Introduction

Ultimate was developed in 1968 by a group of students at Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J. Although ultimate resembles many traditional sports in its basic athletic requirements, it is unlike most sports due to its focus on self-officiating, even at the highest levels of competition. This concept, called Spirit of the Game™, is integrated into the basic philosophy of the sport, written into the rules and practiced at all levels of the game from local leagues to the World Games.

USA Ultimate

USA Ultimate offers three coach certifications: Middle School, High School and College/Club. Each of the certifications look at age appropriate coach behavior and off the field to help make our athletes have a positive and safe playing experience. The need for coaches is high, especially at the youth-level. Talk to your local disc organization about hosting a workshop.

Coaching

USA Ultimate has a comprehensive coaching certification program. Coaches are responsible for making their teams comfortable with the game and for teaching the rules. Contact your local league organization about hosting a workshop.

The Playing Field

A regulation ultimate field is 70 yards by 40 yards with zones 30 yards deep. Play and scoring must occur within the lines. Perimeter lines are out of bounds. The official rules recommend that spectators and gear should remain 15 feet away from the field of play (or whatever distance is designated by the event organizer) to keep the perimeter safe and clean during play.

The Disc

Ultimate is traditionally played with a 175g high-tech molded plastic disc that is approximately 10.75 inches in diameter. USA Ultimate provides a variety of discs for use in ultimate play at both the adult and youth levels.

Safety First

USA Ultimate takes event quality and safety very seriously. USAU staff and the USA Ultimate Medical Advisory Committee regularly review our event guidelines to ensure that event safety requirements for all USAU official and sanctioned events continue to meet or exceed national standards. Review our Event Safety Standards at UltimateCanada.ca. Additionally, all USAU official and sanctioned events are covered by our insurance policies.

Playing the Game

Ultimate is a non-contact sport played by two teams of seven players. The object is simple. Each team plays “keep away” from the other team by completing successive passes and progressing down the field, with a team member catching the final pass in the opponent’s end zone. A typical game is played to 15 points and usually lasts about 90 minutes.

USA Ultimate provides a variety of competition opportunities within the structure of our national and club divisions. Ultimate is played by men and women alike. Gender divisions may include men’s, mixed and women’s. A mixed team must include both male and female players.

Initiating Play: When a player believes there has been an infraction, they must make the call. A foul occurs when contact is made. When a player believes there has been an infraction, they must make the call. A foul occurs when contact is made.

Ultimate is based on the belief that respect and honor between competitors make the game possible for both the players and the community. Each athlete is obligated to respect every on the field to act as an official in which is appropriate for the player. Each athlete is obligated to respect every on the field to act as an official in which is appropriate for the player. Each athlete is obligated to respect every on the field to act as an official in which is appropriate for the player. Each athlete is obligated to respect every on the field to act as an official in which is appropriate for the player.

Non-contact: No physical contact is allowed between players. Pick and screen are also prohibited. A foul occurs when contact is made. When a player believes there has been an infraction, they must make the call. A foul occurs when contact is made.

Spirit of the Game™: Ultimate relies on a spirit of sportmanship that places the responsibility for fair play on the player. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules, or the basic joy of play. Such actions as taunting, aggression, intentional infractions or other win-at-all-costs behavior are contrary to Spirit of the Game and must be avoided.

Officiating: All players are responsible for their own foul and line calls. Players resolve their own disputes.

Obstobers: Observers are non-players whose role is to carefully watch the action of the game and perform any of the following duties: track time limits, resolve player disputes, concise or assist for spectators, scorekeeping, and line calls. Observers may make rulings on infractions called by players, and only after the players have failed to resolve the issue themselves.

Ultimate in 10 Simple Rules

1. The Field: A rectangular shape with end zones at each end. A regulation field is 70 yards by 40 yards, with end zones 20 yards deep.

2. Initiate Play: Each point begins with both teams lining up on the front line of their respective end zones. The defense throw (‘pull’) the disc to the offense.

3. Scoring: Each time the offense completes a pass into the defender’s end zone, the offense scores a point.

4. Movement of the Disc: The disc may be advanced in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. Players may not run with the disc. If the disc is out of bounds, a goal line, or the perimeter, the defense immediately takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense.

5. Change of Possession: When a player catches the disc, the offense takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense. Just like basketball, the game is a transition in which players move quickly from offense to defense on turnovers.

6. Substitutions: Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a timeout or during an injury timeout.

7. Fouls: When a player initiates contact on another player, a foul occurs. A foul occurs when contact is made. When a player believes there has been an infraction, they must make the call.

8. Fouls: When a player initiates contact on another player, a foul occurs. A foul occurs when contact is made. When a player believes there has been an infraction, they must make the call.

9. Self-Officiating: Players are responsible for their own foul and line calls. Players resolve their own disputes.

10. Spirit of the Game: Ultimate stresses sportmanship and fair play. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play.
Players and Positions
Teams participating in the Club Championship Series may have a maximum of 17 players on their roster. Most other series and events do not have roster limits, but a common team size is between 14-16 players. A squad of seven teammates plays on the field at any given time.

Offensive Positions

**Handlers** – A team’s primary throwers.

**Cutters** – A team’s primary downfield receivers.

**Defensive Strategies**

**Person** – When each person on the defensive team matches up to play defense against one person on the other team (one on one).

**Zone** – When defenders are assigned to cover areas of the field rather than individual opponents.

Common Terms

**Contact** – A thrower may call “contact” instead of “foul” when contact with the marker occurs. Play does not stop, and the marker resets the stall count.

**Dump Pass** – A short lateral or backward pass.

**Foul** – When a player initiates contact with another player that affects continued play.

**Marker** – The defensive player within three meters of the thrower who counts out the stall count.

**Pick** – Occurs whenever an offensive player moves in a manner that causes a guarding defensive player to be obstructed by another player. Obstruction may result from contact with, or the need to avoid, the obstructing player. This is a violation.

**Pivot** – The part of the body (usually the foot) in continuous contact with a single spot on the field during a thrower’s possession once the thrower has come to a stop.

**Pull** – The throw from one team to the other that starts play at the beginning of each point.

**Stall** – A turnover occurring when a thrower has not released the disc by the count of 15.

**Stall Count** – The amount of time the offensive player with the disc has to throw the