long side of field, jog the remaining three sides. 2nd lap, sprint 2 sides, jog remaining 2. 3rd lap, sprint 3 sides, 4th lap sprint all 4 sides.

30-60-90's: Set 2 cones ~10 yards apart. Run back & forth, cutting around each of the cones, as many times as possible for 30 sec, 60 sec, 90 sec, 60 sec, 30 sec. If running with a partner, rest while partner is running, otherwise equal rest after running. Plant & explode out of turn around each cone, don't make rounded turns.

Throwing tired: Sprint with a partner, throw 10 throws each after each sprint. Make sure to vary throws, including wide and low.

½ field or field width x 6

Full field x 4

Sports Medicine Section

Jamie Nuwer MD

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The Sports Medicine section of this manual is designed to help players stay healthy by incorporating injury prevention into training regimens.

This section contains information on the following topics:

- I. Warm-up and stretching
- II. ACL tear prevention
- III. Layout safety
- IV. First Aid Kit assembly

For more information on these and other Sports Medicine topics including flowcharts for managing common injuries visit www.injurytimeout.org. Play hard, play safe!

I. Warm-up and Stretching

June Srisethnil PT DPT

Jamie Nuwer MD

Warming up before exercise is important because it prepares you mentally and physically for the game. In the past there was a strong focus on stretching, but over the last twenty years there have been mixed reviews and research regarding the benefits of statically stretching muscles.

Below are the definitions of terms used in this section:

Warm-up – the sequence of activities you do prior to full speed game play, scrimmage or practice including stretching, plyometrics and/or drills.

Static stretching – traditional stretching exercises that put tension on muscles in a lengthened position and are held statically.

Dynamic stretching – movements that take joints and muscles through the full range of motion and are not held but performed in a controlled manner, gradually progressing in speed and intensity until optimal force can be generated without injury.

Plyometrics – exercises that focus on improving balance and muscles strength.

The focus of warming up should be to gradually increase your heart rate and circulation to deliver oxygen to muscles, to increase core body temperature, and to prepare your joints and muscles for participation in your sport.

Traditionally, static stretching has been an integral part of warm-up routines. However, recent studies and reviews in sports medicine research suggest that static stretching before exercise does not prevent injury and does not improve performance. It is unclear at this time whether static stretching decreases performance. If your players enjoy static stretching and would like to continue using it in their warm-up, it most likely will not hurt their performance unless they are stretching excessively (more than a minute per muscle).

Dynamic stretching is the most important part of warming up. It prepares your joints and muscles for the movements required in your sport while increasing heart rate, circulation, and core body temperature. In Ultimate, dynamic stretching means preparing your body for just about everything including lunging, bending, reaching, jumping, landing, running, twisting, pivoting, and shuffling.

The following is an optimal warm-up for Ultimate:

- Jog/run until sweating
- Dynamic stretching (5-10 minutes)

- Plyos - not on a tournament day (5-10 minutes)
- Drills that simulate the game, increasing in intensity (5-10 minutes)

(See the topic II for a detailed description of a recommended warm-up routine)

When to Use Static Stretching

After a workout is the ideal time to use static stretching. Your players can increase their flexibility and help their muscles relax. Stretching also increases awareness of injuries to muscles and joints. Unfortunately, no conclusive evidence exists indicating that stretching decreases post-exercise soreness.

Notes for Static Stretching

- Static stretching is best done after exercise or on your off-days after a brief warm-up.
- Stretching should be done without need to maintain balance. Hold onto a chair or bench or sit on the floor.
- Ease into the stretch slowly and with control. Do not bounce.
- Breathe deeply and exhale to relax into the stretch.
- Hold each stretch for 30 seconds. Relax 10 seconds. Repeat 1-3 times per muscle.

Example Set

Muscle	Stretch
Hamstrings	stand with foot on low sturdy object, knee straight, stick chest out and lean forward
Hip Flexors	kneel in exaggerated lunge, tuck pelvis, and press hips forward
Gluteal/Piriformis	lie on your back, pull knee and ankle toward opposite shoulder
Quadriceps	lie on your side, grab leg above ankle, tighten abs and bend knee bringing heel to buttock
Calves	lunge forward, feet pointed straight ahead, back knee straight, and shift weight into back heel while lunging forward.
Side Bends	cross arms over chest and bend to the side as far as possible
Twists	sit on floor, bend one knee up and rotate trunk in same direction using shoulder to twist further
Shoulders	find a friend, put a hand on their shoulder with arm straight and turn your trunk away from your arm
Neck	roll your head in a circle

For more information, including how to test flexibility, go to www.injurytimeout.org.

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II. ACL Tear Prevention with the PEP Program

Adapted for Ultimate Frisbee by Jamie Nuwer MD

See video at www.injurytimeout.org

Introduction

The Santa Monica ACL Tear Prevention Program (PEP Program) showed a 70% reduction in ACL injuries in a 1500 female soccer players. This program has been modified for Ultimate by Dr. Jamie Nuwer MD. The PEP Program should take at most 20 minutes including warm-up jog, dynamic stretching and plyometrics.

Gradual increase

- Begin the exercises at 1/3 the amount listed
- After 2 weeks increase the regimen to 2/3 the amount listed
- After 2 more weeks do the full workout for the rest of the season

Set up field before warm-up

- 10 yards marker for dynamic stretching
- Set up cones for diagonal runs: 3 cones in a line 5 yards apart. 5 yards wide and offset 2.5 yards another 3 cones in a line 5 yards apart

DYNAMIC STRETCHING -- 3-5 minute warm-up jog first

F=forward, B=backward, R=right, L=left

Exercise	Form tips	Muscle groups stretched
Heel to toe raise	Rise up on toe	Calves
20 toe taps each leg	Keep leg directly underneath body	Shins
High knees (F, B)	Drive knees up	Hamstrings
Butt kicks (F, B)	Heel to butt	Quads
Slides (R, L)	Butt low	Groin and Hips
Lunge Twists	Pull knee up to chest, lunge, twist to both sides, reach back far enough to feel a stretch in your hip flexor (make sure you lean to the same side as your front leg)	Butt, lower back, abs, hip flexor, upper back, lats

If you are at a tournament and not doing plyos, add these:

Exercise	Form tips	Muscle groups stretched
Grapevine (F, B)	Fast feet	Full body
High jumps (F, B)	3 step and explode, land on 2 feet with correct form	Full body

PLYOMETRICS (Balancing, Jumping and Running) -- to be skipped on tournament day

Balancing

F=forward, B=backward, R=right, L=left

Exercise	Form tips	Muscle groups worked
2 x 20 Lunges (10 F, 10 B)	Align knee with ankle (no wobbling or caving), must be able to see your toes in front (never less than 90 degree angle at the knee joint)	Quads (F), Hamstrings (B)
2 x 10 Kickbacks each leg	Stationary leg is slightly bent with good hips-knee-ankle alignment (no wobbling or caving), Kick straight back as high as you can, use your arms to balance	Hamstrings
2 x 30 Calf raises each leg	Slowly rise up with good hips-knee-ankle alignment	Calves

Jumping

F=forward, B=backward, R=right, L=left

Exercise	Form tips	Muscle groups worked
20 hops (L, R)	Focus on landing (not speed or height)	Legs and core
20 hops (F, B)	Focus on landing (not speed or height)	Legs and core
20 single leg hops (F, B)	Focus on landing and alignment (not speed or height) – extra careful not to snap knee back to straight	Legs and core
20 scissor jumps	Focus on landing and alignment: align knee with ankle (no wobbling or caving), must be able to see your toes in front (never less than 90 degree angle at the knee joint)	Legs and core

Running

Exercise	Form tips	Skill worked
Shuttle runs for 60 sec (F, B) 2.5 yards at the cones already set up	Fast feet, short steps, tap lines with one leg and push off with other leg	Agility – forward to backward
Diagonals – 3 times through each, work on form, NOT speed	Sprint facing cone and at last step turn sideways to prepare for the turn, accelerate hard off the turn, tap lines with one leg and push off with other leg, maintain good hip-knee-ankle alignment (no caving or wobbling)	Agility - diagonal
Bounding 40 yards x 2	Drive knee up. Focus on landing and alignment.	Sprinting form – “pistons”

A final word on ACL tear prevention:

Remind your players to land lightly on the balls of both feet and bend their knees deeply when landing a jump. Also tell them that if they get hit in the air it is safer to fall over than to attempt to land on their feet. This will prevent many types of injuries.

You can help your players understand their own knee alignment by video-taping them during these exercises. It may help motivate them to improve their running, jumping, and landing mechanics.

Don't forget to encourage your athletes to go to the gym to find and fix quad-hamstring imbalances and leg versus leg imbalances. The hamstring should lift 75% of what the quad can lift. Lift each leg separately to make sure each they are equal.

III. Layout Safety

Jamie Nuwer MD

Layouts are a common way to get injured. You can minimize this risk by teaching proper layout technique and decision-making early in the season.

Upper body

Start by teaching proper upper body and arm technique. The key is to land with most body weight on the chest and abdomen rather than the arms. The arm catching or D-ing the disc should be extended to prevent landing with a lot of body weight on the wrist, arm, or elbow. The other arm can be extended or bent in such a way that the athlete will not land with a lot of weight on it. To allow the disc to slide easily on the ground make sure players flip their wrist so that the disc is upside down. This prevents jamming injuries.

A simple drill is to get in pairs. One player throws from standing. The other player kneels. The thrower tosses the disc to one side. The receiver leans from the knees to catch the disc with arm extended and disc upside down and lands on their chest/abdomen.

Lower body

There is a tendency to drop one knee as if jumping. To minimize knee injuries players should fully extend their legs and land on their hips and abdomen. If a player cannot master this technique, knee pads can help prevent knee injuries from repetitive banging on the ground.

Find a soft patch of grass, mud, snow, or sand. Have the player hold a disc and sprint to full speed and dive forward. The player should focus on fully extending arms and legs. They should land on their chest and hips.

Decision-making

Players should be taught to avoid any layout that may cause injury to another player. Injuries are far more frequent on defensive bids. When making a defensive bid, players should avoid laying out into an opponent's back or leg (laying out "through" the receiver). This is often a foul or "dangerous play." If a come-from-behind layout is attempted, the defender should focus on diving to the side of the receiver to hit the disc and not the player. Lateral "poach" layouts are dangerous because you cannot see the intended receiver/defender. In this situation players risk getting trampled or may seriously injure the knee, leg, or ankle of another player.

To teach this, create two lines running directly at a thrower 30-40 yards away. The offensive player sprints forward and the defensive player tries to make a play on the disc from behind. If the throw is directly in front of the receiver or to the defensive player's side then a layout bid is appropriate. If the throw is to the side opposite the defensive player a layout across the offensive player is dangerous and should not be attempted.

IV. The Ultimate First Aid Kit

Jamie Nuwer MD

Wound supplies

Hydrogen peroxide (it stings less than other cleaners)

Antibacterial ointment

Band-aids ("sport" ones bend and stay on)

2x2 gauze pads (for cleaning wounds)

4x4 non-stick gauze pads (can be cut to any size)

Cloth tape

Duct tape

Scissors (blunt ended, the ones trainers use)
Gloves (latex-free, always use gloves when dealing with blood)

Blister supplies

Mole skin
Scissors (blunt ended, the ones trainers use)
Gloves (latex-free, always use gloves when dealing with blood)

Insect sting supplies

Tweezers
Hydrocortizone cream

RICE (Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate) supplies

Ace wraps
Instant ice
Plastic bags for ice

Concussion supplies

SCAT card (www.athletictherapy.org/docs/SCATconcussionCard.pdf)
Pen

Emergency supplies

Directions to the nearest hospital (for any location at which you practice or play)
Emergency contact info for each player
Informed consent to first-aid treatment forms for each player (more on this below)
Prescription medication for players with asthma or severe allergy requiring EpiPen use
Emergency blanket (these are plastic, for hypothermia)
Rescue breathing mask for CPR (someone on the team should be certified in CPR)

Liability

Medications should never be given by a coach to a player. A coach may be held liable should something happen to an athlete that they gave medication to (even muscle rubs). If you intend to give any medications to a player, especially a minor, it is a good idea to include them specifically on your informed consent form (http://www.injurytimeout.org/pdfs/sample_consent_form.pdf).

STRATEGY

How to Handle Subbing at Tournaments (Without a Coach)

Katey Forth

Playing and subbing as a captain is one of the hardest leadership tasks in ultimate, but as a leader you cannot shy away from subbing as it can determine the outcome of the game. If you have a very small roster there may not be much you can do, but for a team that has 12+ players or a large number of inexperienced players subbing is crucial.

The key to subbing is captain preparation. Think about your players, talk to co-captains and/or more experience players to get a feel for your players' strengths/weaknesses and potential for development. Write these down and categorize players, grouping them so you understand who are interchangeable.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

Who are handlers, who are deeps, who are defenders, who have the biggest impact on the game (positive and negative), who are my top 7/ bottom 7 and does this change in windy conditions, who are my head cases, who are my dependable players? Totally geek out on this pregame analysis and think through lots of possible gametime scenarios, such as: ultimate point on defense, who do you play? That way, in the heat of the game when you scan the sideline (exhausted) you will be able to call a good line. However, you will need to be flexible in your ongoing prep to recognize a developing player, fatiguing players, and players having a good/bad day. The answers to all the subbing questions above can change within a season and a tournament.

Now for the subbing.

You have a number of options.

- 1) free subbing – lets players decide when they play. At the college level this can be tricky as many players are unaware of their abilities, position on the team and the importance of balancing a line. However, free subbing is a good way to determine the aggressiveness or eagerness of a player
- 2) Pod free subbing – lets players decide within a player-type pod. E.g. Handler, middle and long pod with 3, 2 and 2 playing spots for each point, respectively.
- 3) Captain assisted subbing – a combination of 1 or 2 with captain subbing adjustments to help maximize the line. E.g. "Player X, could you play next point, please. We need another handler in this wind". In this option, the captain is simply tweaking the lines.
- 4) Captain directed subbing – calling the subs for all the points.

Of course throughout a tournament you can use different techniques: free subbing for easy, less important games and captain assisted/directed subbing for important games.

One of the primary dangers of captain subbing stems from the dual role of peer and leader. It's a very difficult position to be in. However, tactfully talking with players upfront and in advance about their playing time and role can set expectations correctly and help to maintain team morale.

Making Game-Time Adjustments

Christie Kim

There are only a few broad points that I will make about this topic. I could easily get into the nitty gritty details and specifics about my opinions on making game-time adjustments in certain situations, but this article is just meant to give some insight and perspective on my own ultimate philosophies. The three points I will make deal with preparation, subbing, and risk-taking.

As a short prelude, before I dive into everything – the reason why I am writing this article (and the reason why you're reading it) is because no one would be concerned with this subject if our overarching goal was to lose games. If it was, we would all be happy just running around playing throw and catch. But we play for the taste of victory. We play to win games. We play to be the best team out there. With this being said, being able to make adjustments within games is crucial if you want to play to win.

Before you can even think about making real-time decisions – or better yet, before you even step onto the ultimate field – you need to be prepared for what you are about to face. Do your homework. Know your team and its strengths, and know what offenses and defenses are in your pocket, like the back of your hand. Similarly, but more importantly, know the other team. Being able to know other players and other team's strategies can come from years of playing against them, going to tournaments and learning about your competition, and just being observant. Having this knowledge before stepping onto the field will allow you to anticipate certain situations and make quicker decisions. For example, if a team consistently beats you with their inside-out flicks rather than their around backhands, you will know to shift your marks so they are flatter. Take stock of apparent weaknesses your opponent has within their offense or defense, and use them to your advantage.

Exploitation is key here. Find their holes, and go for the kill. On offense, have a number of plays off of stopped disc situations that are effective for your team. Don't try and run the same couple of set plays for the entirety of the game; this makes you predictable to your opponent's defense. You want to take what the defense is giving you, but you want them to constantly be on their toes as well. On the flip side, if you're on defense, stop your opponent's pull play if it's beating you every time. Don't let them run the same play over and over again while getting away with it. Throw some kind of junk for 5 passes, and then transition to man. Keep their offense guessing, and make them uncomfortable. Force them to do something they don't want to do.

Have a subbing strategy. Subbing is one of those things that never gets enough credit when done well but almost always takes the blame when something goes wrong. Subbing is an extremely difficult aspect of the sport, but it's so critical in big games and high pressure situations. Have a strategy and make sure it has been clearly communicated to the team and individual players. I won't get into subbing philosophies here, but be organized and know which players can best contribute in specific situations.

Lastly, don't be afraid to take a risk. It's so easy for teams to fall back on certain players and plays in the hopes that "next point, it will work" or "player A is having a bad game, let's see if she can get it together." It's very hard to dig yourself out of a hole late in the game. If your best O line handlers are turning the disc over and throwing it away on low-percentage throws, put in your D line handlers (but only if your lines are flexible enough so that your D line handlers know how to work with the O line cutters, otherwise consider putting in 7 capable D line players). Don't be too rigid in sticking with O and D lines if that strategy seems to be failing. Also, experiment with making strategic adjustments early on in the season against teams you know you will be facing later on. You will have a better idea of what works and what doesn't, and you will develop more confidence to make the necessary changes when the big moment comes.

The bottom line is: if something isn't working, make a change even if it's a subtle one. Knowledge is power when it comes to making split-second decisions. It may feel more comfortable to stick with old routines and rotations, but be confident in your team and what you know about your opponent. Keep an open mind, be flexible and take some risks. You may just find that the rewards can be great.

Assessing and Playing to Your Team's Strengths

Christie Kim

Every team has its weaknesses. Similarly, every team has its strengths. In order to be successful and have your team play to its best potential, you need to take careful stock of what those particular strengths and weaknesses are. You will need to start by evaluating individual players and their skill sets before you can move on to looking at the team as a whole.

To begin your assessment, start thinking about what types of players you have on your team. How many handlers do you have that can throw deep and break the mark? Do you have reliable receivers who can get open consistently under or away? Are there people who don't have the best throws but are just downright raw and athletic? Every player has something that they're particularly good at, and it's the captain's (or coaches'/strategy thinkers') responsibility to recognize what those are and exploit them within the bigger picture of their team strategies.

Once you have taken stock of what each individual can contribute on the field, it is crucial to differentiate those who are athletically and skillfully well rounded to those who are more role players on your team. Role players are different from the well-rounded players because they fit more specifically into different parts of the game, namely the part of the game that they excel in the most. In my opinion, it is more valuable to identify and utilize what these role players can offer, rather than just rely on your playmakers to carry the team.

A good example of a role player is someone who maybe doesn't have the best skill set but who is fast and has a huge mark. This person would fit in perfectly as the marker in your zone defense. Another example of a role player is a defensive player who doesn't have the best skill set but who is quick and has excellent footwork. This player is an ideal candidate for defending handlers. If you have someone who can guard handlers well, and effectively limit their ability to get open on resets and get off break throws, you've just increased the probability of gaining breaks for your team.

After you've identified your role players, you are now more equipped to fit all the pieces together in order to create set plans for your team. The examples below are some ideas of ways to approach formulating offensive and defensive tactics.

Based on your personnel, your offense should play to your team's strengths. If you have deep throwers and fast, capable receivers, consider a horizontal stack or some kind of spread/iso movement off of a stopped disc. If your handlers' throws are limited, consider a vertical stack with a lot of lateral disc movement (dump-swings) to open up the field. Additionally, over the last several years, zone defensive strategies (namely, the 4 man cup) have become more prevalent among college women's teams. With this being said, it is extremely important to consider your zone offense. Again, create a strategy that plays to your team's strengths. Do you need to have 2 handlers behind the disc with dishes to each other and crashes into the cup? Or do you need 3 handlers back with the idea of breaking the mark for big swings across the field? All of this is dependent on what your players are capable of doing.

Defensively, note your primary defenders and put them on your opponent's best offensive players. Having good matchups is an important part of man defense, especially in college where there is often a larger spectrum of athletic ability amongst players. It is also important to have players who can generate an offense for your D line once you get the block. This includes handlers who can generate offense using both their throws and their legs. If you have players who can break the mark easily, exploit that and work the disc down the break side of the field. If your team isn't very fast or quick, consider having a primary zone defense and trap situation to throw against teams with weak throwers or in windy conditions.

With all of this being said, I'd like to note that as important as it is for role players to play to their strengths, every ultimate player should be constantly striving to improve all aspects of their game. Just because someone acts as a role player in one area of the game, it does not act as an excuse to neglect the other parts. A well-rounded player gives a team more flexibility and options on offense and defense, and subsequently contributes to an overall more dynamic game of ultimate. Since it is very difficult to have a team comprised of perfect ultimate players (what a dream!), we are forced to strategize with what we have. The main take away here is that you need to be observant, and you need to do your homework. A lack of keen player/game observation and sloppy strategy planning can lead to a disappointing season, even if you have one or two big playmakers on your team. The idea is to evaluate what's in your arsenal, use your whole roster effectively, and create a strategy that highlights and complements these things.

Assessing and Playing to Your Team's Strengths

Katey Forth

While this seems like a straight forward task for a captain, there are many components that should be factored into team playing strategy. Understanding the team's composite abilities as well as players' individual capabilities is an important first step in establishing a plan. Yeah you want to win, everyone wants to win...but the first decision that needs to be made is short term success versus long term success. Do you want to win this weekend or at Regionals? This is a great talking point for the team so they can put losses into context.

So, how do you determine how to balance the short term success vs long term success?

Reasons to go for short term success strategies

- It's later in the season/tournament and you need to just win the game (i.e. game to go at Regionals or chance to advance to the team's first tournament final)
- You want to keep your Juniors and Seniors happy
- You have low numbers and wins are essential for morale and the future of the team

Reasons for long term success strategies

- You have a well established program
- You want to grow your program
- You want to involve everyone in play
- You want to keep your Freshman and Sophomores happy
- You want to have a better team later in season

Once you know the general approach you are taking, the utilization of your players is easier. The best way to assess a player is in true tournament game play; prior to your first tournament you can get an idea for skills, but impact on a game (positive and negative) can be independent of number of skills - so be ready to reassess.

There are two parts to an initial assessment: Raw Talent (unlikely to be improved) and Technique (areas for coaching)

Raw talent

Speed

Catching (good hand eye coordination)

Field sense

Technique

Cutting – timing, shape of cut, ability to loss defender

Throwing – backhand, flick, IO, OI, hammers, distance, release point, while under pressure, throwing in the wind, throwing choices, breaking mark

Catching – correct hand orientations, catching at highest jumping point, catching under pressure

Field sense – movements relative to teammates

Defensive positioning and foot work

Marking

This separation of skills helps to develop a realistic coaching plan for a particular player, but also allows you to determine a realistic role for each player. If you are investing in a long term strategy then you are looking to help all the players expand their skills in the technique category. A nurturing, “no shame”, positive atmosphere for players to keep extending their skills and practicing them in game play will likely have the best long term results. You can do this with a team-wide weekly goal of improving one of the technique categories and then all players are allowed to experiment with that skill in a game. Alternatively, it could be a specific goal for each player. Regardless, the strategy should be designed to utilize every player in a point. If a rookie keeps picking up the disk on a turn –

let them, maybe they'll be a great handling addition at regionals. Confidence is so crucial to performance; you want to be careful not to squash confidence or enthusiasm. Of course, there may be some loving guidance needed if that same rookie keeps turning it on the first throw. In this long term plan, upperclass-women will need to be in on the plan so they encourage lowerclass-women and do not hog the disk. (Those tactics are more useful for short term success).

Short term success strategies take the skills of all the players of a given moment and try to translate it into maximum success.

Questions to ask yourself:

Are you a deep team of talent/skill? If yes, then are you a strong throwing team? If yes, how many passes can your team complete before a turn? If this number is high, and you have reasonable breakmark thrower, then you are looking to work the disc up the field, patiently.

If you are less deep in the throwing skill and have good defenders, a field position game of huck and defend will yield the best success. This strategy is particularly good if you have an exceptional hucker that can gain valuable yards without many touches. Of course, in this strategy defensive transition is very important and if the team understands the team strategy, they will play defense with enthusiasm. Caveat – In windy conditions, a skilled throwing team may find it difficult to string together many passes and a huck and defense strategy may be optimal. This is for you, the captain to assess and make the game-time adjustments.

Most college teams will need a mix of these two strategies and creative practices could help switch between each playing approach. E.g. Game to 3, everyone has to touch the disc for a score to count, or game to 3 with the cleanest, most efficient offense.

Assessing Team Strengths

Ben Wiggins

An important question:

What is my team good at doing in games?

As you can probably imagine, the answers to this question are going to be things that you want to focus on for successful strategies. Answers that you find do not fit this question are probably things that your team should avoid. An incredibly experienced player or coach might be able to figure these things out by hunch after watching your team for just one game. Then again, they might be fooled! Here are my tips for determining what are your team's best abilities:

1) Watch, repeat

In analyzing your team, one vision of one game is just not going to give you enough information. In science, we like to ask a question and then find the answer over, and over, and over again. This lets us ask questions between experiments or games as our ideas change. You need to find a way to watch lots of your team playing.

The hard way to do this is to watch lots of games over time. First off, this means you aren't playing...this is a worst-case scenario for most of us. Secondly, it means that you have to use lots of time and probably multiple tournaments coming up with good ideas.

The easy way to do this is to get film of your team, so that you can watch a certain game (or several games) many times. It doesn't have to be the best film, or the best game. Any game or 3 will work very well.

2) Look for what works

Obviously, you are watching film to find out what parts of your team are strong (and, by doing this, you'll also figure out weaknesses). If 'working' means 'scoring goals', then you should focus on the last throw of each possession. Are these hucks? Endzone throws? Leading throws down the line? Hammer cuts? You can categorize these plays and determine their relative success rates (for example, you might be 2/6 on hucks, 3/3 on upline moves, and 1/2 on hammers). Numbers help. Scoring isn't necessarily the best way to determine success, though. If you ask Fury's brilliant coach Matt Tsang, I suspect he would point you towards recording possessions in three categories: turnovers, goals, and easy goals that the defense didn't have a chance at. That last category is especially beneficial to your team (ask Matty if this doesn't make sense, he is way smarter than I am) and should be noted as such. Similarly, you could do this by rating possessions as being: turnovers, goals, and 'goals by your non-star players'. That last category is, again, more valuable (since it is something your team can do without relying on Georgia to sky six imperial stormtroopers).

Another way to measure success would be yardage. Especially for teams at levels of the game where the average possession does NOT end in a goal (note: there are very few levels of the game and conditions in which this is actually true!) you might want to judge your success on yardage gained. If 5-yard I/O breaks tend to be on possessions where your team moves 40-yards, and your team only picks up 20 yards on the average possession, then it might be time to call more I/O break-plays for your team!

3) Find combinations

It's not a secret that we all throw better to certain players. I spent 5 years at University of Oregon tossing hammers in the general direction of Doug McKenzie...that darn play worked. By this point, I can predict about 4 seconds ahead when Jenn Wilson is about to throw a high-release backhand to Miranda Roth. Or the Roth-to-Duffy flick-huck. Terrifying. Who is your best-receiver, or the player that you have an eye for their favorite cut? You probably know.

As you watch games, look for combinations that tend to work. Those players might not know it, but those are the players to keep calling in 1-2-3-4 strings, or the players that should be encouraged to call each other on stopped-disc plays. Get them on the field together! If you have a player like Gwen Ambler on your team, then probably all of your teammates like throwing hucks to her. That's not the connection I'm looking for...but I am interested in the dump-swing team that tends to get it done right, or the defensive pairing that seem to end up with one marking the thrower as the other blocks the throw.

Sure, you want to be unpredictable. In a perfect world, every player on your team throws to every other equally well. You'd be unscoutable. The reality is that with finite practice time, it is useful to use those connections that already have chemistry.

4) Have expectations

Teams that love person-D have a tough time adding in zone defense. I've seen this over and over, and vice versa as well. They'll try a zone, and the other team will score, and they'll abandon it immediately. They have, mathematically, missed the point.

When you play person-D, do you expect a block on every possession? Of course not. You have an expectation for maybe scoring 1/3 D-points, or getting a chance at a block on every point, or something like that. You should hold your zone defenses to the same expectation. If they don't work immediately, it may be similar to your first person-D point back in your first fall rookie tournament. You are looking for plays or sets that work at your expected level.

You have a handler with great hucks, but she had four turnovers last game. Was this bad? What was your **expectation**? If she threw 10 goals, and the rest of your team only threw 3 goals, but had a combined 22 turnovers, then your hucker was (relatively) on FIRE. [note: Check out Julie Baker's stats from Davis' run at Nationals in 2005. Huge turnover numbers, but unquestionably the most effective thrower on the field.] By same token, though, your hucker could have a 7-goal game and have played poorly compared to the rest of your team (who, combined, scored 8 with several less turnovers total). Have expectations! Unless you expect a player to be perfect, they should have some number of turnovers on average per game. And some number of 'got roasted' per game, especially if they are guarding very fast players. Find your expectations using film or watching games, and judge your team and yourself on them.

5) Leave the math in the locker room

You've done film, you've analyzed, you've used it to shape your practices. Your team has what it has, and you go to the field ready to play. When you cross that line, just play. Even a perfect mathematical plan can't beat tons of effort in a less-perfect plan. Do it. You have to turn off your 'analyzing' side and just compete, or you'll spend all game making little meta-judgements about yourself. If you are captaining a college team, you are the captain because, at whatever skill level, you can cleat up and kick ass. Do it. Nothing kills a game for a player like too much information, so use it judiciously. A perfectly executed assessment gave you 1-2 things to focus on in practice so that you can smear on the eye black and run so hard you can't even see any more. Do it!

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Cultivating A Mentally Tough Team

Samantha Salvia

In the finals of nationals in 2008, Fury got off to a horrific start. I watched that game from a laptop at home in California with an infant wriggling in my lap. I cringed as I saw my teammates make uncharacteristic drops and poor decisions. As the lopsided first half wore on, spectators began to leave the sidelines. At 6-0, the online commentators called it an “insurmountable deficit” for teams of this caliber. The deficit would grow to 10-1, before Fury began what may be the greatest comeback in the history of the UPA championship series, winning the final 15-12. What gives a team the unshakable confidence to believe they can win in the face of such adversity *and* the resilience to actually do it?

Mental toughness: It is a crucial, but too often underappreciated part of the game. The best definition I have come across is “the ability to consistently perform toward the upper range of your talent and skill regardless of competitive circumstances.”¹ That means playing well regardless of whether it’s a big game or a scrimmage, you are tired or rested, it’s hot or cold, it’s windy or calm, your team is behind or ahead, or any other circumstance.

Mental toughness is a subject near and dear to my heart. It is something I have spent years thinking about, reading about, and trying to cultivate in myself and the teams I have been a part of. I can’t possibly do it justice in this one brief article. Entire books have been written on the subject (and I’ve provided a list of a few that I really like at the end of this article.) I won’t attempt an exhaustive discussion. Rather, what I hope you will take from this article is threefold 1) a recognition that mental toughness is a crucial facet of Ultimate that can be practiced and improved, 2) the motivation to read more about the subject, and 3) some ideas for how you can start cultivating toughness in your Ultimate teams.

We’ve all experienced examples of a lack of mental toughness individually or as a team:

- Getting off to “a slow start”
- Being unable to rebound after what we perceived as a bad call
- Heads down after mistakes or turnovers
- Drops, miscues, and otherwise failing to execute basic skills in big games (choking, tightening up)
- Sniping, critical comments or yelling at teammates
- Difficulty playing under certain conditions (wind, rain, cold, heat, early morning, late in the day, etc.)

There is a tendency to think that the elements of mental toughness are innate - “either you have ‘em or you don’t” - or that it is something that will take care of itself as a season progresses. I can tell you that mental toughness can be practiced and improved, and that if you want to develop a truly successful Ultimate program you must cultivate a culture of confidence, trust, and toughness. The first book I ever read on the subject was *The Warrior Athlete* by Dan Millman. After being selected for Olympic developmental field hockey camp as a sophomore in high school, I was struggling. My game was increasingly suffering (I later recognized) from the overly critical voice in my head that pounced on every mistake and focused on the negative aspects of every performance. I won’t claim reading that book banished the critic in my head, but it helped me realize that she was there and what I could do about it.

I played for Fury for 9 years. In that time we won four national championships and competed at Worlds three times. Mental toughness was something we worked on individually and as a team and it played a crucial role in our success. I believe those years of cultivating a mentality of toughness and

¹ The New Mental Toughness Training for Sports, James E. Loehr, 1995

a belief in our ability as a team to perform and win, coupled with the physical preparation that must underpin it, enabled the 2008 squad to orchestrate their championship-winning comeback. Most toughness books tend to focus on the perspective of the individual, which is unquestionably important. But I also believe that a toughness mentality can be cultivated as a team. I can't provide a formula for what will work with your team. Each team is different and figuring out what will bring out your team's chemistry is part of fun and challenge of each season. Below are some Ultimate-related suggestions for developing team toughness:

- 1) Include mental preparation in your pre-game warmup.

Most pre-game warm-ups focus almost exclusively on physical preparation (stretching, running, plyometrics, throwing, drilling, etc.). One of the simplest and most impactful ways to improve mental toughness as a team is to incorporate mental preparation as part of the warmup routine. It doesn't have to take much time. Something as simple as a moment of silent reflection, deep breaths, repeating simple affirmations ("I catch everything," "my opponent plays hard, but I play harder") or a brief guided visualization in the pre-game huddle can yield tremendous benefits in terms of bringing a team into the moment and ready to perform.

- 2) Encourage players to work on it individually.

- 3) Team toughness starts with the individuals.

Talk about toughness and encourage players to work their weaknesses. Consider reading a book or an article as a team. College teams are often integrating new players. Imagine how quickly a team with players who let go of mistakes could develop and learn.

- 4) Drill it at practice.

Use adversity scrimmages to simulate game scenarios. For example, instead of starting a scrimmage at 0-0, start at 3-0 in a game to 5. Let one side work on closing out the victory and the other side work on coming from behind. Tailor the drills to what your team needs to work on. If your team has trouble when the other team is making what your team perceives are bad calls, run a scrimmage where every time a whistle is blown, the team with the disc must turn it over to the other team for no reason.

- 5) Talk about it.

Cultivate a team culture of resilience, flexibility, support, and confidence by talking about the kind of team you want to be. Talk about things like walking back to the line with confidence after getting scored on, "fake it till you feel it", keeping heads up and letting go of mistakes. Talk about potential game scenarios (rain, big leads, runs by the opponent, wind, injury) and how to deal with them. Frame direction in the positive (say "run through the catch" rather than "don't stop cutting"; say "100% on offense" rather than "no turns")

As I write this, these suggestions all strike me as very basic. I suppose some of the most powerful concepts are the simplest. I hope you'll be inspired by this article to do some more reading and try some of these ideas with your teams.

Suggested Reading:

The New Toughness Training for Sports, James E. Loehr

The Mental Edge, Kenneth Baum

The Warrior Athlete, Dan Millman

In Pursuit of Excellence, Terry Orlick

Top Ten Traps to Avoid During Competition

Tiina Booth and Jonah Herscu

Not Communicating Enough

The teams that have everyone on the same page are successful and communication is essential in achieving this. Communication starts from the top, with the team leaders, and goes down to the last player on the bench. Team rules and expectations are a good way to inform people what is expected of them. Going over team goals at the beginning of the season, and checking in on them periodically is also helpful. At the beginning of the season on the Hurricanes, we are given an index card and we write three personal process goals for the season. We periodically discuss these goals with each other and update them if necessary. Checking in with teammates and making sure every member of the team is doing okay, is also important.

Continuous communication is the key. Communication about specific strategies and individual responsibilities informs players of their role on the team, so that practice and competition expectations are not a surprise. On the field, if you are on the same page as your teammates you know where she will be even before she starts her cut. You know when someone is going to get a block before they do. The best teams talk, and they talk a lot. Having play calls and different defenses is a start, but making adjustments verbally and talking about the game as it continues is also key. The best coaches recognize that they are not playing in that game and that they do not see or know everything that is going on. Players need to communicate with each other throughout each point.

Remember that offering analysis of a player or game has to be as well-timed as the perfect deep cut. No one wants to be criticized in the heat of competition. If you have suggestions for a coach or captain, approach them away from the game and team. After the game, alone, they will be able to fully listen and appreciate your suggestions.

Letting Energy Peak and Plummet

An individual and her team need to maintain a constant level of focus, intensity, and health. Everyone should aim to achieve a consistent level of energy and focus before the first game and not let up until the day is over. A team never wants to get too high or too low. An example of getting too high is excessive celebration after a spectacular play. An example of getting too low is sitting on the ground chatting when you should be warming up or helping out your team on the field. A team that keeps a level head through the good, bad, and ugly will play better than a team that is high and low, almost every single time.

One way to keep a team at a constant level is by doing cheers throughout a game, regardless of what is happening. Cheer when you score a point, but cheer louder when your team gets scored on. You aren't cheering your opponent; you are cheering on your team unconditionally.

Taking care of your body is another essential part of maintaining energy. Drink water! Drink electrolytes! Drink water! Starting two days before a tournament, during, and even after a tournament, drink enough to keep your body satisfied with liquids. Even though your body might not want to, it is also important to keep eating throughout the day of a tournament. Make sure you get a mixture of carbohydrates and protein, from things like pretzels, salty crackers, fruit, and bars.

Tiina often tells her team to "graze" throughout the day, which gives the Hurricanes nutrients, but does not fill players up too much. Each person should find what she likes to eat. Establish a routine so you will be able to eat food which you want, throughout a long tiring day. Don't be the type of player who just mooches off her teammates. This is setting yourself up for failure and shows a general lack of commitment to yourself and your team.

By staying positive, eating, drinking, and working hard, you and your team should be able to stay away from becoming uneven and unpredictable, and can instead become a team that has a constant dependable level of energy-both physically and mentally.

Focusing on Things You Cannot Control

Focusing on uncontrollables is counterproductive, because it takes energy away from you and your team, energy better used to make the team stronger, more focused and more competitive. Focusing on controllables is good, because it lets you and your team concentrate on those things which will help your team perform better.

Weather, bad calls, playing time, scheduling, playing conditions, fields, and opponents are all examples of uncontrollables. Do you decide when you play your next game? No. So do not give it any thought. Do you decide who starts? No. With the energy you would use to complain, whine, or protest, instead, start a drill or push your teammates to warm up harder. The harder you and your team warm up, the easier a game will feel. This holds true especially later in tournaments, because your muscles will be fully warmed up. For example, prepare well by being and staying hydrated, getting adequate sleep, and eating well. Warm up hard, and give 100 percent effort.

Being able to ignore the uncontrollables and to work on the things you can control takes practice and it will not come easy for many athletes. Some individual and some teams remain unsuccessful because they dwell on things outside of their control. This has to start in practice. Mentally and physically you will get stronger, and this will lead to playing better. Wins may not come immediately, because remember, it is a process. In the long run, working with and identifying what you can and cannot control will help you and your team.

Believing in the Myth of a Big Game

Being able to summon forth a Big Game whenever you need it is a myth. In order to have a Big Game you must have a team that trusts you and you need to believe you can do it. Most importantly you must *practice* having a Big Game. In order to do something in competition, you must be able to do it in practice, hundreds of times. Repetition is the key to success. Big Practices are more important than Big Games, because they enable you as an athlete to perform above average in competition. It is important to recognize when you have had a Big Practice and to realize how it felt.

Michael Jordan did not go to the arena and make game winning shots because he felt like it; he first made game winners in practice time and time again. This built his confidence, and made him believe that he could go win the game for his team. On the Amherst Hurricanes, after every practice we ask who had a “big practice,” and we comment on how each of these people performed. If you worked hard to have a Big Practice that day, you try to remember everything you did and how you felt while you were doing it. This will make it easier to recall when you need to.

There is a common misconception that the athletes who play well, especially under pressure, do not necessarily practice at that level of intensity. Do your best to recreate game-time intensity every day at practice. Accept the challenge of pushing yourself in training sessions and practice, so that you are prepared to have Big Games. As John Wooden said, “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.” This means that you must train and practice with purpose, focus, effort, and intensity so that you are capable of performing at your peak level at every opportunity.

Focusing on the Other Team

Who are we playing? Did they win their last game? Is it true that their best player is injured? Nothing can be gained by asking these questions before a game starts. Scouting reports are fine, but many players like to predict the outcome of a game by gathering extraneous information. Some players like to waste time by discussing the other team instead of warming up!

The more you focus on the other team, the less time and energy you have to take care of your #1 obligation: preparing yourself for competition. You should have a mental checklist of what you need

to warm up properly, such as plenty of water, dry socks, a disc, warm clothes etc. Then you take yourself through a purposeful warm-up routine, which you have developed with your team at practice. At some point your individual energy will meld with your teammates' energy and you all will be ready to compete at your best.

As the game continues, it is crucial to maintain your focus on yourself and your team. If the game is close, or contentious, you may have to actively force yourself to ignore your opponents, particularly if they are trying to distract your team with bad calls, heckling or taunting. This is when the trap becomes dangerous because if you respond, the antics often escalate and the game turns into a circus instead of a test of skills, strategy and athleticism. Do not sink down to another team's level, no matter what. Keeping a calm demeanor, even if you don't feel it, will allow your team to enjoy the challenge, no matter how difficult.

Caring About What Others Think

A tournament is an opportunity for teams and individuals to see how they stack up against their opponents. Unfortunately many players allow what others think of these performances to define how they actually think about themselves and their team. Trash-talking from opponents, as well as comments from the peanut gallery, can often distract a player so much that she cannot play her best. One of the most common problems for many women's teams is their obsession with what "their" men's team is doing: Why aren't they watching us? They never watch us play. We ALWAYS go over to their game. While supporting each other's teams can be part of the fun of playing in college, it is a waste of energy to make that a goal of an important tournament. Women's teams often gather on the sideline of their men's team during a bye, which is fine. However, the expectation that the men's team will reciprocate can be problematic and cause unexpected drama. If you spend hundreds of hours training and traveling to compete, your obsession should be with your own team.

This advice also applies to lining up against a team that you have consistently battled. There may even be an opponent whom you have personally battled over the years and who clearly thinks she owns you. Rather than talking about her, or worrying about how she is going to play you this time, don't give her any space in your brain. Don't watch her warm up; don't rerun your last match-up. Blur out her features, put an imaginary bag over her head, or figure out some sort of silent psychological way to diminish her abilities. You may use her as a motivator for your training or practice, but when it comes to game time, it is all about you!

Focusing on Winning

John Wooden never mentioned the words, "winning" or "losing," once his season began every year. These words cause players to focus on outcome goals, which means that their heads are in the future, not the present. The more you worry about how the game is going to end, the less you focus on how to get there. The process is what is important, so at practice, set concrete individual and team goals and measure how close you come to achieving them. For example, set up a "Go To" drill and see how many consecutive passes you can complete as a team. Set up at the same distance every day. Each player sprints hard toward disc, completes the catch and then throws it quickly to an incoming receiver. Count how many you can complete in a minute. Then do it the next day, and the next and watch how your numbers increase. This in turn will build confidence and translate to fewer drops during competition.

At a tournament, instead of talking about winning a certain game on the line, break the game into pieces that are quantifiable and achievable. Some teams like to approach a game to 15 as mini-games of 3 points. This makes it feel more like a practice and keeps everyone's minds on what they need to do at that moment.

Everyone knows when they are in the midst of playing an "important" game. There is no need to add hype to its significance by discussing what you all want the outcome to be. The irony is that the less you focus on the outcome, the more likely you will achieve the outcome you want.

Worrying about the Past or Future

Until you as an athlete are able to go back in time and redo a play, perhaps make that catch or layout and get that D, stay in the moment. Forget about what just happened or what might happen. There is no benefit from worrying about past mistakes or successes. By focusing on the now, you will help your team achieve your goals. When Jonah plays, after a mistake (with time permitting) he claps twice and literally shakes his hands out and says out loud “drop it.” By doing this he moves on, and can therefore be present to help his teammates and to focus on the next play.

Athletes that stay in the past are easy to spot, and opponents will take advantage of those players. These are the players who swear, kick a water jug, or yell at anyone in their vicinity. For example, let us pretend you make an aggressive layout on defense and you get the block. Then you throw a beautiful full field huck for the goal. You would be feeling pretty good right about then. But what if you missed the D, and then after the opponent scored, you made a full field throw into the ground. You would probably be mad, frustrated, and disappointed in yourself. But what if you just stayed in the moment? The now. Focus on what you see, try not to over-celebrate or over-critique. Reflection is important, even essential to a team getting better, but during play, block out the huge paper due next week, do not give any notice to annoying fans yelling on the sideline, and forget about last point’s mistake. Be in the now.

Letting Everyone Speak in the Huddle

One of the best pieces of advice that Tiina received when she was becoming a teacher was, “People are only going to listen to 50% of what you have to say. So figure out what is important, say it in a variety of ways, and don’t try to say too much.” This is also great advice for an ultimate captain or coach. Imagine that you are in a back-and-forth game and you call a time-out. Everyone runs in, amped by the action on the field, and EVERYONE STARTS TALKING AT THE SAME TIME!!!

“We need to hold the force better.”

“Our deep needs to keep everyone in front of her.”

“People aren’t clearing out fast enough.”

“Throwers are looking off cutters.”

“We need to switch to zone.”

All of the above statements may be true, but we guarantee that no one is listening to anyone but themselves. Timeout is over, the chaos from the huddle carries back onto the field, and nothing has been gained.

Instead, approach the huddle much more calmly. Everyone gets water and takes 30 seconds to breathe deeply. Sometimes you just want to give everyone a chance to regroup. The team leader decides on one, or two, or even ZERO things to say. A single good piece of advice might be to, “Throw in a pump-fake on every possession for the rest of the point.” You may want to tweak one piece of strategy, but make sure that it is minor, doable and that everyone understands it. DO NOT introduce new concepts in the middle of a game. DO NOT discuss bad calls. Stay with what you know, what you’ve practiced, and return refreshed to the playing field.

Listening to a Toxic Teammate

If you have played a variety of sports throughout your life, you most likely have encountered a Toxic Teammate. This person appears to be interested in the success of your team, but, as the season progresses and the pressure builds, her true colors begin to show. The T.T. has a variety of different weapons to wreak havoc on her teammates. She often has excuses for missing practice or showing up late or leaving a tournament early. Management of her personal time and school work is often

spotty, so when something has to suffer, it is usually her team. You can usually recognize a T.T. during a huddle. She is the one outside the circle, with her body posture clearly showing her disinterest. She often tries to recruit others to join her in her misery and spends more time critiquing the coach and captains than actually learning how to improve.

It is the job of your team's administration to identify and confront a teammate who doesn't know how to be part of a team. (This is particularly difficult when the T.T. is a captain, but that's another story.) Setting team goals and clear rules of behavior in the very beginning of the season makes it easier to minimize the impact of these negative players. Quick intervention as soon as things start to go downhill is also important. What you don't want is the team splitting into 2 or 3 factions, with one group aligning themselves against the other. It is possible to turn around a T.T., but recognition is the first part of fixing the problem. So if you suspect that *you* may be a Toxic Teammate, then ask a trusted teammate for feedback and really listen to what she has to say.

Reading List

Although most of these books are not directly related to Ultimate Frisbee, many of the observations, advice and philosophies can be applied to life, on and off the field.

<i>Born to Run</i>	Christopher McDougall
<i>Mind Gym</i>	David Mack
<i>The Way of The Peaceful Warrior</i>	Dan Millman
<i>The Inner Game of Tennis</i>	Timothy W. Gallwey
<i>Wooden: A lifetime of Observations</i>	<i>and Reflections on and off the Court</i>
	John R. Wooden and Steve Jamison
<i>Rare Air</i>	Michael Jordan
<i>Playing out of your Mind</i>	Dr. Alan Goldberg
<i>Sports Slump Busting</i>	Dr. Alan Goldberg
<i>Essential Ultimate</i> (Chapter 9)	Michael Baccarini and Tiina Booth
<i>Sacred Hoops</i>	Phil Jackson

YOUTH ULTIMATE

Youth Ultimate

Meredith Tosta, UPA Director of Coach and Youth Development

In the fall of 1999 the idea of freshmen women coming to college with any sort of Ultimate skill was largely unheard of on the west coast. While I was familiar with the game, and even had a close friend who played on the 1996 Jr. National team in Sweden, I arrived at college that fall without ever having thrown a disc. There were whispers about a sophomore on the team who had played in high school in Seattle, and you could tell from her throws that it was true. But in those days, everyone started out totally green and learning to throw, with the majority of the fall being spent on the most basic of skills with the seniors and grad students modeling proper techniques for the underclassmen.

Fast forward to the spring of 2009, and I'm standing on the sideline of the UPA College Championships in Columbus, OH and cheering on alums from the 2008 Girls' Jr. National team. Bailey Zahniser, Elise Rasmussen and Kimber Coles are shredding through the competition as freshmen. Sure, these ladies now have a season of college Ultimate under their belts but their skills were developed years ago at Seattle Academy, Hopkins and Churchill High School (respectively). But it's not just the girls from the Jr. National teams that are having an impact on college programs; it's every girl who has the chance to find Ultimate at a younger age and carries that passion into college.

This isn't about being hyper competitive. It isn't about getting the early edge over the competition. It's about opportunities for young women to play team sports. It's about being fit and eating healthy. It's about making lifelong friends. And it's about reaching out to the community and giving back. In the end, if it also means that a college program gets a head start on the season, or has more tools available to succeed in the UPA College Series, than that's just the cherry on top.

So what can a women's college team do to encourage the growth of girls' Ultimate?

- Be a mentor - By taking an active interest in the high schools and middle schools near your college, you have the power to get girls hooked on Ultimate. There may only be a handful of girls on the local team, but having college women coaching and playing with a youth team will make a difference when it comes to retaining female athletes. I can put you in touch with schools desperately in need of coaches, and we could even schedule a Level I Coaching Workshop to generate momentum.
- Run clinics or hat tournaments – This can be a great fundraiser for your team (ask for donations or charge a small fee), and also gives you a chance to get to know youth players in the area and interact with the Ultimate community beyond your college campus. Open it up to women of all ages and you may be surprised who comes out of the woodwork to take part. If you need insurance, the UPA can sanction your event and provide it. There are also free kits for Women's Skills Clinics available.
- Play showcase games with regional rivals – Believe it or not, the market for Ultimate as a spectator sport is growing, and it's the youth players who are driving it. Don't underestimate how cool it is to watch college teams battle it out. This could be another fundraising opportunity, plus its good "show time" practice for your squad. Advertise through the local youth organizers, find a venue that's easy to get to, and you are likely to draw a crowd.

When it comes to UPA membership numbers, women's memberships increased 8% in 2008, slightly more than the 7% for men. That the growth is comparable to the numbers for men is fantastic. What we should also consider is that women represent 31% of the total membership. While this approximate 30/70 split is on par with other team sports organizations, the more that we can help cultivate girls playing Ultimate, the stronger our numbers will be for every generation going forward. The investment we make in developing the younger generations will of course pay off when it comes to our competitive teams down the line. Yet, in a culture where girls aren't necessarily as supported

and encouraged to participate in sports as their male counterparts, the impact that we can have by bringing more girls into the fold goes beyond our immediate experience.

Ultimate is a powerful sport - in self officiating, we learn to have a voice and speak up for ourselves. It's an endurance race every game - we must take care of our bodies and eat right to be strong. It's being a part of a bigger community – one that emphasizes respect, hard work and fair play. Bringing more girls into the community at the youth and the college level not only grows the sport, in numbers and in level of play, it also builds confidence and weaves a network of support that girls can benefit from in many facets of life.

There are a lot of reasons that I play Ultimate and enjoy my role in helping to grow the sport. The ability to reach out and empower more women through Ultimate is why I hope I'll continue to be able to do so for another decade to come.

Want to get fired up? Watch the 2006 Girls' Jr. National team's exciting double game point win over Canada to take the World Junior Ultimate Championships gold medal:

<http://media.upa.org/video/upa-girls-junior-national-team-promo>

Youth Ultimate: Teach a Kid, Teach the Community

Andy Lykens

High school kids need great role models and positive influences from sources other than peers, parents, and celebrities or sports professionals. Ultimate is probably the best situation for them to be in for the very simple fact that our game is not only equally (if not more) challenging than every other high school sport, but the mindset of the game demands a respect for everyone on the field. Though I'm not a huge spirit of the game hippie, I definitely buy into the fact that what makes our game unique is what makes its people so fantastic.

The first great part about youth ultimate is the age of the kids. As long as they are starting to play as late as early high school (later if you've been coaching the same team consistently for a while), you've got a great shot at creating life-long dedicated teammates. Even though it may not always seem like it, high school kids are far more likely to listen to you (as a guest clinician/coach, coach, or friendly pick-up player at summer league) and learn your habits (good and bad!) than you can know. Advantage: Get them early and you'll have their attention and respect for a lifetime, but be careful. Show up on time and give it everything you have just like you would on the field. Else, they'll learn the wrong habits early too.

Another fantastic aspect about youth ultimate is the rapid change in confidence. From hour 1 to even hour 2 you'll start to see the players change their attitude with each little skill they learn. The easiest way to get a kid hooked is to show them you can teach them a forehand. The forehand is what everyone (young and old) want to learn when they see a real ultimate player crank one 75 yards. Get them to throw it 7.5 yards and you've shown them they can do what they thought impossible only a few minutes prior.

From here you should be teaching them not only the basics of ultimate, but also the basics of athletics. Movements like the squat (bodyweight) and push-up are a great place to start and from there you can move on to burpees, pull-ups, and so on. Also, the fundamental skill of running is key - you should be monitoring form and correcting it during track workouts to make them efficient, confident, and strong athletes.

Goal setting is another huge task that needs to be visited and re-visited. You can set goals for the team, for individual players, for the O and D lines, and for yourself. Set small goals for practices, drills and tournaments, and long-term goals for the season or across multiple tournaments. However you do it, make them realistic and specific (ie: I will be able to throw a forehand vs. I will be able to throw a forehand 10 yards by next Tuesday). Like I mentioned earlier - show them you can help them achieve things they never thought possible and you'll have taken huge strides in creating a confident, consistent team.

The last two things I'd like to talk about are highly important, comraderie and respect. They are also the most challenging. Why? Because YOU have to practice them constantly too. Under this category you can file things like showing up on time (which is at least 15 minutes early by the way, "on time" is late!), staying positive, attendance, focus and constantly learning new skills and ideas.

Yikes, right? It's very very hard to stay focused as a coach. It's very very hard to stay positive, especially as a coach! Yet these things are so crucial to developing players who follow your lead and then hold their teammates to the same high standards. Consistency and diligence - man, show me a great ultimate player and I'll show you someone who is ALWAYS working, and ALWAYS working hard, smart, and consistently.

Youth Ultimate is how to instill the values of a great Ultimate player. It is the single best way to enforce and solidify the philosophy that ultimate players are to respect teammates and opponents, themselves, and be better players and teammates through hard work and persistence. If you've ever

been on a club team where people leave mid-season, miss practices and workouts, and then bitch at tournaments when they lose, then you'll know why these things are so important. So get out there and coach a kiddo, the entire ultimate community will thank you for it.

Youth Ultimate in Your Community – Giving Back

Susan Thomas

Youth Ultimate is growing and developing nation wide. As ultimate itself becomes better known, fostering more skilled players and young leaders, the game is becoming more popular among younger and younger populations. Increasing numbers of college and club players are entering levels of higher competition with a great skill base thanks to their youth ultimate roots. Not only is the development of the sport for younger generations fostering great future players and leaders, it also offers the opportunity for those of us who can no longer play as youth to give back, and grow as leaders ourselves.

Why give back?

Getting involved with youth programs in your community is a fulfilling experience with many positive benefits. In addition to building your personal skills as a leader, you can also further develop your abilities as an instructor and organizer. Beyond these personal benefits, you are becoming more familiar with your community –which from my experience has been very valuable in terms of program building and social networking- and also building skill and interest in the sport in your local area.

How can I give back?

The needs of your community are going to depend on what youth programs are established in your area. Your community may have a steady youth league, or there may be no youth programs whatsoever. The first step in finding out how to help is finding out what resources exist already. If programs already exist, there are likely opportunities to volunteer as a coach, an organizer in your local league, an instructor or even just another body at skills clinics or similar programs. If there are no programs in place, start them! Organize a skills clinic for high-school age players (middle school programs are growing too!), or advertise pick-up. Use your qualifications and connections. As a player with experience you are invaluable as an instructor to someone just learning the game, and as someone who loves ultimate you are invaluable to fostering interest in the sport.

How can youth ultimate in my community become a sustainable program?

Getting a youth program started and creating something sustainable are not exactly small tasks, but they are tasks worth pursuing. The success of a youth program feeds directly off of the energy and enthusiasm of those involved as organizers and players. A good initial step is to give your league an identity. This provides something for people to talk about, to be excited about, and to feel that they belong to. Whether you work from the top down, speaking with school administration and creating a structural framework, or from the bottom up, gathering a bunch of kids together on a field with some discs, the key to keeping a program going is to keep people interested. Spread the word, spread the excitement, and contact anyone you know who you think can help promote the program. If there are already established teams in your area, work with them. Help is out there, and the youth will show interest with some exposure to what ultimate has to offer.

What challenges might I face?

There are, without a doubt, some potential difficulties involved when working with youth populations. The first stumbling block is communication. There is often very little organization when getting youth programs off the ground, with no coach or other adult leader for youth from different schools to report to. Keeping in touch with the youth and maintaining a line of communication can be tough. Talk face-to-face or voice-to-voice as much as possible. Also, it is often difficult to retain players. Staying in communication and seeing players, and potential players, as much as possible is necessary to keep the youth coming out. It will take patience, but doing what you can to get involved and to help develop youth players will definitely pay off. Seeing players improve, building programs, and watching young players get excited about the sport we all love are all great payback in and of themselves. As we give back to our communities we help to build our sport into something more recognized, more established, and more respected.

Youth Development in Pittsburgh Contributing to Pitt Ultimate

Christie Lawry

Since the very beginning of the Pittsburgh High School Ultimate League (PHUL) in 2001, high school players have influenced ultimate at the University of Pittsburgh to some degree. In the past four years, however, the influx has become much more influential. As our city becomes better known throughout the country, namely for the youth and college scenes, the effect of high school growth on the college teams becomes much more apparent.

In 2007, PHUL introduced the Girls' League, putting immediate focus on fostering female youth development. This movement has not only gotten the Pitt women's team, Danger, to improve through organizing and coaching, but has shown the high school girls the levels of skill and commitment that they can reach. With Danger players acting as leaders in the community, the young girls have become more interested in continuing their play at higher levels and have become especially excited to join the Pitt Ultimate community. The excitement has led to a huge influx of PHUL players finding places on the Danger roster, most noticeably in the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. The Danger roster currently includes a total of 12 of 27 girls that played in an organized high school league, 9 of which came directly from PHUL.

The appreciation that Pitt Ultimate has for PHUL recycles itself every year. As the entry of more talented underclassmen enhances the skill level of the college teams, more and more college players become interested in youth ultimate, spending their own time and energy coaching, organizing, running clinics and tournaments, observing, and recruiting whenever they can. Throughout this cycle, non-Pitt members of the community gain pride and respect for their college and high school teams and are more likely to contribute to fund-raisers and other events. The added interest from the community stimulates a larger communication base leading to other advantages such as parent involvement, school funding, and a generally better environment for fostering ultimate at all levels.

As a former PHUL player currently on Danger, acting as an organizer and coach in the meanwhile, I cannot imagine the relationship between our high school and college teams becoming any less valuable over time. The benefits come full circle-- and you do not need to live in Pittsburgh to see it.

STARTING AND BUILDING A B-TEAM

Starting a B-Team

Amy Chou

The Background

In 2001, the Berkeley Women's ultimate team formed a B-team for the first time and we decided to call it the Tarts. We had just two or three returning players that year and maybe around 15 on our roster total, so I don't believe we did very well, but we had a lot of fun. I captained the Tarts the next two years, played with the Pie Queens in 2005, and began coaching the larger Pie Queen program in 2008 (we stay as a combined team in the Fall) with Ethan Schlenker and Corey Lee and the Tarts in Spring 2009 with my former co-captain, Kate Kelsey.

Here are 12 things I did while coaching the Tarts that I thought worked well:

1. Be available, open-minded, positive and patient. Possibly the most important thing I did was let the Tarts know I was always available to them and that I cared about each of them developing as best as they could. I was sure to make myself available (ie. responsive to e-mails, phone calls, gchats, etc.) and open to suggestions/criticisms/questions/feedback. I think especially for the B-team, it is important to let every individual player know you genuinely care about their development as a player because sometimes they are unsure of their playing abilities or interest in ultimate.

2. Constantly provide constructive feedback. Prior to returning to the PQ program as a coach, I coached with Andy Lykens at Stuyvesant High School in NYC, which was an invaluable learning experience. Amongst other things, he taught me that constant constructive feedback is needed to improve. The girls needed to know what they were doing wrong as soon as they made a mistake so they could correct it immediately. At first I thought this seemed overly negative/might discourage new players, but I now recognize that it is much easier to fix things before bad habits are set. Plus, if someone never touches the disc or always throws it away, she is not going to have fun playing so I learned that it was my responsibility as a coach to help the players understand what they needed to fix and how to fix it. Kate and I tried to give every individual player specific feedback on their playing and remind them to get into good habits right from the get go (ie. plant hard on every cut, attack discs when catching, step out and get low with every throw, etc.).

3. Reinforce good habits. In addition to providing constructive feedback, Kate and I were also sure to reinforce good habits. It is important to let players know when they made a good decision (esp. when the execution was poor and it resulted in a turnover), a good cut (even if esp. when they weren't thrown to) or when they tried to run through the catch but they dropped it.

4. Let them make good mistakes. I found it important to teach the difference between good and bad mistakes and then let them make all the good mistakes they want. You won't be able to fix anything if you're afraid of making mistakes. As long as the players are adjusting (ie. not throwing the same crappy throw over and over again), encourage them to keep working on that throw they are not sure they have (as long as it's a good decision), keep trying to time their jumps even if they end up missing the disc a bunch, etc.

5. Work on fundamentals. With over 3/4 of the Tarts being first and second year players, we spent a lot of time working on fundamentals. We selected basic drills and reminded the returners that they had a lot to work on as well. No matter how good your throws, catches, cuts, reading abilities, etc. are, chances are there is something you could always fine tune. We made ourselves available to throw outside of practice and encouraged everyone to do so.

6. Give the vets / faster learning rookies specific goals or new roles. Throughout the season, I tried to continually ask the vets to challenge themselves in some way. You can set small goals for them in scrimmages (ie. you can only throw break mark throws, must have 2 flat and catchable hucks per game, etc.) or make sure they are honing their fundamentals even when the drill is simple (ie.

actively marking with their feet, catching a disc at the highest point possible, etc.). Or you could ask them to play a role they haven't played before on offense or defense, in zone or in man. It never hurts to have an understanding of how other positions work.

7. Invite club players from the community to guest coach. We invited club players from some of the best Bay Area club teams including Fury, Slackjaw and Mischief to come guest coach for a practice on some kind of fundamental individual skill set (ie. deep throws, setting up deep cuts, individual defensive positioning, catching, boxing out). The Tarts were always excited about the guest coaches and I think enjoyed having a different voice/way of explaining things and definitely retained the information better from guest coaches.

8. Call lines and set playing time expectations. I think it is important to call lines if possible (but don't worry about it there aren't a lot of subs or if everyone is around the same level) because the combination of players on the field can make a pretty big difference. Even if we don't win, our offense would generally flow better or our defense would generate more turnovers when certain key players were in so they got more PT. PT expectations should be clearly set based on the team goal decided at the beginning of the season.

9. Ask newcomers to return in the fall after a certain point. In 2009, the Tarts had 15+ at almost every practice and we decided mid-March that we were not going to let new people join the team anymore and instead encourage them to come out in the fall. This was helpful from a coaching perspective because I didn't have to take time away from the larger team to teach a new person everything everyone else had learned in the fall. While I was on the Tarts, because we needed numbers, we took rookies throughout the season (even up to the week before sectionals). This allowed us to have more people at practice and also made some of the late joiners stick around until the fall, but it can be definitely frustrating.

10. Establish a competitive team mindset. At Berkeley, we always try to emphasize that we are fortunate enough to have enough interest in ultimate that we can form 2 great teams and that there is no reason the Tarts can't be competitive with other teams. Realistically not Superfly or the Pie Queens, but definitely smaller/newer A-teams and other B-teams. I tried to emphasize that the team will be more competitive the more time and energy players are willing to give. If they had to miss practice, they had to e-mail Kate or myself, which helped us plan practice but also let the Tarts know that they were expected to be at practice and their presence would be missed. I understand that there are some people who can't make ultimate a priority and that is why they want to play on the B-team, but there should be an environment where players are encouraged to give as much time and energy as they can.

11. Attend a variety of tournaments or make sure to regularly play other teams. While I was playing, there was only one other B-team in our section, Stanford. Since there were fewer womens teams, we went to all the same tournaments as the Pie Queens and other A-teams and constantly got crushed. We also scrimmaged Stanford B about once a month. Now, the Tarts have a number of teams who are around their level nearby (ie. Davis B, Stanford B, Alameda High School) and a bunch of qualifying tournaments they can attend. It is nice to regularly play so many teams around our level throughout the season, but playing against high-level A-teams constantly was also beneficial because we learned from the best and were able to see some really great ultimate and understand what the game is supposed to look like. The Tarts went to Davis Ultimate Invitational this past spring and played Fury, Zeitgeist and Slackjaw and really enjoyed that learning experience. They understood why they needed to have active marks, why they needed to use the full range of their pivot, why they had to go to the disc, etc. I think it is helpful, if possible, to attend a balance of both types of tournaments. If there aren't any B-team level tournaments in your area, you can always organize round robins with other teams. If there aren't any B-team level teams in your area, you can also try to scrimmage A-team rookies from nearby teams.

12. Be extra active/vocal on the sidelines. Since there are typically fewer experienced players on a

B-team, there are fewer experienced role models, sideline talkers, etc. Thus it was extra important for Kate and myself to be extra active on the sidelines and spend time teaching people how to talk on the sidelines. Often this just meant asking people to follow me around and echo what I said (since I have problems projecting anyways, this was pretty helpful for me too).

Starting a B-team can be difficult, but as noted in some of the other articles, it can really have a positive impact on your program. It is important to early on define the goal of the B-team for any particular season and plan accordingly. Ideally you want to be as competitive as possible, but a lot of talented athletes/players may be on the B-team because they can't commit the time necessary for the A-team.

Why Start a B-Team?

Megan Insco

At many universities, more people may want to play ultimate than there are spots on the team, and ultimate is FUN so it is good to include as many people as possible. Thus, B teams can be built to include people who either don't make the A team or would prefer to play ultimate and be part of the sport in a less committed setting. I have found that due to the different reasons players join the B team, there can be a spectrum of individual goals amongst the players. Having a coach that is aware that players on the team may have different goals and is willing to help individuals meet those goals can make the B team experience rewarding for many types of players. I tried to accommodate everyone who came out, including some players that had never played sports before or been on a team before. So, B teams can offer fun and exercise in a friendly fun environment for some people. However, other members of the team want a place where they can learn skills and grow as a player, possibly to try out for the A team the next year. It is important to have a coach with sufficient experience to be able to teach these more ambitious players all they want to know about ultimate. If teaching ultimate skills is done well in a fun way on a B team, B teams can serve an important role in building ultimate programs out of ultimate teams.

How to build good relations between the B team and A team?

It can sometimes exert a challenge to maintain a good relationship between an A team and a B team because some members of the B team may not make the A team or because of disagreements between strong personalities leading the A and B teams. But I think strong ultimate programs are built where this good relationship exists. Ways to foster a good relationship include traveling together, setting up ultimate program social events (not just team social events). Coaches can have an active role in fostering these relationships and can lead by example. Getting the teams to cheer for each other can help as well. We tried to encourage anyone who wanted to try out for the A team in the fall. We made it socially acceptable to determine what each player wanted out of the program and tried our best to help each individual reach their personal goals, whether that be trying out for the A team, or working on skills and continuing on the B team.

How do I coach B team players?

I found that one of the main parts of coaching B team players was teaching individuals how to be part of a team. Many members of a B team may not have played a team sport before. They may not have any practical experience with planning their work ahead of time and practicing discipline to finish work so they attend important tournaments or practices. B team members may not know how to plan team activities or B team captains may not know basic leadership skills. However, teaching how to be a part of a team to B team players can be very rewarding because the skills you teach will be teamwork skills, which will be useful for the rest of their lives. Also, asking members of your team that have played a team sport before to help with team leadership will aid your role as a coach or team leader.

Another important aspect of coaching B team players is that careful observation and specific communication are key. Many B team players may need more explicit instructions to be able to complete some of the tasks required to play ultimate. My favorite example of this is we had a very nice, focused young woman who had great throws and could get open very easily but couldn't catch no matter how hard she tried. We unsuccessfully tried to coach her through this in many ways. Finally my co-coach had the insight to notice she was closing her eyes at the last second as she went to catch. We asked her to next time try to keep her eyes open when she went to catch. She caught almost everything from then on!

Some other more general advice to building a B team include:

- 1) Build the offense around basic concepts and your players' strengths.
- 2) Stay positive! No matter what happens, show how fun it can be to play hard ultimate.
- 3) Be a good teacher.

- 4) Plan practices ahead of time.
- 5) Only cover one or two topics per practice.
- 6) Teach every concept in a couple ways (with a couple different drills).
- 7) And realize that the most talented ultimate players out there have to practice a new concept about 3 times to add it to their repertoire, thus you likely will need to repeat most information innumerable times in different ways to teach a new ultimate skill.

Also, find a good co-coach!! Coaching a B team is a lot of work and more suited to two people. We found that coaching was more successful when the coaches were enough older than the players, that there is a determined hierarchy (so the players listen to the coaches).

Building A B-Team

Amy Chou

The Tarts (UC Berkeley B) will be stronger this year than ever before. We have 10+ solid returners and 20+ talented and dedicated rookies. The overall level of talent, dedication and athleticism on the team is higher than it has been in past years and we had a record 31 people at our first meeting. It is incredible to watch the Tarts grow as a program and also to know that more and more women are playing ultimate.

B-teams offer:

1. Fun and friendship
2. A structured learning environment to develop talent (potentially to play for the A-team and beyond. There are former Tarts on club teams including Fury, Showdown and Slackjaw).

Getting to the point where you need to have a B-team is just about recruiting and retaining. There might be an awkward time where you don't quite have enough for two teams, but you have way too many for one team. If that happens, just continue to be welcoming, inclusive and encouraging to everyone. Athleticism can be developed and ultimate can be taught to anyone, it just takes some people longer to learn than others. Perhaps as the program grows, you can move to recruiting only those with previous athletic backgrounds. Whatever the numbers on the B-team end up being, they can still learn together, have fun (play a lot of hot box if there aren't enough at practice to scrimmage) and continue to accept people throughout the spring (it's a little disruptive, but good to have bodies and some people are bound to stick around for the fall).

In the beginning, gauge how competitive, committed, intense, etc. the team wants to be and set an appropriate goal. You definitely don't want to scare people away, but you want to challenge those who are willing and excited to put in the work necessary to improve. It's only within the last few years that the Tarts have really pushed to be competitive and intense (since we now have 20-30 to showing up at every practice). Just make sure people are having fun, working on their fundamentals and enjoying each other's company.

Other important/helpful things to have are:

1. Plenty of opportunities to play other teams, especially if your team is too small to consistently scrimmage 7-on-7. You can organize scrimmages with neighboring B-teams, high school teams, or possibly even A-team rookies. Attend as many tournaments as possible and emphasize playing hard, improving and having fun.

When I started playing with the Tarts, the only other B-team in the area was Stanford B. We would arrange scrimmages about once a month against each other and sometimes mix the teams up just for fun. Now the Tarts will scrimmage Alameda High School on occasion, but more for learning purposes or getting rookies playing time rather than because we don't have the numbers at practice.

2. The support of your A-team and social events or workouts between both teams. Generally maintaining that you are one program can also go a long way in keeping B-teamers interested and motivated while the B-team is still working on getting numbers and establishing its own team identity.

When the Tarts were first formed, there was a lot of confusion about whether or not emails sent to the "Queens" included us or not (like birthday and end of the season celebrations). This led to some awkward moments, but now we are much clearer about when things are for both teams or just for one. It doesn't really matter, so long as you specify. We also have

mandatory workouts for the Queens that are optional (though strongly encouraged) for the Tarts. The players do the workouts based on their individual schedules, so it doesn't matter so much which team you play with. This also helps motivate and challenge those Tarts who are ready to be more competitive or intense.

3. A committed and dedicated coach for the B-team. The person doesn't have to be an elite level club player, but ideally someone who has solid fundamentals and a lot of time, energy and patience. Having a coach can boost the confidence of inexperienced players and help them work harder and more efficiently.

I am not that great of an ultimate player. But I do understand the game pretty well and give a lot of time to them (throwing with them outside of practice, chatting with them on gchat, eating with them after practice, etc.). Coaching the Tarts has been a lot of fun for me because they are wonderful. They feed me (hooray for freshmen and their meal plans!) and generally understand that I am approachable which I think has also helped with retention.

You'll know you need to have a B-team when you have too many people at practice, which is definitely a good problem to have. Establishing a 2nd (or 3rd!) team is a great solution, so long as you proceed thoughtfully with full consideration to everyone involved.

Building Women's Programs: The Importance of B-Teams and How to Build a Successful B-Team

Eyleen Chou

The Wisconsin Ultimate program has always been a leader in college ultimate. Both men's and women's teams have attended Nationals and finished in the top 5 within the last several years.

One of newest successes of our Ultimate program is the new Women's B Team, Atropa. Before Fall 2008, Wisconsin had only once created a successful B Team (2004-2005 season).

B teams are key for the growth and development of women's ultimate. New women to the sport of ultimate will be able learn at any pace they choose, rather than having two levels: no ultimate or elite college ultimate. In addition, B teams help the development of ultimate as a sport overall. The more people that play the sport, the more credibility it will gain. We need players at all levels. Main stream sports, soccer, basketball, etc, all have rec leagues, high competition teams, teams of any competition-level. B teams make the sport of ultimate more accessible to all.

Because Wisconsin has always had such a competitive team (Bella Donna), players were always trying out to play for Bella Donna. During my college career there were several variations on forming the team. My first two years of college ultimate, the cuts were made very late (if made at all), leaving the people cut with no good chance to form a successful team on their own.

During my third year playing for Bella Donna, cuts were made early enough in the fall season (October/November). However, there were not enough women interested in the B team, Mad-Donne, despite the commitment of two coaches. There were typically 8 players on good days, and unfortunately Mad-Donne only attended one tournament.

For a variety of reasons, primarily my involvement with other organizations on campus, I decided I would not be playing for Bella Donna starting Fall 2008. With the help of Bella captain, Georgia Bosscher's recruitment, Wisconsin-B was going to have a new coach as well, Tim DeByl.

Over the past year and a half, we have now formed one of the strongest B teams in the country. Atropa will certainly continue in years to come.

My contribution to the College Women's Ultimate Resource Manual is Atropa's best practices that have made for a very successful B team.

Key Ingredients for a successful College Women's B Team:

- A committed coach
- A handful of "veteran players," both handlers and cutters if possible. (In Atropa's case, we have 4-6 players on the team with Club or elite College experience)
- Committed captains
- Coordination with the A team
- Active recruitment
- Clear goals (In Atropa's case, we always emphasize learning the sport and improving one's skills. We want to develop everyone's skills and give everyone an opportunity to play)
- Good commitment from all players and a positive ultimate experience
- The players!

A Committed Coach

Tim DeByl has been one of the biggest factors of Atropa's success. He has all the qualities of a fantastic ultimate coach. He's been playing for 10 years, and thus has had the experience to see

many different styles of play and competition levels. With the years of playing comes a wealth of knowledge about skills that any young player needs to learn.

Above all else, he has allotted the time to commit to be a good coach. For Atropa, this means that he attends 95% of practices, 50% of the non-series tournaments, and 100% of the college series.

Atropa has two outdoor practices a week, September-Thanksgiving in the fall and Spring Break-May in the spring. Over the winter from December to Spring Break, we have one indoor practice from 9:45 pm- midnight plus one optional conditioning workout. Conditioning workouts are self-run and our coach typically does not attend.

Tim, like many ultimate players out of college has a family, so he does not attend our far non-series tournaments (anything more than 5 hours away). Even if he's not at the tournament, we always check in with him and give him updates on how we're doing. He still gives us tips on what offenses to run and how to approach each game.

Tim runs all of our practices. If he ever cannot attend, the captains always have played enough years to have a good set of drills for practice up their sleeves. (This Resource Manual will only provide more help to captains for planning practice!)

It's likely as our B team program gains momentum that the coach's involvement can decrease. But certainly is critical in the first two years to have a coach that has a comparable skill set and commitment level to what Tim has been for Atropa.

A Handful of Veteran Players

This is a component of Atropa that has been surprisingly easy to maintain. For some programs it might not be the case. Bella Donna has become such an elite team that it requires a very high level of commitment that there are several college women who still want to play ultimate but simply cannot (time-wise) or do not want to play at that level.

It's also very helpful that Wisconsin is such a large school, so there are plenty of athletic women looking to play.

Both this year and last year, Atropa has had at least 5 players who have experience playing Club or elite college ultimate. Many of them have decided not to play with Bella Donna, or have had years of experience, but unfortunately got cut. In any case, all of us veterans love to play ultimate and are always excited to teach new players.

Having a small group of veterans allows for teaching by example. I cannot count the number of times where I've been able to say to a new player, "Watch [Veteran] as she's cutting during this point. She makes a hard in and deep, and if she doesn't get it she clears quickly." Or apply that sentence to any skill.

In addition, it allows for a more spread out leadership. New players know that they have several people in addition to our coach to ask questions.

These players are also lead by example by being some of the most committed individuals on the team. If you can always count on a core group to be at every practice and workout, then newer players know that this is the norm.

One (preferably two) Committed Captain

One of the greatest things about Tim is his leadership compliments the leadership of Atropa's captains. Again, our players typically are involved in other ways on campus. It has been fantastic to be able to just be a player who leads when I need to rather than a player who leads and plans all practices/workouts.

Like any college women's team, usually the choice for who should be captain is pretty clear. For any women's B team, it will be one of the veterans. It is also to keep in mind transition planning. Be sure to nurture those up and coming veterans who may be stepping into the captain role in coming years. Encourage them to speak up during huddles and practices.

Coordination with the A Team

This is one of the most important factors in developing a women's program with a solid B team. One of the things that was very detrimental to Wisconsin-B in the past years was the late cuts that happened even as late as February (my freshman year).

Now Wisconsin has developed a simple and straight forward protocol at the beginning of the fall season. From the first day of practice in the fall, women trying out should be made aware that there will be two teams. The goals of each team need to be clearly stated at these first practices.

For Wisconsin, Bella Donna organizes the first couple weeks of practice/try-outs. The first few practices are strictly to introduce the sport to new players, then try-outs start a few weeks into the semester. Once try-outs begin, Atropa splits off and starts regular practice. Within the first month of the school year, we have a B team formed. It is certainly not the final team, as we always hope to retain people who are cut from Bella Donna. In addition, we continue to recruit through the fall semester.

Because our teams end up operating pretty separately, it is important to maintain communication through out the year. Any thing from finances, to tournament planning, to logistics with Club Sports campus, to spring break plans need to be talked about:

- Will the B team have a separate checking account from the A team?
- Who will take care of waivers and general team and university relations?
- What tournaments will each team attend? Will we carpool between teams or take separate vehicles?
- How will the teams work together on recruiting new players?

This is something that Wisconsin can still improve on. But we have a great start.

Active recruitment

Good recruitment is key to building a women's program. In addition to participating in the normal student organization fairs, and club sports events, we've had a couple more unique ways of picking up new women.

Have players scout out pick up games at the beginning of the school year. If there is one girl playing among all guys, you know that she wants to learn more and play at a different level. Another very effective way to get more women to join is to hold a "buddy practice." This year, Atropa's buddy practice took place right before winter break. We asked all players, old and new, to bring a friend to practice. About half of the buddies who came had little to no ultimate experience, and about half of the new buddies stayed with our team.

Teams may also try to pick up women who participate in intramural sports like soccer and basketball. Freshman who are used to playing 2-3 sports during the year will want to play on a team again.

Clear goals

As mentioned previously, goals of a team need to be stated on the first day of practice. From day one, it is clear to players that Bella Donna will be training and playing with the goal to win Nationals. In Atropa's case, our goal is to teach players how to play the sport and improve everyone's skills. We want to develop everyone's skills and give everyone an opportunity to play.

This goal also goes in line with creating an environment where players can develop confidence as they learn skills. Atropa minimizes calling lines at tournaments, with the exception of the last few tournaments. We like to mix lines with the veterans and new players. Typically, on a line we have 2 experienced handlers, 1 newer handler, 2 experienced cutters, and 2 newbie cutters.

Good commitment from all players and creating a positive ultimate experience

Another goal we have is to have a committed B team. It is important to keep practices fun and exciting, but at the same time it's important to make sure all your B team players understand that they never have to choose between their education and playing ultimate.

I always want players to have a good time at practice. If Atropa gives the impression that practice and workouts are required, then there are times when it becomes a task rather than something they look forward to.

Atropa is above anything else striving to be a positive ultimate experience.

If you can create a team and environment where everyone wants to play and enjoys playing, they will be committed. Players will come to as many practices and workouts as they can; oftentimes, it is all of them.

The Players!

Finally, the thing that makes a successful B team is always the players. With the help of previous ingredients, you can make a perfect environment for a great B team, just add the people.

OTHER

Fundraising Tips

Jamie Nuwer

Okay, I know it's not the most interesting topic, but if you don't have funds, you can't rent fields, pay coaches, or travel to tournaments. So hang in there and I'll try not to get too bogged down in the details. Fundraising can be fun and productive at the same time. It can be an excellent team-building activity to do something together that benefits everyone.

The first thing you have to do is get someone to manage team fund-raising full time. This should not be a captain and ideally not the treasurer either. Try to find someone who is enthusiastic and outgoing. It's great if they have experiences in organizing teams or events as well. If you play on a youth team, parents can be great resources for organizing fund-raisers. If you're in college, find a veteran on the team who fits the above descriptions.

Once you have your FUNdraising guru you need to come up with some ideas. Try to involve the whole team in brainstorming. You'd be surprised what sorts of creative ideas come up and you'll get better buy-in from the team that way. Once you have a list of ideas, have the fundraising guru analyze each of them for money expected to be made vs time and resources spent. Here's an example. Weekend carwash: buy big bucket of cheap carwash soap (or get a parent to donate it), gather some free buckets from your high school or club sports college office, and find a hose you can use for free. Cost is minimal so you get to keep most of the profits.

So you get the idea: cheap costs mean you get to keep more of the money you make. Once you've determined which activities can make you the most money, proceed to the implementation phase. You should plan to do at least two fundraisers per semester. All players should be required to participate in some way.

Organizing should be done with enough time to smoothly implement the fundraising drive. That can be weeks or months depending on the complexity of the project. Keep very good records of everything you do because next year you may want to repeat the same project.

Once you have alumni, you should keep an alumni list for fundraising. Alumni will remember how hard it was to raise funds. They'll be more likely to donate if you send out alumni newsletters/updates, give alumni access to buying team shirts or jerseys, and/or have an alumni reunion each year. Alumni are especially useful for fundraising.

Following are a list of tips for keeping people excited about fundraising:

- Involve everyone (if everyone knows it's a requirement from the beginning of the season, then this is easy)
- Make it a competition (using the carwash example, make a prize for the person that gets the soapiest. A funny competition is more fun)
- Give people lots of positive feedback
- Make a big deal about how successful the drive was no matter how much money you make
- If you make more than you thought you would, consider giving the team a reward like pizza or beverages

For more ideas about great fundraisers, try websites that fundraise for various causes. A short of recommended websites is included below:

- <http://www.aidslifecycle.org/fundraising>
- <http://www.fundraisingtips.com/ideas.htm>
- <http://www.profitquests.com/FundraisingIdeas.html>
- <http://www.usafundraising.com/fundraising-ideas/sports-fundraisers.html>

A Barrage of Pointers

Courtney Kiesow

How do you recruit players?

Recruitment is a necessity at Wisconsin. Our campus is huge and every year new students get lost in a sea of welcome events and new, exciting opportunities. Grabbing the attention of brand new players is no small task, but it is one of the most important things we do every year. Some of our best rookies have been girls that had never played before.

How did we reel the good ones in? It was different for everybody. That's why we take a lot of different approaches every year. We put up flyers in dorms and workout facilities. We attend fairs for student organizations and talk to girls tossing on campus. This year, we took it a step further and advertised several scrimmages, inviting everyone to come play with returners and see how they like it. We even had a cook out, a less-intimidating way to get to know the sport and the veterans.

First day of practice: How do you run your first practice? The first impression is always the most important, so how does your team make its best impression? How do you structure, advertise and invite players to their first practice?

When newbies express interest in trying out we add them to an email list, or this year a facebook group, so they can get updates on practice times and team events.

At the first practice, it's crucial to make everyone feel included. Veterans throw around with the newbies and give them some tips before practice. They chat and get to know each other so that the new player has someone to talk to if they have any questions, a go-to person. This year, we introduced captains and coaches then immediately split into four teams. Each coach and captain was in charge of a small team that warmed up and ran a simple drill together; again for the purpose of getting to know a smaller group of girls. The rest of the practice was just for scrimmaging, getting everyone a lot of playing time.

Building a program: How do you go from starting a team to building a team that competes at Sectionals and Regionals every year? How do you get to the point where you need to start a B team?

When I joined the team, Bella Donna was already a regional competitor. I cannot offer advice about getting a team to that point, but I believe that all progress is based on one thing. Commitment.

My first year on Bella Donna, we lost in the game to go at Regionals. It was a huge disappointment for the large group of fifth year seniors we had that year. The bottom line was, and we all knew it after the fact, that we simply did not put in enough work. The following year we committed ourselves to more workouts, more practice, and a focus on team bonding. This commitment paid off when we tied for 3rd at nationals, but the conscious decision the leaders made to create a winning team has paid off every year since.

I understand that it is difficult for team leaders to set a high bar for commitment when players are unwilling to match it. This usually happens when there are only a few veterans (as with many new teams). Don't overwhelm your team right away in the fall with talk of commitment. Make them love the team and the sport, then slowly push the limit of their commitment. This is how more and more people become involved; fun first, competition next, then commitment.

Last year Atropa, Wisconsin's B team, took flight. We have had fledgling B teams in the past, but with low numbers and very new leaders, usually fell apart through the spring season. Last year a former Bella Donna, Eyleen Chou, became Atropa's leader. She added a great coach and was instrumental in welcoming (and keeping) new players. Although Eyleen put in a lot of work, what made Atropa successful was that the program was *ready* for a B team. It was no longer just the girls that got cut

from Bella Donna, but a separate, proud entity. It was (and is) full of girls that want to improve, lead, and that simply love to play.

Putting your region on the map: What can we as team leaders do to put less strong regions on the map in terms of college women's ultimate? How do we go from being a relatively weak region to a powerhouse like the Northwest? What are the small steps we can take to put ourselves on that path?

I would say that the number one answer is travel (literally and figuratively). Travel to west coast tournaments or wherever you can find the best competition. Financially, this is tough, but even if you can only attend a few tournaments, pick those that are most competitive. Improving also takes the willingness to leave the comfort of your routine. It is hard to leave a system that has worked in the past, but it's necessary to adjust to the evolution of ultimate. Every year on Bella Donna we try to make small changes that reflect this evolution. Usually the west coast teams lead the way, so it's not a bad idea to follow their example. Reaching out for advice is the best thing any new (or old) team can do.

For a relatively weak region to improve and put itself on the map, one team needs to step up and force others to follow.

Player development: How do you turn a good athlete into a stud ultimate player? How can we foster player development in our region?

The strengths that great athletes bring to a team are usually defensive. They are speedy, agile, coordinated, and aggressive; perfect D line cutters for their first year. Many teams, including Bella, have not always had the luxury of separate O and D lines and giving these players more playing time benefits the team by giving the starters a rest.

The weaknesses that these players present are usually their smarts and their throws. The best thing to do is give them specific roles. For example, their job is to get open, catch the disc, and look for a handler reset by stall 3. Every time. Give them a pattern to follow. Although this won't create a big thrower for your team, you'll get a solid player out of it. They develop their game after they perfect their role. They start trying new things and succeeding, they make an upfield throw or two, they start making handler cuts rather than just clearing out, etc. but they still do the job that is essential to the team.

Fundraising: Some clubs are supported by their universities, but teams are always in need of more money to pay for travel and tourney fees. What are successful fundraisers?

Bella Donna has held hat tournaments, worked at the concession stands at basketball games and held clinics to get grants from our local ultimate organization. None of these has really put a dent in our overall expenses, but they help a little. I recommend anything that allows the team to work together. Fundraisers are perfect for team bonding.

Playing in Observed Games

Daniel “Bones” Brady

The arrival of two observers on field before every game inspires anxiety in top level teams from pool play at Centex to finals in Sarasota. In a game with so few spectators, being watched all of a sudden changes everything. Offsides? Time limits? What if I don't contest? It doesn't help that most teams aren't observed until those critical moments--the game to go to Regionals. Backdoor finals to Nationals. Suddenly, in addition to all the normal pressures of performance, you have two people wearing orange jerseys eyeing every throw and catch, ready to pounce on your smallest misstep.

Here's a short collection of thoughts on how to play with observers. After that is a brief introduction to what observers can and can't do. Lastly, you will find a list of common rules misconceptions, good advice for playing with or without observers.

- **Know the Rules.** The rules are the same with or without observers. Knowing the rules is advantageous in every game you play. Don't rely on one teammate to be bearers of knowledge; everybody should be on the same page.
- **Project confidence.** Base your call on what happened, and how that affected subsequent play. Don't back down because another player is louder. The calmer, more reasoned you are, the more convincing you will be.
- **The Blame Game.** Never re-enact a foul or any other call. Observers saw what happened. We ask what the call is because we don't want to rule on something that you DIDN'T call; tell the observer what your call is and why, and he will make a ruling.
- **Make your Call.** Observers can only deal with the call that has been made. If you call a foul, an observer will not rule on any other infraction that remains unspoken. Similarly, if you say you were fouled one way but the observer saw it happen differently, the call may not go in your favor, even though a foul did occur.
- **Smile.** Keep it spirited. A call made with a smile will disarm even the most aggressive opponents. Being louder won't make observers hear you better.

What Can Observers Do?

Remember, observers will not rule unless you ask them to. Any player involved in an infraction may choose to go to the observer. With that said, observers, at their discretion, may ask you to discuss a call before making a ruling (e.g., “Don't come to me right away”), or may approach a lengthy discussion and either ask for a call to be made or offer to make a ruling.

The following is an abbreviated version of the talk observers give to the captains before every game:

- In and out of bounds and the endzone are active calls made by the observer. Calling a player IN the endzone is different from saying the disc was up; it is up to players to make up/down calls.
- Up/down calls are INACTIVE. Players make these calls, observers do not unless asked to make a ruling.
- Offsides is active. The pulling team must stay completely behind the endzone line before the disc is released. The receiving team must keep one foot on the endzone line after signaling readiness.
- Time limits will be kept as follows: a down disc is in play after ten seconds if it lands on the playing field proper. If the disc lands out of bounds or in an endzone, the team picking up the disc has twenty seconds. After which the observer will announce “Disc is in,” and a defender within three meters of where the disc is coming into play may begin stalling.

- Misconduct fouls, including TMFs and PMFs, are in use. If you keep the game spirited, their penalties should never be incurred. You can read more about them at <http://upa.org/observers/manual#conduct>.
- Playing with observers means you agree that any ruling they make is final.

Top Six Rules Issues and Misconceptions

1. **Offsides** - This is especially important with observers. The second Offsides violation results in a yardage penalty, i.e. the opposing team gets the disc at midfield (or you start with the disc in your own endzone).
2. **Endzone Strip/Foul** - If you are stripped in the endzone and the defense does not contest, it's a goal. A strip is a subset of fouls in the rules. If you call strip, and the observer thinks you were "merely" fouled, your call will not be upheld. When you think you are stripped in the endzone, call a foul. It covers all the bases.
3. **Contested Stall** - A contested stall comes in on 8. That means your marker must say "stalling eight . . ." after the call.
4. **Doubleteam/Fast Count/Disc Space** - The marker is required to drop their count by one (i.e. stalling 1, 2, 3, disc space!, 2, 3 . . .) A second DT/FC/DS *can* be called as a violation, but the player with the disc must say violation in addition to making the second call. The player with the disc may optionally continue without calling a violation. (Any combination of DT/FC/DS may contribute to the violation: e.g., first a fast count, then a double team, is a violation.) Play stops, and the count goes down to zero.
5. **Stopping Play** - "A player's ability to catch or make a play on the disc is not considered to be 'affected' because that player stopped . . . playing because a call was made by another player." (Rules, XVI.K) Don't give up on D or O. Especially considering:
6. **The Continuation Rule** - XVI.C states some subtle things about when play stops after a call. It's tricky, even for seasoned players and observers. I could fill pages describing scenarios and outcomes. However, if you always play through on O or D, you will never make a mistake. Don't use "I thought there was a call made" as an excuse. As the above states, it isn't valid.

Sources:

<http://upa.org/ultimate/rules/11th>
<http://upa.org/observers/manual>

How To Find A Coach

Bryn Martyna

Over my years playing club and college ultimate, I have experienced a wide range of coaching arrangements. I played for UCSD from 1997-2001, co-captaining my sophomore and junior year. Both of those years we did not have a full time coach, but we were able to get some very valuable coaching assistance my junior year from a local club player (including coming to Regionals). My senior year, we got another club player to lend coaching assistance towards the end of the season (and come to Nationals with us) and she then coached the following year (when UCSD won Nationals!). I also co-captained Fury the one year that we didn't have a coach, but we were lucky enough to get the assistance of a club player at end of year practices and Nationals, as well as a couple other club players for clinics on specific skills. I believe 99% of finding the right coach is "being in the right place at the right time", so my main suggestions are really about your approach and how to lay the groundwork to find the right person. Most of my specific suggestions relate more to how to get coaching assistance in a variety of ways even if you can't find someone to commit full time.

The main lessons I learned from my experience in college are 1) finding a coach may be a multi-season process, 2) relationships with the local ultimate community are key, and 3) there are many forms of coaching, short of finding a full-time coach, that can be very valuable to your team. Of course all three are inter-related, but I address them each in turn.

The first point is perhaps the shortest – think long term. This is often harder in college than on a club team, since in college you know your time on the team is limited. But as a leader of a college team, you are part of building or sustaining a program, and when you take the long view, you will have the most impact on the team for years to come, even if you don't directly benefit.

In practical terms, this leads to the second point – work on developing or strengthening your relationship with the local ultimate community. Local club teams are a great place to start. Do not limit yourself in any way – reach out to all tiers of club teams and both women's and men's teams – your perfect coach could be on any of the teams in your area. Tangible ways to develop this relationship if it does not already exist include (from most to least time consuming): trying out for and playing on the team, inviting the team to scrimmage your team, inviting the team or members of the team to lead a clinic or come watch you at a tournament and give pointers, and finally just showing up and watching the club team play. You may also want to reach out to or participate in local summer or winter leagues. The coordinators of these leagues usually have connections with a huge portion of the local ultimate community and may have good ideas about potential coaches. Another resource is recent or not so recent alumni of the team who are still in the area. As a final note, I have to admit that while the above is all good on paper, in my experience, more often than not, we have found a coach who is a husband/boyfriend/partner of someone on the team. I am not sure how to translate this into a recommendation, (other than to recruit a player who is dating your perfect coach – but that would have made for a much shorter article), but I suppose it simply means to keep your mind open to all possible sources of coaches.

Of course, it isn't just a matter of finding any coach – you want a coach who fits your team. I am biased towards a very player-run system because I think it can be incredibly rewarding and empowering, so I believe you want to be choosy about who you get to coach your team. If you are taking this approach, you need to be very clear from the start that this is your approach – you need clear communication with your coaching candidates, to let them know up front what your vision is for a coach, and the process you plan to use to select a coach (e.g., have them coach you for a weekend or a practice or two and then have the team discuss if it's a good fit).

I think the key aspects of vision for the team that absolutely must be addressed up front include:

- General philosophy of coaching and balance of "power" between the player-captains and the coach

- General approach to offense and defense
- Logistics of how many practices/tournaments they will attend, will they have to pay their own way, etc.

Of course if you feel any coach is better than none, you don't need as much of a process and don't need to have an in depth discussion about vision. But even so, you will want to communicate your expectations clearly up front to avoid trouble down the road.

Ideally, you follow the above steps, and you find your perfect coach. But sometimes, there just isn't someone who is a good fit who can commit to your team. This leads to my third point, which I think may be the most overlooked. Sometimes teams think of finding a coach as an all or nothing prospect, but nothing could be farther from the truth. There are a number of ways to obtain coaching assistance short of finding a full time coach.

One option is to have someone "guest coach" – I use this term to describe someone who would actually come to a tournament, in addition to one or more practices. From personal experience, having a club player come to a few practices and come coach us at President's Day and Regionals my junior year was incredibly valuable, even though she wasn't able to join us for other tournaments or for Nationals. The same was the case on Fury during the season I was co-captaining when we didn't have a coach – a player from the men's club team (who also happened to be dating one of our players...) coached us for a number of practices and came with us to Nationals.

One caveat – I think that in order for a "guest coaching" arrangement to work, the captains need to have a very strong working relationship with the "guest coach" and she/he needs to be respectful of your vision/plan for the season as a whole. She needs to understand that with a limited time commitment comes a more limited role and she needs to be willing to listen to your plan and lead practices and make decisions at tournaments that are consistent with that. I think both my experiences with this option were so positive because this was the case.

Another, more limited option, is to have someone come to one or more practices (but not tournaments) and lead clinics on specific topics. We did this on Fury during the season we did not have a coach and it was very helpful. I think the most efficient way to do this is to have the clinic focus on a basic skill such as throwing, marking, or cutting, so that the guest doesn't have to spend too much time in advance learning your entire offensive/defensive structure.

Another option is to have a club team come scrimmage your team – you will learn a lot just from watching how they play against you, and you can also ask their captains or all of their players to give you feedback after the scrimmage. This can be particularly beneficial to you as a captain, since you often do not get any feedback on your personal game. And it is often difficult to give feedback to your teammates, so this can be a great way for everyone on the team to get feedback on their individual strengths and weaknesses.

I hope this provides some helpful suggestions, and will also stimulate you to come up with your own strategies for finding a coach that you can pass on to the next generation of college captains!

Zip's Tips

Josh Ziperstein

20 May 03: Nationals

hey brown, just remember: were better than these guys.

19 May 03: mental game [from Paul Greff]

The physical preparation is over. Other than eating and sleeping well, you're not going to improve your physical status. Now's the time to work on your mental game. The mental preparation during the 10 days prior to nationals is, in my opinion, just as important as the previous 10 weeks' physical preparation. If you care, I'll share my pre-nationals "mental workout" with you before age takes it's toll on my memory and I'm content to pick lint from my navel.

1. Take a physical inventory. Are you in the shape that you wanted to be in at this time? If not, then figure out a strategy for maximizing your output over the 3 day tourney and make peace with yourself. Whining to yourself (and heaven forbid, to your teammates) b/c you're not in shape is an awful distraction. You cannot have any mental distractions at this tournament. Pure focus. If you have an injury, then figure out a game plan to avoid aggravating it BEFORE you get to Austin. I can't offer much more help with injuries. I played over them. Learn how. If you're content with your level of conditioning then polish that porksword and get ready to do some damage.

2. Take a skill inventory. What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses? Define ways to exploit your strengths and simply leave your weaknesses behind. If you don't have a particular throw, don't use it. Someone else on the team has that throw. I guarantee it. One of my weaknesses (that's a relative term btw) was always breaking the mark. I found it helpful to identify certain game situations where it would be important for me to force that throw and in all others I would probably fake the throw and try to go to the strong side. Again, this exercise reduced the number of mental distractions and removed the guesswork while in the heat of battle.

3. Set personal goals. This is purely subjective but it's important to set personal goals to help you stay focused every game. My goals remained fixed over 20+ years: no drops, no throwaways. I know they weren't realistic over the course of the tournament (although no drop tourneys weren't uncommon) but I set out to accomplish those goals every half of every game. It gave me a sense of accomplishment during the game and strengthened my confidence. Other goals included shutting a particular opponent down, never being beat deep in the zone, etc. When the tourney is over you'll be able to look back and evaluate your own performance b/c in the end the only person you need to impress is yourself.

4. Visualize greatness. This exercise yields the most benefits. But it is also the most difficult to perform correctly. Visualizing greatness does not mean picturing which clothes would look best while standing on the victory podium. It has two levels. The first is to visualize yourself executing the team's playbook in various roles. For example, on defense I would picture myself playing different positions within the zone moving as one with the rest of the team while the opponent moved the disc around the field. Kind of like those skiers who picture the course before the race. The second level is all about Glory. See yourself shutting the best player down, staying with him cut after cut after cut until his teammates stop looking in his direction or until he puts his hands on his knees to catch his breath. See yourself getting open at will and delivering every pass on the mark. Imagine it's game point and you're down two goals at the cap. One of your teammates lays out for a diving D and we score. You can feel the opponent tighten up. We come down hard on the pull and they have to work for every inch of soil. Another teammate gets a D and we score. There is fear in their eyes and nothing but hunger in ours. Now it's your turn. You shut your man down the entire length of the field and then you set him up. You let him and the thrower think he's got a step on you and as the disc is released you burst forward, leave your feet and watch your hand sneak in front of his to snatch the disc away. No time for Glory yet. You stand up, take one deep breath to collect yourself and then you're an offensive

machine. Untiring and unstoppable. You help work the disc down the field until you throw or catch the final goal. Game, set, match, Glory. The championship has been won and you contributed directly.

This is the sort of stuff I still fall asleep dreaming about. If you visualize these things, you'll believe in yourself when it counts, you won't be nervous and you'll want to make the big plays. You'll want to be called in to receive the disc for the final point of the tournament. You will have hunger, not fear. Champions attack - they never protect. If you do this, I guarantee at some point you will be the difference.

Leave it all in Austin - except the cup.

18 May 03: catch like an outfielder

when a pop fly goes up, a good centerfielder will immediately take three steps back, assess where the ball is going and then either continue to backpedal or run in and attack. The same goes for catching an overhead pass when at a standstill. our hammers/blades in zone o are rarely underthrown; more often a jumping, difficult catch is necessary. When the pass goes up, follow the same procedure the centerfielder does. Not only will this prevent overthrows, but if the disc is short, you can attack it as opposed to waiting and letting it make a play on you.

17 May 03: hold your line

in between points hold your line on offense. after outplaying a team i enjoy knowing that they can make no excuses as to why they lost. give them nothing to complain about, no reasons for whining. Teams who walk around on the line are nervous and fidgety; stand up and let them see who you are and then go out and crush.

16 May 03: the little things

focus on doing the little things correctly. people will comment on great players: "how does he always get open deep?" or "how did he make that layout grab look so easy?" or "how does he always appear in the holes of our zone o right when i want to throw there?" well, he always gets open deep because he is drifting away from the disc as it is moving up the field, so when he cuts he has 25 yards of lateral field to break his mans ankles. he makes the layout look so easy because as hes approaching the disc he starts lowering his center of gravity so he doesnt lose forward speed when he goes horizontal. he pops into the holes because as you are faking he is bouncing on his toes and watching your eyes. rome wasnt built in a day and big plays usually begin long before the goal is caught or the disc is d'd.

15 May 03: swinging for the fences

when things are clicking on offense it is one of the most unbelievable feelings in the game; difficult catches are being made that are usually dropped, cutters have a spring to their steps, throws are cutting a path through the sky that you only see in your dreams and eye contact is being made on cuts where his back is facing you. conversely, when the o is not flowing there is nothing more frustrating and the opposite effect of the above occurs; cuts you can usually count on are not showing up and throws that are the staple of your offense seem to be finding the ground. when this happens, many will try to get back to the "good o" in one fell swoop — a very bad idea. when you have fallen into a rut, a foundation must be built before you can stand up again. dump and swing, only take 100% throws and slowly your squad will reel it back in. not trying to get it all back in one throw is mentally one of the toughest things in the game.

14 May 03: complacency

do not remain content with being a good thrower, challenge yourself to be a great thrower. often times a thrower will have the attitude "i got the disc around my mark, i put it into the space where my cutter is — i did my job." the best throwers (and the best teams) have committed to making every throw perfect. another level of focus or a half second more of thought turns "caaatch-able" throws into great throws and good cutters into unstoppable receivers.

13 May 03: hot weather

before playing at a tournament site which is known for especially warm weather, there are two things you can do that will keep you dramatically cooler. 1) wear a hat when you play. if you are not used to playing with a hat, then try it out at practice before the tournament and get used to it. it keeps your face cool, less sweaty and you are less likely to get sunburnt. 2) get your hair cut. im not joking.

12 May 03: sideline space

as a wing in zone offense you should always keep at least 2-3 yards between yourself and the sideline. otherwise, if a hammer is thrown to you and it is slightly long, you will back right out of bounds trying to make a catch.

11 May 03: Mother's Day

go call your mom or write her an email to tell her how much you love her. if you are reading this tip and its not mothers day, go do it anyway.

10 May 03: alternate email addresses

go onto the CIS homepage and get yourself a couple of alternate email addresses. this is possibly the most fun, stupid little pleasure to arise since waking up naturally a minute before your alarm goes off. since becoming a pastime, whitechocolate@brown.edu, jayz@brown.edu, raff@brown.edu, 25@brown.edu, holla@brown.edu and checkthepulse@brown.edu have all become major players in the email game.

9 May 03: turn and face

when you catch a disc in the open field, if you are not going to immediately make another throw then a nifty little trick is to turn towards your mark and face them up like you are going to break them. doing this for the first second of your stall makes your mark swing around to protect the break throws and when you turn upfield at 2 or 3 you will have completely uncontested open-side throws (this also makes throwing i-o breaks even easier because your mark swings to protect the break around). this also sets a tone for the possession and the rest of the game: its "your trying as hard as you can to stop me from throwing any and every throw i want" not "im just trying to get a throw off on you."

8 May 03: weather

when its a little windy players have the tendency to reel their throws in a bit, and conversely, when conditions are perfect they will often let their throws hang out. the latter is a much worse habit; in perfect conditions there is no excuse for turnovers. decisions about making throws should be based on a "perfect condition" scenario and as conditions worsen, decisions should become tighter. on a side note, in great conditions people often try to "baby" their throws — putting a lot of touch on the disc and trying to hit a receiver perfectly in stride. although this often looks very pretty, it is a much harder disc for the receiver to read, so shoot 'em in there.

7 May 03: scoops

after a long practice, if you need a little extra boost to your meal but have missed 7:30 ratty/vdub, just head over to the gate for a sandwich with a scoop. once your sandwich is finished (cut and plated) and the delier is about to hand it over, lean forward a little and say "could i maybe just get a scoop of tuna on the side" sounding both extremely tired from practice and so hungry that if she didnt give you the scoop you might just jump over the counter and dive into the fixins bar. i advise us all; only ask for the scoop when you really need it. if this becomes commonplace, it will surely be outlawed. more often than not, the worker is so stunned by the question he hands over the scoop before knowing any better.

6 May 03: faster than you think

you can always run faster than you think. a couple interesting anecdotes/thoughts on this 1) i was watching a sportscentury classic on jerry rice and one of his ex-coaches was talking about him: "jerry had the most unbelievable functional speed ive ever seen. when i looked over the 40 times of the

cornerbacks across the league, most of them were faster than jerry — never seemed to be able to catch him though." 2) if you are chasing down a disc that you dont think you can get and pull up early, you are selling yourself short. run absolutely as fast as you can until the disc has almost hit the ground and then layout for it if you have half a chance at getting it. if you walk away from a disc knowing you did everything you could have possibly done, you leave no room for what ifs. if you do this every point of every game of every tournament, you will have a regret-free ultimate career. a side note on this tip: from what i hear, one of the more difficult things about being a wide receiver is catching a ball that looks like its bobbling even if its a perfect spiral, because while running full speed your head bounces around. during the beginning of his NFL career, jerry worked extremely hard at the track and taught himself how to run at full speed so that his head stays perfectly still, even when checking over his shoulder for the ball...the man.

5 May 03: pick a few

with reading period coming to a close, i thought this would be an appropriate tip. look over the tips from the past and pick a couple of things that you want to work on in the next three weeks. before each practice bring these goals to the front of your mind and consciously decide to improve that aspect of your game.

2 May 03: favorite receivers

know your receivers but dont have favorites. knowing your receivers entails: being aware of what types of throws certain players will catch, when to release a throw based on the cutters speed and when it is a good idea to hold back on a throw you might make to another receiver. on the other hand, having favorite receivers is often accompanied by: looking off open men while waiting for your favorite cutter to get open or forcing a throw to your favorite receiver because you enjoy completing passes to him. this is a fine line, and certainly more a mental challenge than anything else, but is often the reason why poor throwing decisions are made.

1 May 03: the jerz

if you are unsure whether you are about to play in a very big game and need some juice for the mind, ask qp what hes wearing under his jersey. if you see the 2-five on the blue and white, you know its on. this vet has only rocked the jerz for a small handful of tourneys; worlds, nats, senior year amherst invite versus me...this is the real deal.

30 April 03: before a tournament

before you play in a big tournament come to terms with each aspect of your life. schoolwork, friends, jobs, women...be happy with wherever you plan to leave them and then do just that. this is the final weight that needs to be lifted from your shoulders before you enter the realm of: g-g-g-g-g-gangbuster.

29 April 03: after a score

especially in an important/close/highly spectated game, jog back to your own endline after each time the other team scores, even if you know you probably wont be in the next point. this accomplishes two very important things: 1) when a team scores on you they think they have gained the upper hand and now you are broken. if you run back to the line it says "okay you got that one, i cant wait until you pull it though, so we can jam it down your throats." teams see when you do this and it scares them. 2) have you ever had the feeling of never being tired while playing, feeling like you could play ten more games and then at the days end you take off your cleats and sit down and you are instantaneously exhausted? this is kind of like that; if after a point of hard running you just stop and walk back in, your muscles along with your mind feel defeated. aside from these two, its never fun to make your way through a cheering crowd of opposing players.

28 April 03: stay ahead of the disc

when playing zone defense, after a pass gets by the cup many defenders get into the bad habit of chasing the disc. the scenario looks as follows: a throw goes over or through the cup to a popper and

the defensive wing then puts his head down and runs to the spot in which he would be perfectly positioned to defend if the disc stayed at the man who just caught it. unfortunately good zone o teams always keep the disc moving so the defender ends up looking like he is running from an alligator, taking a zig-zag path down the field. after a pass has gone past you, it is a much better idea to 1) run with your head up so you can see the disc move, allowing you to change your path as you run 2) run past the spot where you think the disc is going to end up. #2 might give up an extra couple of yards before you are re-set but slightly overcompensating allows the zone to restabilize, which is the key to good zone defense.

27 April 03: THE HYPE

don't believe it

26 April 03: on the side

go out and support your teammates in their other endeavors. sometimes it is difficult to see life outside the realm that is ultimate, but many people do some very cool stuff when they are not tossing a disc.

25 April 03: goals

before a tournament, establish certain goals that you would like to accomplish in terms of personal play. breaking the mark, setting yourself on deep throws, getting down on the pull, holding your mark...whatever it may be. at the end of the tournament assess whether or not you've achieved your goals (if you did, what was working right and if you didn't, why not)

24 April 03: being on time

get to practice on time and by on time i mean 10-15 minutes early. if practice starts at 4, be at the fields at 3:50 so you can put your cleats on and get some throws in before we run at 4. if you have class, then bring your gear and start putting your socks/ankle brace/mouth guard on when your prof goes into the "there's only 3 minutes left in class but i don't want to let them go early" spiel. we've all made a big deal about how we weren't on fields until mid-april and how we've seen nothing but pools and tracks...well now we are on grass. if we run at 4, then we do marking at 4:15 and drills at 4:25 and 10 pull at 4:45...we get to play more, which is certainly why i do this. you guys?

23 April 03: sandwiches

when you eat a sandwich, eat the first half holding it "right side up" and the second half "upside down". some sandwiches are much better in one orientation, due to placement of meat, cheese, condiments and vegetables. for some of you, this will be an inconsequential tip, for others it might change your life. either way, try it out, i've worked in a deli for many years and if there is one thing i know in life it is sandwiches (a side note for veteran sandwich eaters: if you like, you can eat the first half of the first half in the primary orientation and the second half of that first half in the secondary orientation. the second half of the sandwich can then be consumed in the preferred orientation).

22 April 03: one-handed catches

earlier in the tips list, the issue of catching a disc that you were chasing down was examined (trailing edge versus the correct way) but this issue is also important if a disc is coming right at you. if a disc is coming in extremely fast or high (these are the only instances in which it would be necessary to make a one handed catch — otherwise you should get your body behind the disc) then there are two ways to catch. very good players will maneuver their hand in a way that does not force a trailing edge catch. for example, if the disc is a flick high over your left shoulder then you clearly want to catch it with your left hand. but, if you just go to grab it with your palm facing away from you then this becomes a trailing edge catch and the disc will often spin off of your hand and past you. instead, if you face your palm more towards you to get around to the back side of the disc, then it is no longer a trailing edge catch (for those of you who lack great visualization skills, it now looks like your hand is a puppet and when you make a catching motion you are talking to yourself). if the throw is a backhand you want to catch palm out. this sounds like a lot to be thinking about when making a catch, but 1) if you practice it, this

will become second nature and you won't think "am i catching this trailing edge or not?" you will simply catch the correct way and 2) this is why the best players are the best and make hard catches look easy.

21 April 03: getting low

when you are going to make a catch on a low disc, there are two acceptable ways to catch: 1) go into a slide 2) run to the spot where you want to catch and then get low for the disc. first of all, in both cases you want to get your body in front of where you want to catch, aka "the break basket". secondly, you certainly do not want to run for any number of steps with your hands down around your knees. this is as silly as running with your hands over your head to catch a high disc. the former is much more common but just as ineffective — it is extremely hard to maintain speed and balance running in this way.

18 April 03: hats

bring a winter hat when you go to tournaments, even if it might be a little warm. if you wear this while you warm up you will immediately break a sweat and your body will stay warm (you lose 80% of body heat through your head).

17 April 03: stopping short

when you run a track workout do not slow up short of the finish. if you are running a 400, then run 400. slowing up short so you can begin resting as soon as you reach the line is as ludicrous as slowing up a cut before reaching the disc, so when you catch you can be ready to throw (not coincidentally there might be some transference between these two habits..)

16 April 03: break mark throws

pull the trigger on your break mark throws; the mere chance of getting point blocked should not dictate when you throw to the break side. if you receive a break mark throw as or from the dump and you turn to break and see a cutter, lunge your body out and put the disc into the open space. most of the time markers will a) not believe that you are going to throw (as crazy as this sounds) and won't actually guard the throw or b) they will be so worried about getting broken io that the break will be simple. an addendum to this tip: unless you are setting up an io throw do not fake to the break side. this fake makes your cutter think a throw is coming and he often runs an extra 5 yards in expectation, usually making the break side unavailable for the rest of the stall.

15 April 03: spend \$ to make \$

on defense, you gotta spend money to make money. by this i mean that standing 5 yards behind your man and giving him free in-cuts to avoid the risk of getting beat deep is not good defense. if you are forcing your man in, then if he gets the disc on an in-cut it should be a contested catch with a hard mark immediately following the reception. with that said, pick your times to force your man out. if he is thrown to deep you should be on his heels forcing him to play good offense and hold you off — the best defenders in the world get beat deep from time to time, and that is because there are a lot of good cutters and throwers out there. but, those same defenders also get more d's and have their man shut down more often than anyone else and the number of times they are beaten deep pales in comparison.

14 April 03: water and a disc

there are two very simple things you should bring to every practice: at least 2L of water and at least 1 disc. the latter will allow you to play and the former will allow you to play well.

13 April 03: visualization

visualize yourself making great plays in the week leading up to a big tournament. laying in your bed, eating lunch, sitting in class, talking with your girlfriend...run through the entire sequence in your mind and continue to do it over and over until it is just how you want it. a novice visualizer might respond: "i sometimes have trouble catching the disc when i play and when i run through the visualization

exercises in my mind, every time it comes to me i drop it. should i stop visualizing the play?" this my lads is the very reason you should be visualizing. most people who have the dropsies from time to time are actually very good catchers and their mental game is what is lacking. visualize again and again until you are catching the disc, laying out and getting the d, skying your man for the goal, not having your mark broken...and then you will go out and do those things.

12 April 03: nutrition

eat some protein the morning of a tournament, especially if you have trouble eating food during a day of ultimate. although some extra energy spent in digestion might make you feel slightly lackadaisical to start the day there are two consolations 1) a good warmup can usually get you going and you wont be all that lethargic 2) later in the day you will reap the benefits of the protein filled breakfast. good protein sources: eggs, tuna fish, beef jerky, turkey slices, rice and beans...for more options ask the man, Will Arnold.

11 April 03: viable cuts

make all your cuts viable ones. for example — all too often when a player is trying to make an in cut they will only ostensibly drive their man out, although they never actually intend to cut deep. a great cut is when you turn your shoulders and run deep for 5 steps and then turn on a dime and beat your man back in. if he does not respect your deep cut then just keep going. good defenders will know when your fakes are just that and wont even respond to them. a side note — this may or may not be why some of the best cutters in the game often look like they dont really know what they are doing until the last minute but are consistently open by 5 yards.

10 April 03: zone offense

if you are playing zone offense (not handlers) and the disc gets advanced upfield past you it is imperative for you to work to get in front of the disc. our zone offense functions because when we get one throw through the cup we often get three and it is because we are moving faster upfield than the defense is.

9 April 03: off the pull

get down on the pull. not only is it practically a very effective defensive tactic because you can use the endline as an eighth defender if the pull is good, but it is also mentally devastating to the other team. if they think you are tired (or more importantly think they themselves are tired) then if they see you sprinting down on the pull they will be broken. remember: you are less tired than you think and we have more players than you think.

8 April 03: break mark cuts

the only player on the field that can create break mark offense is a cutter. once a good cut has been made the thrower is responsible for breaking the mark, but the cut needs to come first. as a cutter once you have established the break mark cut, most defenders will begin to inch little by little to the break mark side until you will be open on either the force or the break side. CUT TO THE BREAK SIDE, we have great throwers.

7 April 03: the trailing edge

if you are chasing down a disc and you have to catch it with one hand, make sure not to catch it trailing edge. just so its not unclear: trailing edge is when your catching motion is in the same direction as the disc is spinning. if youve ever been in a mac line, you know that trying to catch a disc trailing edge often results in you hitting the disc on instead of stopping the spin. so, you want to catch backhands righty and forehands lefty (try the trailing edge versions to see how much more difficult they are). being successful at this tip requires two things: 1)become very comfortable catching with your off hand 2)think about it for just a second while you are chasing it down.

6 April 03: to grass [from trainer Bryan Doo]

as our practices move from turf and track to grass it is extremely important to stretch very well, no

matter how fit you think you might be. muscles that you have not used in a while are very important on grass and they will tighten up if you do not do a good job of stretching during this transition period. along with continuing to stretch well, you might even have to add some stretches to your routine. for example my IT bands often get tight and need good stretching after playing on grass.

5 April 03: off days

pick one or two days a week to make your off days and commit to those. if you play your off days by ear, then usually you either end up never taking a day off or taking several days a week off (neither of which is good for training). with that said, non-practice days are not necessarily off days. lift, swim, bike, throw, whatever, because youve got to know the other guy is too...

4 April 03: fakes

when you fake, you do not actually need to go through the entire throwing motion to complete a successful fake. for example, on the force side, you can plant your foot in order to turn to the break side before you begin to fake and then you will nearly always beat your man across, because you are moving before he is. also effective is if your fake is somewhat circular and its natural motion has the disc already coming towards the break side. also, a kind of crafty trick is if you know you want to throw a break mark throw on a backhand force, use the forehand grip (or at least begin to position your fingers) while in the backhand position. you can fake by pumping your shoulders or stepping out and then beat your man to the forehand side and already be set to throw a flick.

3 April 03: lacing up

lace all of your footwear up to the top hole. i started doing this with my cleats a couple of tournaments ago and just recently started doing it with my sneakers . it is awesome. the shoe feels like it is part of your foot and can truly fly. yes, it takes a couple of extra seconds to lace up, but i contend it is worth it. this is especially good if you have had a history of ankle problems.

2 April 03: learning across the disc

when you are playing offense think about the things that you find hard to stop as a defender. when you are playing defense think about the things that frustrate you as a cutter. ive always said the best strikers are ex-goalies and vice versa. if you can learn every time you play, especially learning "across" the disc, you will become a successful player very quickly.

1 April 03: little tricks

good little tricks that all the great players use:

- work on a four-fingered flick; its especially good for throwing short dump passes or to post cuts when you have to put some touch on it.
- when you are cutting, close your eyes; it will be even harder for your defender to guard you or know where you are going.
- when you layout say the word "jambalaya," it compresses your lungs and allows you to layout further.
- on offense, right before the pull goes up, lick the tips of your pointer and middle fingers; your forehand will be right on point and you wont ever drop a pass.

31 March 03: fakes against poachers

if you are playing against a team that poaches a lot then the best way to clear the throwing lanes is to uses pumpfakes. when you fake, poaching defenders will jump out into the lanes and at a most basic level you will be able to see where the poaches are so you dont throw into them. even better is if you can fake in the lanes and get them to bite on the fake and then throw the disc where they just were, likely to an uncovered receiver.

ps. a definition — a poaching defender is one who is not guarding a man, someone who is just floating on the field looking to get a d when a throw goes up. i have used this term before and wanted to make sure everyone knows what it means. if you are being poached, yell "poach, poach" and go find the disc, as described in an earlier zips tip.

19 March 03: to sophomores

bring your concentration forms on spring break. its a great stress free time to do them so you dont have to cram them in among the long hours of school and disc. paul and i are going to hold a phat cypher one of the afternoons and just bust 'em out.

18 March 03: throw when fatigued

after a hard track workout or practice make sure to pencil in 10 more minutes of practice time. throw thirty forehands and thirty backhands and focus on making them good. it is not often that you get a chance to throw when you are very tired and it is extremely important to be able to maintain your throws late in a tournament.

17 March 03: fatigue

during a long point or a long game your body tends to get physically tired. people yelling at you and pushing you on or telling yourself to keep working are both good ways to keep your physical output high. a much more difficult aspect of fatigue is to keep your mental game on point. some keys to achieving this and also playing well when you are mentally tired:

- 1) only take higher percentage throw options. your receiver is probably tired as well and he may not be able to leg out a long huck. also, even the best of the best dont have as good throws when they are tired — instead they just have a very good sense of which throws they still have.
- 2) find out what type of player you are; a thinker or a non-thinker. thinkers remain focused because they are always thinking and do not let their mind drift. non-thinkers are never actively thinking, but are actually always thinking, and their play is based on instinct and/or good habits. you can usually pick out a non-thinker if you ask them to show you the form on how to throw a flick and then they cant throw it themselves (because they are now thinking about it too much). if you are a thinker then keep thinking, do not let yourself slide — you thrive on this intense mental focus. if you are a non-thinker, do not begin to think, "should i cut now" or "i am getting tired" just try to stay in your game.
- 3) find some things that individually work for you. for example, during a stoppage i often will take a deep breath and fix my hat. i have classically conditioned myself to associate this with a need to focus. when i do this, i know its time to buckle down and focus in (or actually focus out, i am definitely a non-thinker).

16 March 03: the redzone

the closer you get to the end zone the better a player you should become. wicks said it today — the difference between good teams and great teams is how well they convert in the redzone and the same goes for individual players. if you would not throw to a man when he is open by one step in the field then you should not do it when he is in the end zone. three things to remember about end zone offense:

- 1) we know where we are going and they do not
- 2) there is not shot clock in ultimate, thus no rush to score
- 3) the gut cut scores as often as the cone cut...do it

15 March 03: focus

go out and try to break the consecutive throws record. it is as much a test of focus as it is of throwing skills. paul and i did today and it was awesome; there were two great things that came out of it.

- 1) i realized that it is never acceptable for me to drop a throw — ever — because today when i was focusing on it i didnt drop.
- 2) i feel like i saw something new about paul today and we now have a connection that will transfer onto the field. it is also now unacceptable for there to be an error when im throwing to paul or vice versa, because today when we were focusing we never missed.

14 March 03: competition

use your teammates to push you when you are doing a workout. if you look around and try to go as fast as the fastest guy (and everyone else does this too) then the entire speed of the team will necessarily increase.

13 March 03: rationalize

develop certain rationalizations for specific pieces of your play that can explain either your negative or positive performance. these will make you always seem like a better player than you are, especially when used correctly. my three primary examples: 1) i ran hurdles in high school and it changed my stride form which is why i run so fast/just tripped while cutting. 2) my right wrist is double jointed which is why i have good deep throws/just turfed that forehand. 3) i have a heart murmur which is why i am in such good shape/struggling with this last 400. clearly the less the person you are talking to knows about physiology/athletics, the better off you are. conceive and use these well, for they will take you far.

12 March 03: seniors

i didnt quite realize until this spring season the feeling of last years seniors being gone from the team. my advice is this; appreciate the seniors on the team because in reality we dont have them for that much longer. invite them to come to jos with you after practice even if it means forking over some points for their food. give them a high five when you guys connect for a goal and make an effort to spend time with them at practices and tourneys. i promise you, you dont know how much you will miss teammates after they leave the team, so build a bank of memories for each one of these guys.

11 March 03: breaking the mark

the first thing you need to have good break mark throws is to have good throws. there is nothing "tricky" about these throws. next, it is important to work on your fakes (see ZT 2/7/03:solid fakes). once you have good throws and good fakes, breaking the mark is very easy. some tips for breaking the mark:

- 1) the best break mark throwers are often also the players with the best field vision. if a break mark cut is about to develop (assume forehand force) then a good thrower will give a big forehand fake (or even an io forehand fake) to get their mark to move around and try to stop the throw. once he has moved, it is easy to beat him back to the break side and get the throw off. the key to doing this well is timing — too late and the cut is expired, too early and your mark will likely be able to recover.
- 2) if a cut develops too quickly or you dont have great field vision, then the key to getting off a break mark throw is using your body. step around your man and use your leg and hips to seal him off. now the break mark throw is easy.
- 3) if you can throw around your marker because he is not very good or you are simply faster than him, then make sure to follow [ZT 3/6/03:throw extension]. it would be quite a shame to ground a throw on a porous mark.
- 4) this is mentioned in all three of the preceding points, but it need be restated for emphasis. when you turn to face your mark (either to hit the dump or break) your legs are at shoulder width. never, ever, ever throw from this position. the key to solid fakes is pivoting and the key to flat, controlled throws is pivoting/lunging out into the flat.

10 March 03: the dump

1)when you hear the word "six" turn your body and face your defender so now you are being marked straight-up.

2)make eye contact with your dump and wait for him to make his move.

3)when the dump has made a cut and is open, put the disc out into space.

other important points:

-to accomplish 3) you will have to make a break mark throw. see zips tips tomorrow for more on making a good break mark throw.

-if your throw allows the dump to run onto the disc and catch in the motion of his movement (as opposed to stopping and having to wait for the throw) it will be easier for him to make another throw to the break side.

-finally and most importantly: dont give up on your dump. if you turn at stall 6 and he is covered on his first fake do not turn back upfield. this is what happens: everyone will have stopped cutting and you will turn back to your dump. now at stall 8/9 most markers will strike around to guard the dump because he knows its all youve got. at this point you will a)get stalled b)get point blocked or c)throw a

big, looping dump which will result in an even bigger loss. **STICK WITH YOUR DUMP!** if at stall 9 he has fallen/has no chance of getting open, turn upfield and throw it in the direction of your best receiver.

9 March 03: capitalize on breaks

a good cutter (one who is dangerous on both in and out cuts) will likely "break" their defender at least once or twice during a game. this occurs when the defender bites big for a fake and either falls over because he is trying to move faster than he can or gets tangled up. if your defender is in this situation it makes sense for you to immediately cut deep, since you are open wherever you want. this tip may seem intuitively obvious, i suppose, but it is something i do not do well and is an easy way to score a lot more easy goals, since youve already done all the hard work.

8 March 03: deep cuts

when you are running for a deep disc (either on o or d) make sure to run on the line that takes the shortest distance to where the disc is catchable (this sounds like a repeat of the tip from a couple days ago, but read on). not "running the curve" is a matter of reading the disc and making sure that its flight doesnt outrun you and has little to do with opposing players. in terms of positioning, if you have your body on the line the leads to the place where the disc will be easiest to catch, then even if your man is faster than you he has to go around you on a longer path to get to the disc first. a great deep cutter will combine the elements from these two similar tips; run to where the disc will be, not where it is and take the straightest most direct route to that spot so as to keep your opposing player on your back. doing these two things will force your defender to make a choice; 1) try to go around and outrun you and get to that spot first or 2) run the curve and try to make a play on the disc at a time/place hed rather not. if he does 2) youve done your job. stay on your path and if he makes a spectacular play shake his hand after the game. if he does 1) refer to zips tip on 12/17/02

7 March 03: fruit

make sure to eat your fruit. it is often expensive to get fruit (for those off of meal plan) and difficult to get good fruit (for those on meal plan). make sure to keep eating apples (applesauce is good too), oranges and bananas. also, jos has begun to offer a nice tropical fruit selection and i am especially partial to the baby pineapples for only \$3.00.

6 March 03: throw extension

you often have to move your throws out when you want to make a throw around a mark. a common misconception is that to do this you should extend your arm out even further than normal — this causes you to lose control of the disc and it will often not be released parallel to the ground (instead it will be an outside-in bending throw). to throw around your mark extend your entire body out so you can keep your arm at the same distance as if you did not have to stretch for the throw. if you do this correctly then when you are in the throwing position it will look like you are doing a lunge.

5 March 03: straight cuts

make sure that when you cut deep you do not "run the curve". if the disc is coming in at an angle a good player makes sure not to follow the path of the disc, but to intersect the disc at a point when it is easily catchable. if you follow the path of the disc you will end up running much further and may not catch up to it. for you mathematicians out there, running to the place where you think the disc is catchable is the equivalent of running the hypotenuse of the triangle or the chord of the arc.

4 March 03: dictate

the question arises: what do i do if i am guarding a man that is taller/faster/smarter/can jump higher than me? the answer is dictate. dictating is positioning your body so that the only direction your man can cut without running into you is the way you are letting him go. clearly, this involves constantly changing your body position and is the most difficult aspect of good defensive play. as a defender, you cannot completely shut down a very good cutter, but you can stop him from doing the things he most wants to do, which are likely the things he is best at. if you think your man is faster than you,

then you should force him to make an in cut (ie. back towards the disc as opposed to towards the end zone). once you are forcing your offensive player to do what you want him to do, then his strengths become less important because you are playing to your strong points. if you do not know what type of player you are guarding, it is probably better to force him in at the start of the game, because this is a less devastating reception if completed.

3 March 03: keep your head down

if you are running deep (either to defend or to cut) put your head down and run. trust that you will hear an up call and then turn briefly to check where the disc is. as you get better and better at reading the disc, this quick check will allow you to know how fast and where the disc is going and you can put your head back down and run some more. it is extremely hard to run (and even harder to run fast) with your head looking back over your shoulder.

26 February 03: long flights [from Will Arnold]

When you fly a long distance, the cabin conditions subject your body to significant stresses. 1) You are in an environment of low pressure, dry, recycled air; it is very dehydrating. One should drink at least a pint of water for every hour spent on a plane. 2) The seats are very uncomfortable and force awkward posturing. Especially if you are tall, they put stress on your low back and restrict circulation to your extremities. One should not sit still for more than 45-60 minutes at a time, but should take advantage of the aisles and the space in the back of the plane for walking and stretching. 3) Airplane food is neither very palatable nor very filling. Pack at least a sandwich for every meal you will miss. Get ratty to go. Throw in a banana or two.

Here is what I recommend for a flight:

1) When you board the plane, drink four to six airplane cups of water. The steward/ess will be happy to oblige and soon you will have developed a friendly, comical rapport.

2) In about 45-60 minutes, you will have to use the rest room. Take this opportunity to drink another 4-6 cups of water, flirt with the steward/ess, move your legs around a bit, and stretch. Stretch seriously for at least ten minutes. There is enough space in the back of the plane to loosen up your hamstrings, quads, calves and groin. Not only will stretching make you feel better the next day, but it will also relax your muscles and make you more comfortable when you return to your seat.

3) Repeat 2.

4) Repeat 2.

Note: If you can somehow get your hands on an entire aisle affording you the opportunity to lay down, do so.

Note1: Many would say that they would prefer to spend the time on a plane sleeping. I would say you will feel better the next day if you keep your muscles loose and body hydrated.

Note2: If you have ever travelled with me, you will notice that I follow this routine religiously. You get used to the dirty/quizzical looks from other passengers. Trust me.

Lastly, and arguably most importantly: carry your cleats and jersey on the plane with you regardless of whether or not you check a bag.

25 February 03: vitamins

calcium and potassium are two very important nutrients for muscle performance and are sometimes hard to find at a tourney. K: theres a chance that the tournament food box will have some bananas, but it also might not. either way, its a good idea to find a little grocery store while you are driving around the night before a tourney and split a bunch of bananas with a teammate (that is 1 bunch not "a bunch"). Ca: make your way over to CVS before leaving for the weekend and pick up a container of tums. if you pop a couple of tums between each game, eat a banana before you start and during the bye and get some salt in you, you will be free of muscle cramps all weekend.

24 February 03: hydrate

go start drinking water right now and dont stop until you go to bed on friday night. when i play in a tournament i can barely drink any water, otherwise i feel sick and slow. if you are like this (or even if you can drink while playing) it is important that your body be extremely well hydrated and this cannot

occur overnight or in a couple of hours. if youve ever poured water into water, youll notice that there are no little bubbles. theres a goal for you, go and get it.

23 February 03: when poached

when you are poached by your man immediately do one of two things. 1) cut deep. if there is open space and a good thrower, this is the best way to burn your defender for leaving you unguarded. 2) instead of standing in the stack or waiting for your turn to cut, go get the disc. if there is a lot of action on the force side, go to the break side and call for the disc and your thrower should be able to find you. you know what they call it you have the disc on the break side, unmarked and smiling because you just made your man pay — the power position.

22 February 03: rec.sport.disc

do not read rec.sport.disc, especially as tournament time starts to roll around. if you do not know what rsd is, even better. anything that is important or that will psych us up, wicks will surely relay along to the listserv.

21 February 03: cuts

make your cuts run parallel to the sidelines as opposed to parallel to the goal lines. you will make your throwers job much easier and with one juke you can go from an out cut to an in or vice versa. players that do this well are unarguably the hardest to guard.

20 February 03: thinking

for each practice, try to keep the things we worked on that day in drills or chaltalk in the front of your mind. some people say that when you play in a game you should always be thinking; i say you should very rarely be thinking. the best players do all their thinking at practice and while walking from class to class and while eating ice cream with their girlfriends and even while sleeping. if you can constantly practice very good ultimate habits, then you will naturally make the correct cut or move your body into the correct position without thinking — because sometimes that extra millisecond is all a good opposing player needs.

19 February 03: alcohol

do not drink alcohol in large amounts in the week leading up to a big tournament; it is a poison and it is not good for your body. i will not be drinking until stanford, although i do intend to toast ben and cj with a pint of guinness at their celebration.

18 February 03: sleep, part II [from Ross Loomis]

I thought my guest zip tip would have been on the value of laughter, however all that needs to be said on that subject is it has value and if you need to laugh just read Kevin's e-mail, I know I'm going to keep it some place close when I need a chuckle. But Kevin does bring up an interesting point, sleep is important, college does not provide the best environment for sleeping, here are some sleep facts which you can use to adjust your respective sleep situations.

People need sleep - everyone needs between 6 to 9 hours of sleep a night, individual variation for what this number actually is is great, so know thyself and try to hit it.

In order to fall asleep quickly - during the day, don't drink caffiene after 5 pm, and do your pushups and crunches at least half an hour before planning to sleep, in bed, assume the most comfortable position as possible, and stay absolutely still. Every time you move you have to start falling asleep all over again, so get it right and stick with it.

Sleep in a large block is better than napping - Due to the structure of sleep cycles (which are ~ an hour and a half in which you go through all stages of sleep, from NREM to REM), a full 8-9 hours of sleep gives you more REM sleep/min than a 3 hour nap, which has to be good for you.

I would personally recommend trying to get to bed by 1 am every school night, guaranteeing yourself at least 7 hours of sleep a night (exceptions for nights before exams are acceptable, but if you have some reading you "should" be doing, put it down and hit the hay, your teacher will thank you for staying awake in class).

If your situation (i.e. hockey player roommate) prevents you from going to sleep by one, comfortable ear plugs are available, and you can wear one of those airplane masks to block out light. One last addendum, and it has yet to be scientifically proved, but empirical evidence leads me to believe - time lost to sleep by hooking up with women or men is not actually lost to sleep, in other words, getting busy for three hours and sleeping for four is as good as sleeping for seven hours.

18 February 03: sleep [from Kevin Loo]

Today's guest zip tip of the day pertains to sleep.

As many of you may or may not know, I take sleeping very seriously. Sleep is and should be an essential part of everyone's daily routine. Sleep can be incorporated into a number of daily activities, and I suggest you try any or all of the following activities in order to maximize your total sleeping potential.

For instance, try catching a little shut eye during class by sitting at the back of the room. A strategically positioned arm used as a crutch for your limp neck will block your eyes from the professor's scrutiny as well as suggest deep thought, or concentration. Be wary though, for if in your moment of sleeping ecstasy your head should slip out from under your hand, you may awaken to find several of your peers jeering loudly in laughter and disbelief.

Ultimate parties. They're long, and like any other activity in life they require patience and moderation. Try catching a wink or two at your next ultimate gathering. Couches are usually your best bet, particularly because you can count on your ultimate buddies to keep you from getting too much sleep, as can often be the case. If you're lucky enough, you might even have the pleasure of receiving a danza slap by your most esteemed colleagues. I got one when I was a freshman, and I can only say that it is something I will never forget.

The Ratty. This, by far, is one of the least recognized environments for sleeping potential. Talk is cheap; you're gonna do a lot of it in your days. But how many times are we allowed to fall sleep to the soothing chatter of the Ratty dining halls? Do it after a long Saturday morning practice, when nobody's paying attention to you, that way nobody will notice. Everyone else usually looks like ass anyhow since they're just waking up from having partied all night. It's priceless I tell you.

As you can see, there are a number of untapped moments in the day where traditionally one wouldn't think it appropriate to sleep. I'm not a scientist, no, but I've adapted this practice to my own lifestyle and have found it incredibly successful. Some call it narcolepsy, I call it time management. Because when it comes down to it, sleep is just as important as eating right, or exercising, or coming focused to practice. Get your work done, party if you have to, but make sure to get your sleep, because your body needs it.

17 February 03: stretching [from CJ Hoppel]

In addition to eating right and sleeping right, in preparing your body to play, it is essential that you stretch, and stretch well. Not only does stretching help prevent injury, loosening up directly benefits your play. And, unlike anything else I can think of, including eating, sleeping, sprint workouts, and even applying moisturizer, you can never "over-stretch". What I'm saying is that stretching more will never hurt you. That having been said, here are a few things to remember. Our stretch routine in our circle is pretty decent. But only if done right. It is important to make sure that you are actually stretching when we're doing it. You should stretch each muscle to its limits, nice and slowly. Feel the pull. This also applies to our after practice stretching. We don't do it just so that Ross has an audience for some jokes. Stretch just as well (if not more) as you do before the game. This helps with soreness afterwards and of course, overall flexibility. It is very important to stretch your hamstrings well. If you screw them up, it really sucks. Plus, as I think Zip added earlier, loose hamstrings greatly benefit play. When you're stretching your hamstrings (feet together, left over right, legs spread apart, or sitting leg out) try to keep your back straight. Bending your back does not help at all with stretching your hamstring. This is an unusual position for many people, so you may have to conscientiously arch your back backwards to accomplish this. Many people like to imagine their waists as hinges and bending forward like that. On a side note, bending your back in these exercises stretches your back. When you want to stretch your back out, don't bend down as far, just bend your back.

16 February 03: hands [from Josh Champagne]

Healthy hands are crucial for playing comfortable ultimate. Having messed up fingers can hamper throwing and catching and affect how comfortable you feel with a disc. It's simple but sometimes challenging to keep your hands happy.

- 1) Never bite your finger nails or the skin on your hands. I have trouble with this. If you bite your nails as a habit while reading, develop a better habit. Mine is drinking water from my bmo/disco glass.
- 2) Moisturize when you get out of the shower. You heard me, chump, use lotion. In the case of cuts or splits, anything will heal in time; but you can help the process by cleaning and covering cuts when you go out, and by wearing gloves to class. Using Neosporin or BandAid Plus on a cut and then putting a little bandage on helps keep it clean. I hear vaseline is good to use in extreme cases. And isn't that just good to have around? NB: don't use lotion immediately before playing ultimate. It can make your hands slippery, which negates the positive elements of hand happiness.
- 3) If you're playing in the cold, try out a base layer with holes for your thumbs. This keeps the heat from your wrists from escaping, which helps a great deal.
- 4) Don't cut your fingers when slicing limes for the rim of your glass. That would be just plain silly.

15 February 03: eating right [from Jon Jay]

eating before practice: try to eat 2-3 hours before practice, maybe even 4 hours before a track workout. make sure you get some high-quality carbs (e.g., pasta, whole wheat bread, beans, bananas or potatoes — not fries, Kevin). these foods release energy slowly into your bloodstream instead of all at once, keeping you from "bonk"-ing. have a little bit of protein, but understand that a hamburger doesn't provide any energy you can use during practice. do not go on the Atkins diet, especially you, Ben Wiseman. eating after practice: it is extremely important to eat well, and as soon as possible, after practice or working out; it will help your body maximize the benefits of the conditioning, recover and be ready the next day. if you're eating immediately after practice (within 20-30 minutes) you can go for some of the fast energy sources (juice, powerade, oranges) plus the smart carb sources and more protein. in this short window, your body replenishes energy quickly. if you're eating 1-2 hours after practice, go for a well-rounded meal. a small salad would be good here. it's important to eat well all the time — your body is constantly recovering from your last workout and preparing for your next. be sure to eat fruits and vegetables (especially leafy green ones) every day. drink a lot of water to stay hydrated. if you can, eat smaller meals several times throughout the day. eating desserts, chicken carberrys, etc. are not terrible for you, but make sure they aren't replacing healthier foods in your diet. don't think of Lucky Charms as a healthy breakfast option; however, it has been noted by B-Mo alum Kyle Weisbrod (an expert on getting lucky) that you may want to have some in small doses "to increase your luck intake."

14 February 03: bring it

bring the fire to practice. do whatever you need to get psyched up. if you bring it to practice, you will play better, the man you are guarding will have to play better, we will play better. it is extremely important that our practices are intense and hard fought, for this in turn will make them productive and fun.

13 February 03: your body

take good care of your body, especially as the season gets more intense and demanding. you will play how you want to and feel good when you are not playing. this long weekend we will have a couple special guest zips tips where each aspect of staying healthy will be examined in greater depths by experts on the subject.

12 February 03: visualize

when you run, lift, swim or workout in some way that demands that you work hard, have some vision in your mind. whether it be a guy beating you deep, you running past your man to the cone, or just looking at your man late in the game and seeing him with his hands on his knees, keep that picture in the front of your mind.

11 February 03: the two elements of throwing

break your throwing motion into two separate parts. the first is the backswing — get the disc in a position where you are ready to make a throw and the only motion from there on out will be forward motion. the second part is the shot — arm forward, making sure to keep the disc parallel to the ground and follow through in a path also parallel to the ground. wobbly, uncontrolled throws often occur as a result of there not being separation between these two elements.

10 February 03: keep in touch

keep in touch with your friends from home. this semester i have found that i have sort of lost touch with some very good friends and recently getting back in touch with these people has made my life better. if you have trouble getting the go behind your actions, stop pepe anytime you see him, anywhere. he has guaranteed me that he will always have the necessary items (pen, postcard, stamp) on his person. he will also provide the materials and delivery to the po free of charge, as part of his mission to keep good friends, good friends. i salute you pepe.

9 February 03: throwing up

if you throw up — whether it be because of sickness, exhaustion or drinking — go out and get yourself some gatorade/powerade. you lose tons of electrolytes when you boot, those little things in your body that make you good at whatever you do and sports drinks replenish these very well.

8 February 03: lifting

i find that when i am lifting if i expect a set to be hard then it ends up being hard, whereas if i convince myself that ive got it and its no thing, i pump it out. the same goes for every throw, game and tournament — it is only as hard as you make it. convince yourself that you are ready, you are better, you know what you are doing and you can do it, and then you will.

7 February 03: one solid fake

when you have the disc and are trying to fake your marker so you can get a break throw off, it is much more effective to do one, solid fake than five little jukes, none of which are really faking the marker out. a good marker will not simply respond to movement, they will only respond to movement that could lead to a throw. practice your fakes in front of a mirror if you want to see whether or not they are believable. a truly good fake is one in which you do everything but throw the disc, forcing the marker to cut off that throw and then you beat them back to the place you actually want to throw it from.

6 February 03: throwing to open space

as a thrower, if you have a good cutter then they will create space for themselves. if they have already gotten open, a good throw is to lay the disc out into space and let them run onto it; assume they will maintain the separation they have established.

5 February 03: playing smart ultimate

after asking tom and nathan my question the other night (why do you think you are successful at ultimate?) i thought more about why i think they are successful and came to one conclusion, which neither of them mentioned. both nathan and tom are incredibly smart ultimate players. not to shoot them down, but i dont think athleticism carries their game, although they are both better athletes than some of you might think. they think about ultimate in a very smart way and then go out on the field and do all the things they talk about. if you are a sick athlete and you are smart then you are unstoppable. unfortunately athleticism cannot be taught, but smart ultimate can, and it begins by playing within your own bounds and the scheme of your team.

4 February 03: eye contact

a good cutter will often make eye contact with their thrower when cutting. this will sometimes help to know where a thrower wants the cutter to go, but i think more importantly is the opposite. if a cutters man is seriously overplaying him to the force side, then he can signal to the thrower that he wants to

go for a break mark cut. this will allow the thrower to set up a break mark throw by faking and/or moving the mark.

3 February 03: music

when you go to a tournament pack a cd that is composed of entirely instrumental (preferably classical) tracks. this serves a great purpose. if you are trying to get homework done in a loud environment (such as a gate in the airport) then this will act as a nice sound barrier while not distracting you from your work like another cd might. my personal favorite is mozarts violin concertos 1-5.

2 February 03: buddy up

find someone on your team, kind of like a buddy, who can remind you when you are falling into a bad habit or in a slight rut. for example, nathan always makes sure that i am having fun because he knows that i play my best when im having fun. if you check in with this person both of you will be better players.

1 February 03: attack the disc

when catching the disc make sure to attack it, especially as field and weather conditions worsen. if you watch a good shortstop, they will pick their bounce and then attack the ball when they want to. if you wait you are at the whim of the disc, which is not a good place to be. also, if you learn to do this well you will almost never have someone layout past you for a d.

31 January 03: be ruthless

dont hesitate to be absolutely merciless in the opening games of a tournament. especially in longer and more competitive tournaments, getting these games done quickly and soundly helps in terms of escaping fatigue towards the end of a tourney as well as building confidence from the first point of the first game.

30 January 03: throwing deep

all too often, beginning players completely change their form when they begin to try to throw deep, thinking they have to "kill" the disc or "jack" it. a good throwers deep throws and short throws vary very slightly in form; moreso in revolution speed and snap at the end of the motion. to practice throwing deep, try to throw hard short throws with a lot of disc revolution (disc revolution is directly related to torque applied on the disc). once you have mastered short throws where the disc does not wobble at all and stays parallel to the ground throughout its entire flight, then you can move onto deep throws, doing the same things you were doing while throwing short, but increasing your arm speed and the torque you put on the disc.

29 January 03: take a break

i got nothing for tips today, ive been drawing blanks all day trying to come up with something good, trying to make one player a little better, see one aspect of the game in a slightly different light. todays tip therefore, was quite obvious. take a break from the things that you always do from time to time. youll come back more fired up and probably do a better job. if ultimate is your break from schoolwork, great. if schoolwork is your break from ultimate, even better.

28 January 03: lazy throws

Never let your throwing habits become lazy. 1) if you want to throw to the forehand side, switch your grip from backhand to forehand and throw a flick. even if you have a loose mark a little backhand flip to the forehand side is not a good throw or a good habit. 2) if you want to get off a quick throw to the backhand side and your feet are parallel to your shoulders, it is unacceptable to use a wrist shot without pivoting your right leg around. a good marker will shut this down and it is also very hard for your cutter see that a throw is coming, resulting in many miscommunications.

27 January 03: why?

For many players, this tip may become more relevant as your ultimate careers move up and on, and for some of you it might change the way you think about the game. Think for one minute and decide why it is that you love playing ultimate and invest time, money, your heart, your body and your mind in it. If in very little time you cannot think of why, then it becomes harder and harder to stay passionate and intense about the game as your involvement in it deepens. I respect both the people who try hard to find what ultimate does for them and those who try to find something else because their soul/body/mind involvement in ultimate doesn't match ultimates involvement in their life.

26 January 03: be creative

if you burn the bridge of your nose while laying out, make up some kinky/amazonianish/polar bear/flaming marshmallow type story to explain it.

25 January 03: transitions

if you get a go-to layout d, some might debate whether you should pump the fist to the sideline or just stare down your man. I say the best thing to do is to start the fast break. your man is physically and mentally outmatched; you are ahead of him in the direction you want to be cutting and you also own him because you just layed out past him for a d. if you then score on him or even just get the disc on a nice cut, he will have been fully broken for the remainder of the game if not the rest of your college career.

24 January 03: horizontal layouts

when you lay out for a disc try to keep your torso as close to parallel to the ground as possible. you can decide which of these is more important to you, but doing this will accomplish the following two things. 1) if you are on offense you will be less likely to drop the disc when you hit the ground, being that there is no fumble caused by ground rule in ultimate. 2) laying like this prevents short term (burns and bruises) and long term (shoulder) injuries.

23 January 03: warmup throws

when you warm up your throws before a game or practice begin by you and your partner being separated by a large distance (30-40 yards) and then after a while move in. before your muscles warm up your accuracy may not be exactly on point, but a throw that is off by 2 yds to a receiver 30 yds away doesn't matter much. once your muscles are warm, move closer (10-15 yds) and hone in your accuracy.

22 January 03: play through fouls

when you throw, cut, jump or catch you must play expecting not to get fouled. all too often players will have weak break mark throws expecting a slap or not go up strong for a disc anticipating the hack. the best players play as if there is no one else on the pitch while still knowing where everyone is.

20 December 02: winter break

lifting:

-try to lift a couple times a week and mix it up so you are alternating days for exercises on the same region of the body.

-good exercises: bench, triceps, lat pulldowns and lunges.

-great exercises: squats, paintbrushes, and runners.

-paintbrushes: hold a 8-12 lbs dumbbell in each hand at your side. with your palms down, lift your right arm up to eye level, without bending your elbow and then bring it back to your side. do your left arm next and then you have done 1 rep. do three sets of about 12 reps (its kind of like a reverse curl, but with a straight arm. it should look like you are painting).

-runners: have dumbbells in your hands (light maybe 8-10 lbs) and run in place but only with your arms (you are standing still, just do the motion your arms make while running). same deal as before, 12 reps, 3 sets (twelve reps means 12 right arm 12 left arm).

special note: paintbrushes are especially important. I can't tell you how many people I know who have

injured their shoulder laying out. this is the best way to prevent layout injuries. it strengthens your traps and your rotator cuff.

running:

try to run as much as you can, but vary it up, go long one day and shorter the next. a good medium length run is 3 miles, and on a longer day you can do up to 5. telephone pole runs are also good, you can do 2-3 miles of sprint one jog one on alternating telephone poles.

plyos:

-jump rope as much as you can, especially on days when you do the telephone pole runs (because you've already been working on fast twitch muscle groups).

-to strengthen your ankles (or do some rehab) close your eyes and try to balance on one ankle for a minute. then do the other one. try to do this every day, especially if you have a history of ankle injuries.

ultimate:

-play it, throw it, talk about it, think about it.

19 December 02: hamstrings

make sure to stretch your hamstrings very well, even if it is not a matter of injury or speed. when your hamstrings are tight, your entire lower back is tight and it affects your throws on the backhand and forehand side. if you think you are in good shape but tire quickly while throwing, this might be your problem.

18 December 02: run fast, think slow

run fast, think slow

17 December 02: jumping rope

the best way to improve your vertical, get a quicker moving mark and have your change of direction speed be unmeasurable is to jump rope often. i like to do anywhere from 15-20 minutes total of 1 minute on/1 minute off, averaging about 120 jumps per minute. at 1000 jumps a day you'll be much faster very soon.

16 December 02: plays

before a tournament look over the different plays that we call as a team. Then put yourself at different places and positions on the field and envision what play call you would make or what you would do for a certain play call.

15 December 02: seeing through the mark

one of the aspects of a good mark is it gets the thrower thinking about the mark more than the throw. work on seeing the field through your marker when you have the disc. being able to do this is sort of analogous to a point guard being able to dribble down the court without looking at the ball. you can get better at this by faking and pivoting whenever you throw, mark or no mark, and also by having a teammate try to fluster you on the mark so you can work on your focus.

a side note: sometimes when people begin to gain this capability they zone out fast counts or fouls on the mark. there is a fine line between being aware and intense concentration. call your fouls.

14 December 02: two-handed layouts

practice laying out and catching with both hands. this can be interpreted two ways, both of them important; practice laying out with two hands and catching (this usually occurs when you are chasing down a disc and you have a good amount of time, you just need to get low — this is the most stable way of catching a layout). when you catch like this you should never pancake, you should go palms up just like if you were laying out with one hand, but it's even more reliable. second, practice catching

one-handed layouts with both your left and right hand. this will make it so you can comfortably catch either way so you wont have to make difficult trailing edge catches.

13 December 02: disc golf

go out and get yourself a disc golf disc, preferrably a driver (for those of you unaware, true disc golf is played with smaller, heavier discs). throwing with this will improve your distance and take away any airbounce that might be in your throw.

12 December 02: something small

not including the things I actually need to play, a small hand towel is the most important thing that I pack in my ultimate bag for a tournament. not only does it keep my hands and face dry, it keeps me unbelievably focused. whether it be a towel, a waterbottle or a thought, try to get things that keep you in your game or get you into a routine.

11 December 02: long gains

if you catch a deep pass and are not in the end zone, the best thing you can do is turn around and dump the disc (if you are following the play, the best thing you can do is give the man a dump). If you run by the man with the disc you are setting up disaster; either you will have to get to the back of the endzone and cut back towards him (a long time) or he will be tricked into throwing to you as you run away from him (looks very promising and wide open, but is the hardest throw in the game). Get the dump and then he can cut and score the goal.

10 December 02: being in shape

never let fitness be your limiting element. get yourself in good enough shape in the offseason so that it is not even an issue during the season. what a miserable thing to be the ceiling on your game when it is one of the things you have greatest control over. let your learning curve not catching up with your desire or want or excitement be what limits you, if only for a couple practices.

9 December 02: play, play, play

Play ultimate. I have had a harder time writing zips tips lately and for a second, thought that i was slipping, but i was reminded by a teammate that it has been hard because i have not been playing ultimate. the best way to get in shape for ultimate is to play ultimate. the best way to get comfortable playing ultimate is to play ultimate. the best way to get better at ultimate is to play ultimate.

8 December 02: laying out

if you have trouble getting yourself to layout for d's then before a game or practice decide that the first disc that's close you are going to make a bid on.if you miss then get up and mark, but chances are you'll either get the d or your receiver will be more tentative when cutting.

7 December 02: 3 on 3

if you played this year, then play next year; if you did not play this year then you should play next year. 3 on 3 is just fun, it is simply fun ultimate.

6 December 02: vary throwing speed

when you are throwing around, try varying the speed of your throws. Great throwers not only can throw well at different distances or angles, but at various speeds.

5 December 02: imaginary lines

when you are on the green throwing around establish imaginary lines for yourself and try to stay "in bounds" wherever your field might be drawn. good athletes look as though they keep their feet in bounds when catching very naturally, but nobody does something awkward like that naturally. good receivers have practiced the footwork and practiced thinking about the footwork while not losing focus on the catch.

4 December 02: high catches

when catching with two hands above your head designate one of them that you like to use as a primary and the other as a secondary. I like to think of it kind of like shooting a basketball; you have the shooting hand and the secondary hand that stabilizes the ball. I like to catch righty and use my left as a guide-in for the disc.

3 December 02: dictate early

an important follow up tip to yesterdays tip: many teams, like us, run a four-man play or some other type of pull play to score in under 5 passes. if you stop your man from cutting deep the first five passes of the point, many teams offensive strategy will fall like a house of cards. this does not mean stand ten yards behind him and give a 25 yard-gainer underneath, but think about forcing your man in and then marking hard. when they do get frustrated and huck it deep (note huck, not throw), well get the d more often than not.

2 December 02: don't get beat early

do not — i repeat, do not — let your man beat you deep in the first three points of the game. As a deep cutter, if I establish my deep game early then my confidence bursts and I have my man beat either way for the rest of the game. It is better we get scored on the first three points but they have to work hard and throw a lot than they beat us deep two out of three tries and we are up a break.

27 November 02: train hard over the break

train hard over the break. my 3-on-3 team will DESTROY you come monday.

26 November 02: skying

a skying summary:

1)more often than not you should not have to sky your man as a receiver. good players will put themselves between their man and where they want to catch the disc, creating space. one key point; do not play deep game defense and deep game offense the same way. on offense always try to get to the disc at the first possible place you can catch it — no milking it, no catching up high — it doesnt have to be pretty, just come down with the disc. on defense, play the man and not the disc (sounds illegal right?); unless you are 100% sure you can get the d, do not leave your man for the disc. wait with him and either you will both misread it or youll have a play on the disc when it comes in.

2)for when you do need to sky: practice catching up high with both your left and right hand and also jumping off of each foot. if you are behind your man and a floaty outside in backhand is coming in, you will want to go up righty. if it is the mirrored throw (outside in forehand) you will certainly want to go up off your right leg and catch lefty; you will have a better angle and be less likely to foul your man (also in each case this means you will not have to catch the disc trailing edge).

lastly; if you are put in a position where your man has boxed you out and a sky is going to be necessary, there is no harm in slowing down your pace so you can get a running start at the disc and time your leap. your man will probably be jumping solely vertically, and this is when the monster skies occur.

25 November 02: rituals

establish certain things that let you know that you are about to play a big game; wearing a certain pair of cleats (aka the white pony phenomenon), a song that gets you ready or a warm up routine. Again, relaxed is good, casual is not.

24 November 02: being casual

sometimes people think that superstars look extremely casual and relaxed when they play. relaxed is good, but casual is very bad. a short anecdote; in one of my first big club games a disc got thrown deep to my man and I was sure I had the d so I went up to get it casually and he skied me straight up. Make sure on every play, be casual at the parties after weve won the tourney.

23 November 02: throw placement

As a thrower, start trying to put the disc to certain parts of your receivers body. make it easy for them to hold off their defender, make it simple for the break throw mentioned above to be in the flow of their movement, make every player love to be your receiver. this tip is next level.

22 November 02: quick catch & throw

work on the quick catch and throw following your bodys momentum. this is extremely effective when you receive a dump or a swing pass to get the next one off. this is an advanced throw because it is necessary that it is a controlled throw, but you cant set your feet very well to make the throw.

21 November 02: baby powder

before a long tourney (or a warm one) bring some baby powder along to use in your shorts. By day 2 of the tourney you will have realized that it was a good idea. I am partial to Johnson & Johnson as it does not contain any corn starch.

20 November 02: accountability

hold yourself to an extremely high level of accountability. Good players will think about what they did wrong after they get scored on or beaten. Great players will think about what they did wrong while their team is scoring and winning. We must continue to improve even when we are playing well. Many times when I play I think games are much closer than they actually are because if my man broke my mark then thats what I remember, even if we got the d on the next pass and scored. Constantly be improving.

19 November 02: catching high hammers

for hammers that are above your head, don't catch them like a normal high throw (fingers on top rim, thumb underneath). Instead bring your thumb up as well (your hand should now resemble a little cup). For a normal high throw there is a natural space for your thumb under the rim, but for hammers this doesn't exist and the disc will often hit your thumb first and bounce away. One might say that you could catch with thumb on bottom and just bring your other four fingers over the top, to rest in the same natural spot under the rim. To do this though you must get 2-3 inches higher (thus lowering the peak of your jump by 2-3 inches) and sometimes this makes all the difference.

18 November 02: pack the night before

pack your bag the night before a tournament or early practice. you wont forget your cleats ever again.

17 November 02: "my bad"

never say "sorry" or "f—" when you make a bad throw before it has actually become a turnover. for some strange reason, once you say this you have taken responsibility for the error and your receiver will drop more often or not try as hard. (on a side note, give 100% effort on pick or foul calls, often times a pick throw can get d'd or a foul call will turn out to be null)

16 November 02: low hands

keep your hands low down when you mark. contrary to what you might think, you can move your arms quicker from low to high than from high to low (gravity doesnt give a helping hand).

15 November 02: nasal passages

when you warm up before a game suck on a good cough drop. it gets your nasal passage wide open and you feel like you are breathing pure oxygen. its like tiger balm for your lungs.

14 November 02: fingernails

cut your nails before a big tournament, but not the night before; the night before the night before. in case you nick a cuticle, you want to give it at least 24 hours to heal up.

13 November 02: improvement

make a list (preferably on paper) of the things you do well and the things you don't do well. for the things you don't do well, find someone who you think does that well and talk to them about it or watch them play. no one player is naturally good at everything in ultimate. watch other players that are good and make yourself a mosaic of good ultimate players.

12 November 02: confidence

do not cede victory in any way, to anybody before the game begins. when i look across the line at the chump i am about to d up i think exactly that. this does not mean you should not acknowledge an opposing players strengths; if your man is a good deep cutter, recognize that's probably what he wants to do and plan accordingly. but he is certainly not a better deep cutter than you are a deep defender. simply know that you are better. some may call it cockiness, i call it confidence.

11 November 02: water

drink a glass of water before you go to sleep and when you wake up in the morning

10 November 02: bring your disc

carry around a frisbee while you walk from class to class or while sitting and watching tv and just mess around with it. one might say, "well spinning a disc on your finger or flipping it and catching it with one hand don't actually ever come up in ultimate." to this i respond: soccer players who can juggle the ball well are always very good at trapping and the harlem globetrotters are still nasty ballers. you will be better if you are very comfortable with a disc in your hands.

9 November 02: backhand power

to improve the power you have on your backhand throws, find a partner and stand about 10-15 yards apart. throw on the backhand side, but keep your legs planted at a little wider than shoulder width. you can do a trunk-twist type motion to throw and this will work a lot on your arm mechanics and force you to put good spin on the disc (rotation=stability). after about 10 minutes of this you can step across with your right leg as you normally would and your throwing power and stability should be dramatically increased. when you begin to step across try not to change your arm motion, just add power from your lower body.

8 November 02: power hour

If the morning after a power hour with some frisbee buddies you wake up and don't have your brown id, call the site of the power hour before you go to get a new id.

7 November 02: always be moving

as some of you may know, i am very big fan of acronyms. today's; ABM, always be moving, both on d and on o. this serves three purposes; 1) when you are playing d you should always have an eye on your man, but sometimes it is very helpful to be able to check upfield and see what's going on. if your man (or you) has his hands on his hips then a good defender (or your defender) will have a chance to check. 2) for your man to be absolutely beat towards the end of a hell point on the fourth game of the tournament and look up and see you bobbing and jumping is absolutely devastating. you've already gotten the d at that point. 3) the best o cutters are always moving; as soon as a play develops they are ready to react, often quicker than their defender because they were already in motion (why do you think they call false starts in football?)

6 November 02: pushups and crunches

start doing 50/50 (pushups/crunches) every night before you go to sleep. in two weeks you will see a difference in your throwing power, cutting power and the type of women you attract.

5 November 02: catch both ways

when throwing on the green or when warming up make sure to catch "both ways." alternate catching with your right hand versus your left hand on top of the pancake. for good throws, this doesn't make

much of a difference, but if an errant throw is to the right of your body, it will be easier to catch left on top, and the same goes for the other side, but switched. the more comfortable you are catching both ways, the more natural it will be for you to catch with the correct orientation. i guarantee your drops will go down if you work on this.

APPENDIX A: AUTHOR BIOS

Name: Jaime "Idaho" Arambula
Current Team: Seattle Sockeye
College Team(s): Idaho State University, UCSD, UC Berkeley
Brief Frisbee Bio: Mixed National Champion 2001, Open National Champion 2006 and 2007, Open National Finalist 2005, Bronze Medal 2002 Club Worlds, Silver medal 2003 World Disc Games, 2004 and 2008 World Guts and Ultimate Championships
Frisbee Mentors: Pat Benson, Mike Ferris, Steve Dugan
Advice for a first-time college captain: A non-playing coach will make your job much easier. :)

Name: Alicia Barr
Email Address: alibarr8@yahoo.com
Current Team: Fury ('01 to present)
College Team: Stanford Superfly ('99-'00)
Brief Frisbee Bio: Learned how to play ultimate in the corporate world at HP, then went to Stanford for grad school in '99. Been hooked ever since. Have played with Fury since '01, and will continue until the body says no. Coached UC Davis Pleiades 2002-2004.
Frisbee Mentors: Amy Little, Jennifer "JD" Donnelly, Nicole "Sprout" Beck.
Advice for a first-time college captain: Establish a core leadership group, whether it's co-captains, workout coordinators, or a coach. Having a group of 2-4 people helps take the entire burden off you, and provides a great structure for your team to grow.

Name: Susan Batchelder
Email Address: batchie@gmail.com
Current Team: Zeitgeist
College Team: Middlebury Pranksters
Brief Frisbee Bio: I first played at Middlebury, a small liberal arts college in rural Vermont. I then moved to the Bay Area and played for Homebrood from 2002-2005. Since 2007, I've played with Zeitgeist, currently the 6th ranked women's team in the US.
Frisbee Mentors: Alison "Fish" Fischer in college, Sharon Hill told me I was a defender, Joy Chen on thinking then not thinking, Megan Insco is a defending guru
Advice for a first-time college captain: Own it. Delegate. Be creative. Creatively delegate.

Name: Amanda Berens
Email: amandaberens@gmail.com
Current Team: Texas Showdown
College Team: University of Texas, Melee
Brief Frisbee Bio: I have been playing ultimate for almost 10 years. I captained Lady Marmalade/ Melee in 2002 and 2003, an Austin club women's team in 2004, and Showdown for their 2007 and 2008 seasons. I have played in the semifinals of the College National Championships and the Quarterfinals of the Club National Championships. I have also played with an Atlanta club team, Ozone, at Club Worlds in Perth, Australia in 2006 and with the Mexican National Team at the Worlds Ultimate Championships in Vancouver, Canada in 2008.

Name: Tiina Booth and Jonah Herscu
Brief Frisbee Bio: Tiina Booth is the coach of the varsity boys Hurricanes of Amherst Regional High School in Amherst, MA. Jonah has been on this team since the ninth-grade and in 2010 he will be a senior and returning captain. Tiina and Jonah are very interested in sports psychology (read: obsessed) and this article is compilation of what they have learned, experienced and observed over the years. A reading list of some of their favorites is included at the end. Tiina will retiring as an English teacher from ARHS in 2010. Jonah will be attending Carleton College in the fall.

Name: Daniel “Bones” Brady
Email Address: danjbrady@gmail.com
College Team: UCLA Smaug

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started observing while at UCLA in 2006. Since then, I’ve observed at top college tournaments, four College Championships, three Club Championships, experimental rules tournaments, and been the Southwest Regional Observer Coordinator until 2009. I think orange is a great color.

Frisbee Mentors: Jeff Chai, Jamie Nuwer

Advice for a first-time college captain: Despite your best efforts, you can’t be everything to everyone. Delegate responsibilities, stand by your leadership decisions, and be comfortable with occasional discontent and grumblings from your teammates. They’ll love you in the end.

Name: Kayla Burnim
Email Address: kburnim@gmail.com
Current Team: Northeastern University (Coach)
College Team: University of Delaware

Brief Frisbee Bio: I began playing ultimate in 7th grade at Amherst Middle School in Amherst MA. Continued on, and played in high school, first on the JV team, then on the Varsity team, winning 3 national championships. In college, I played on, and for a year captained, at the University of Delaware. I also captained the 2004 silver metal winning Jr Women’s National team. I began coaching in the summer of 2000, first a children’s summer league, followed by summer camps, the BUDA girl’s YCC team, and finally I’ve been coaching Northeastern for the past three years. I retired from playing in 2006 due to a knee injury, but still remain active coaching and Regional Coordinating the Women’s division in New England.

Frisbee Mentors: Jim Pistrang and my brother Sam

Advice for a first-time college captain: It is easy for captains to get overwhelmed with the vast amount of work it takes to captain a college team. My main advice is to always try to keep the big picture in mind. Choose a goal, weather it is advancing to a certain level, building a program, increasing regular players, etc., and take pride in the small milestones. If your brain is all over the place, its hard to realize how much you have accomplished. Take all the wins you can, delegate work appropriately, and make sure to always have fun.

Name: Lou Burruss
Current Team: retired
College Team: Carleton

Brief Frisbee Bio: I played my first game in the fall of 1990. It was a Carleton Intramural game (an 11-10 3rd Goodhue v 2nd Goodhue victory) and I was hooked. I played a year of B Team (91) and four years on the A Team (92-95.) After graduating, I played ten years for Sockeye (96-05.) I coached Carleton Syzygy for four years (97-00.) I am currently in my fourth year of coaching at Oregon. Over 500 tournaments and counting.

Frisbee Mentors: Jon Gerwitz

Advice for a first-time college captain: Relax.

Name: Amy Chou
Email Address: amymchou@gmail.com
Current Team: Dutch Rudder
College Teams: UC Berkeley Tarts (2001 – 2004), UC Berkeley Pie Queens (2004 – 2005)

Brief Frisbee Bio: Started playing at Berkeley in 2001 and played for the Tarts from spring 2002 (first season the B team was created!) – 2004 (captaining in 2003 and 2004). Played with the Pie Queens in 2005 and Ambush in 2006. Started coaching Stuyvesant High School Girls’ team from 2006 – 2008. Coached the Pie Queens/Tarts since Fall 2008.

Frisbee Mentors: I learned so much about coaching from Andy Lykens, my co-coach for the Stuyvesant High School girls team. Tracy Tietge was there supporting me from day 1 as a teammate and later as my captain. Nancy Sun has also been a great resource to me and always provides thoughtful insight to even my weirdest questions. Thank you!

Advice for a first-time college captain: Try your best and don't be afraid to ask for help. When I captained the Tarts, the captains were responsible for travel arrangements and a lot behind the scenes stuff, but now the team has officers to handle a lot of the paperwork and bureaucratic stuff. If you're feeling overwhelmed, chances are some of your teammates would be willing to help you out and if you spread the tasks over a bunch of people then no one is responsible for too much and people will feel more invested in the team.

Name: Eyleen Chou

Email Address: eyleenchou@gmail.com, atropa.captain@gmail.com

Current Team: Atropa (University of Wisconsin- B)

College Team(s): Bella Donna , Atropa

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started playing ultimate my junior year of high school at Madison Memorial in Madison, WI. I continued to play at the college level with Bella Donna from Fall 2005-Spring 2008. Last year with the help of many others, we worked to start a solid B team, Atropa. I've played for Atropa since Fall 2008. In addition, I've played on Madison Jazz/Club 2006-2008.

Frisbee Mentors: Tim DeByl, Courtney Kiesow, Holly Greunke, Georgia Bosscher, Emelie McKain.

Advice for a first-time college captain: Get excited. You know you love playing ultimate and now you have a chance to lead a team! Make clear goals for your team at any stage (between points, for a practice, at a tournament, etc.)

Name: V.Y. Chow

Email: vychow@gmail.com

Current Team: Boston Lady Godiva

College Teams: UBC men 1996 & women 1997 (2nd place UPA College Championships)

Brief Frisbee Bio: Team Canada 1998,2000,2001,2005,2008,2009 (2 gold, 3 bronze)

Lady Godiva 1998-2005,2007-present (4 UPA National Championships)

Fury (2006), Traffic (2007)

Frisbee Mentors: Christine 'Teens' Dunlap, Molly Goodwin, Peg Hollinger, Teresa Fong, Al Bob Nichols

Advice for a 1st time college captain: Your team is your family - you don't have to like everyone but you have to respect and support everyone...after all, families have all sorts of characters. Delegate, delegate, delegate. Get your team mates involved. It will help get everyone on the same page, reduces the stress of you taking care of everything, and gives people roles and an understanding that they are integral to the team.

Name: Cara Crouch

Email Address: cara.crouch@gmail.com

Current Team: Texas Showdown

College Team: University of Texas Melee

Brief Frisbee Bio: UT Melee (player and coach), Atlanta Ozone, Austin Showdown, Team USA

Frisbee Mentors: John Hammond & Scotty Berens (former Melee coaches)

Advice for a first-time college captain: Try to get a core group (4-5) girls hooked on Ultimate and playing together for 3-4 years. That's a secret to success when developing a solid college women's ultimate team!

Name: Katey Forth

Email Address: keforth@gmail.com

Current Team: Texas Showdown

College Team: Mythago, University of Bristol (England)

Brief Frisbee Bio: Played for 15 years, player for Great British National team for 14 years including World Games 2009, competed in 4 World Championships, 5 World Club Championships, 10 years UPA, won Paganello 7 times, etc. Coached / trained TUFF (UT men), Melee (UT women), SkyU (Texas A&M women), Miss Red (Rice University women), and guest coached numerous college and club teams.

Frisbee Mentors: Sean McCall, Si Moore

Advice for a first-time college captain: Have a plan, it's better to execute a good plan well than a great plan poorly

Name: Kira Frew

Email Address: kira_frew@hotmail.com

Current Team: Vancouver Traffic

College Team(s): UBC '04-'08 (player), '10 (coach)

Brief Frisbee Bio: Main role is as a defensive handler. I captained the UBC team from '05-'08 and currently captain Traffic. I played on the Canadian Junior Team in 2002 & 2004, Canadian Mixed Team in 2008 and the Canadian Team at World Games in 2009. I also won gold at WUCC in 2006 with TFP in the mixed division. I qualified for the UPA college championships the last 3 years I played. We finished tied for fifth the first year, 3rd the second year and won the tournament my last year.

Frisbee Mentors: Alyson Walker, Jeff Cruikshank and Steff Chow (for coaching advice)

Advice for a first-time college captain: Be patient and positive. Work hard to set the tone in practices and at tournaments. Set goals as a team and work together to achieve them.

Name: Sarah "Surge" Griffith

Email Address: sjgrif@gmail.com

Current Team: Seattle Riot

College Team: Michigan Flywheel

Brief Frisbee Bio: Played at the University of Michigan from 2004-2008 and captained my junior and senior years. Played three years with the Michigan women's club team, MOJO, while in school. Started playing for Riot in Fall 2008 when I moved out to Seattle, and am captaining this season (2010).

Frisbee Mentors: Stephanie Bailey, Martha Carlson, Liz Duffy

Advice for a first-time college captain: Fake it til you make it.

Name: Meg Hofner

Email Address: mhofner@gmail.com

Current Team: Texas Showdown, formerly) MeddlingKids / Prion and Alpha Cobra Squadron

College Team: University of Illinois Menace

Brief Frisbee Bio: Started playing freshman year of college. Liked it. Kept playing. Loved it.

Advice for a first-time college captain: You don't have to know everything there is to know about ultimate because you can't teach it all in a year anyway. The best way to teach them all you tell them is by example. On the field.

Name: Megan Insko

Email Address: minsco@stanford.edu

Current Team: Zeitgeist

College Team: Duke, Stanford B Team Coach - 2 years

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started playing frisbee after my junior year of high school when a couple of my older friends went away to college and brought the sport back to us in Missouri in the summer. I played four years at Duke, captaining my junior and senior years. I played my senior year on Backhoe (my first club experience). I moved to the SF bay area for school and played 3 years with a club team called Skyline. In 2007, I played with Fury (1st place national finish) and in 2009 I played with Zeitgeist (6th place national finish).

Frisbee Mentors: June Srisethnil, Chris Sherwood, Kerry Karter, Frannie Goodrich, Christian Schwoerke, and Matty Tsang

Advice for a first-time college captain: Learn to delegate! You are now a manager of an organization. Identify the tasks to be completed, delegate those tasks, and follow up with people. Learning effective delegation will lead to success and sanity.

Name: Mia Iseman

Email Address: mia.iseman@gmail.com

Current Team: Texas Showdown

College Team: NYU Violet Femmes

Brief Frisbee Bio: I played pickup in high school, helped develop a new team in college, and then moved to Texas to play where it's really, really hot.

Frisbee Mentors: Julie Sussman, Ken Chen, Zac Roy, Jeff Ho

Advice for a first-time college captain: Enlist the help of alumni and other vets whenever possible. It builds relationships and makes your workload smaller. If you use gmail, don't accidentally send emails to people when you really just meant to look up their email address. Don't post naughty pictures to Facebook.

Name: Courtney Kiesow

Email Address: ckiesow@gmail.com

Current Team: Nemesis (Chicago) (2009 season)

College Team: Wisconsin Bella Donna (2004-2009)

Brief Frisbee Bio: My high school economics teacher convinced me to start playing my junior year at Madison Memorial High School. I went on to play 5 years with Wisconsin, captaining for 3 of those years. I started playing for Nemesis last year.

Frisbee Mentors: Dan Raabe, high school coach and the guy that convinced me to start playing. Holly Greunke, my captain/co-captain and the most solid player I know.

Advice for a first-time captain: My first year captaining was a big learning experience. It took me a while to be comfortable with being in charge, especially with older girls on the team. Just remember that you were elected captain for a reason, and you should be confident in your role. Something I wish I would have done more as a captain is ask for outside help. There are a lot of really helpful resources out there for captains, with information about everything from new drills to fund raising ideas. These resources will make your life a lot easier because without a coach, captaining is a lot of work. Give some of that work to your teammates; let them submit bids, fund raise, do travel planning, design jerseys, etc. Finally, remember that your entire team follows your example. If you have expectations of your team, you have to be the first to complete them. Being organized and making goals is really important to meeting these expectations.

Name: Christie Kim

Email Address: christie.sarah.kim@gmail.com

Current Team: Boston's Brute Squad, 2007-present

College Team: Boston University Lady Pilots, 2004-2008

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started playing ultimate my freshman year of college, and I've been hooked ever since. I consider myself extremely lucky to have learned from and played with some of the best ultimate players in the country. 2010 will be my 4th season with Brute, and I'm so proud to be a part of this team. We have come very far since the team first formed in 2002, and I'm psyched to see what 2010 will bring! Along with devoting my time to playing club ultimate, I am coaching the Needham HS women's team this spring. Brute Squad is dedicated to giving back to the ultimate community, and I'm happy to be a part of that.

Frisbee Mentors: Kathy Dobson, Emily Walton, Shelly Peyton

Advice for a first-time college captain: There's a lot I could say here, but one important thing I learned while captaining my college team is to not put so much pressure on yourself. As a captain, you have to play so many different roles, and there is pressure to be the best player on the field while being a mentor and leader off the field. Just focus on doing all the little things well and don't try to do everything. Play your game and don't worry about any perceived expectations that people might have. Also, have your peers and teammates help you with different aspects of leading the team to take some of the burden off of your shoulders.

Name: Alisha Kramer

Email Address: ask54@georgetown.edu

Current Team: Georgetown University's Huckin' Foyas

Brief Frisbee Bio: 4 years of high school ultimate at the Paideia School, Nationals Quarterfinalist with Ozone in 2006, U.S. Jr. Worlds team 2008, Nationals Quarterfinalist with Bucket in 2009, Captain of Georgetown University's Huckin' Foyas

Frisbee Mentors: Michael Baccarinni and Kyle Weisbrod

Advice for a first-time college captain: Start compiling a document of team information. Include attachments to administrative forms such as University Waivers, driver authorizations, and UPA waivers. Include a list of potential tournaments in the fall and spring and any contact information that is available. Include an example for writing bids and copies of past budgets. This will help the team to stay organize and will aid future captains immensely!

Name: Christie Lawry

Email Address (optional): christielawry@gmail.com

Current Team: University of Pittsburgh Danger, formerly Loose Cannon

College Team(s): University of Pittsburgh Danger

Brief Frisbee Bio: Somehow I ended up at a Hampton High School practice the fall of my junior year - I'm not sure if a friend told me to come or if I stumbled upon it, but I was there. I played a bit that fall and ended up playing the spring season as the only girl on the boys' team. Our coach and captains didn't exactly know how to play and I never threw a flick in a game, yet I didn't see that as much of a problem. We made our way to High School Easterns and other random places... and as it always goes, I got hitched. Between High School Easterns and the following Summer League, I was thoroughly heckled to play Pitt Ultimate. Luckily I wanted to go to Pitt anyway, and found myself on Danger before school even started. I've gotten to watch Danger improve as a team and a program over the past four years and it's certainly been a rollercoaster ride. From the underdog to the top seed and back down again, with a few injuries and other roadblocks in between, Danger's made me a better teammate, competitor, leader, and student.

Advice for a first-time college captain:

-Get a coach. Even if they aren't the best player in the world, they can be useful for establishing authority and doing jobs that your captains can't or don't want to do.

-Use who and what you have available to you. If you don't like someone but they have the best throws in town, get them to run a throwing clinic for your team-- then they can disappear if you want them to.

-Go to tournaments with worse teams to have a chance to know what it feels like to win. Go to a better tournament to get crushed and learn what it's like to lose. You'll get better.

Name: Michelle Ng

Email Address: mdng10@gmail.com

Current Team: Texas Showdown, formerly Bay Area Slackjaw

College Teams: UC Berkeley Tarts, UC Berkeley Pie Queens, University of Texas Melee

Brief Frisbee Bio: Played 3 years for UC Berkeley- 2005 Nationals Quarterfinalist, 2006 captain and Top 3 Callahan finisher. Played 2 years for University of Texas- 2008 captain and All-Region selection. Started and captained Bay Area Slackjaw- 2007 and 2008. Currently play for Texas Showdown- 2009 Nationals 5th Place Finisher, current captain

Frisbee Mentors: Cara Crouch

Advice for a first-time college captain: Don't underestimate how important it is to lead by example. Most of the time, it won't seem like anyone notices the hard work you put in but if you're giving 100% to your team day in and day out, your teammates will want to do the same. Be the first one to practice, the last one to leave, and be the captain who goes the extra mile both on and off the field. If you are your teammates' biggest support, I guarantee that they will want to play harder for YOU.

Name: Jamie Nuwer

Email Address (optional): jnuwer@gmail.com

Current Team: Zeitgeist

College Team(s): Stanford, UCLA

Brief frisbee bio: I first learned the game at Stanford playing with Superfly from 1999-2002. I learned strong fundamentals at this well-developed program and served the team as fundraising coordinator and captain. I went to medical school at UCLA and helped start the women's program there with Alex Korb. I played my final year of eligibility as a player-coach. The second year we recruited so many new players that we started a B team. I coached them as well as the A team until we recruited full-time coaches. My last year at UCLA I co-coached the B team with Abby Goodhue. In the meantime I played and captained lots of Women's Club Ultimate in the San Francisco Bay Area

Frisbee Mentors: Jennifer "JD" Donnelly, Dominique Fontenette, Mike O'Dowd, Kerry "KK" Karter, and Chris "Woody" Sherwood.

Advice for a first-time college captain: Don't blow all your budget on beer!

Name: Chelsea Putnam

Current Team: Portland Schwa

College Team: University of Oregon

Brief Frisbee Bio: Played at University of Oregon (captain 3 years, Callahan winner) Played Schwa for 9 years (captain 3 years) Played on Team USA in 2009 (gold medal). I was an assistant coach for the Junior US team in 2008 and I am currently an assistant coach for 2010.

Frisbee Mentors: Tracey Satterfield, Dara Bailey, Anna Neraas, and Leslie Calder

Advice for a first time college captain: Try your best to NOT get overwhelmed even though it is a very overwhelming job. Your team is not going to be perfect the first time, so don't focus on trying to make it perfect. Figure out your team philosophy and match your decisions to it...learn to delegate and remember that you play disc because you enjoy it!

Name: Samantha Salvia

Current Team: Fury 1999-2007, Captain (2002-2004), National Champions ('99,'03,'06,'07)

College Team: Stanford Superfly 1999, Captain, National Champions

Brief Frisbee Bio: In a previous life, I was an NCAA Division I field hockey player. I discovered Ultimate as a graduate student at Oxford University. After Oxford, I returned to the States for graduate work at Stanford and played for one remarkable season on Superfly. That sealed my love for the

sport. Fury picked me up as a rookie that Fall and the rest is history. I've coached, captained, and been an observer. Ultimate has introduced me to amazing places around the world, my closest friends, and my husband, Mike Payne. I played with Fury from 1999 through the 2007 season and in Spring 2008 welcomed our son Rylan Payne into the world. Ultimate continues to be a huge part of our lives. In 2009 we traveled as a family to Israel with Ultimate Peace to teach Ultimate to Palestinian and Israeli kids.

Name: Susan Thomas

Email Address: sthomas@gmail.com

Current Team: University of Pittsburgh Danger, formerly PA's Wildcard

College Teams: University of Pittsburgh Danger

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started playing ultimate Frisbee when I came to the University of Pittsburgh as a freshman. I quickly became hooked and have since been involved in many facets of the game as a player, leader and organizer. I am in my fifth year as a player at Pitt, and have played club with former Pittsburgh Pounce for two years, and most recently played with Pennsylvania's Wildcard. I have also served as Pittsburgh's Youth Club Coordinator for the city's Youth Club Championship teams for the past 3 years, Girls Division Commissioner of the Pittsburgh High School Ultimate League for one year, organized Girls Skills Clinics and have a few seasons' experience as a certified coach of various high school programs.

Frisbee Mentors: Diana Schmalzried, Jen Kacin, Ben Banyas (former captains and fellow organizers)

Advice for a first-time college captain: Build relationships with other programs and your community. If your program is established, get as much input from your former captains/leaders as you can. Think about what goals are best for your team, what the players want and what is attainable, and discuss your objectives for the season as a team. Keep your players motivated through leading by example and by staying enthusiastic, energetic and encouraging.

Name: Michael Whitaker

Email Address: mbwhit10@gmail.com

Current Team: Operation Kapow! (coed)

College Team: Player- Stanford Bloodthirsty, Coach- Colorado Kali

Brief Frisbee Bio: I played for five years on Stanford's men's team winning a national championship and finishing second in the Callahan my last season. I then proceeded to coach the Colorado women's team (Kali) for four years and played several seasons with Johnny Bravo.

Frisbee Mentor: Mike Payne

Advice for a first-time college captain: Make the experience enjoyable and clearly communicate expectations. If you are playing to win and playing a short rotation, say so. If you are trying to develop depth and play everyone evenly, say so. Most problems arise from lack of communication between team leaders and the rest of the team.

Name: Josh Ziperstein

Current Team: Chain Lightning, Atlanta

College Team: Brown University Brownian Motion

Brief Frisbee Bio: I started playing ultimate seriously during my senior year at Amherst high school. I went on to play all 4 years of college at Brown and began to play for Boston's Death or Glory in the fall of my sophomore year. I played for DoG through the rest of college and for 2 years afterward before moving to Atlanta in 2007, at which point I started playing for Chain Lightning. I have coached the Lakeside High School Girls team (Seattle, WA), the Brown Mens College team (Providence, RI), and been a counselor at the National Ultimate Training Camp (NUTC) several times.

Frisbee Mentors: Nathan Wicks, Fortunat Mueller, Bill Rodriguez, Tiina Booth

Advice for a first-time college captain: In terms of recruiting, focus on athletes -- you can always teach people how to play frisbee. In terms of practices, focus on drills that teach good fundamentals, playing a ton, and fitness -- those 3 things will go a long way towards fun and improvement.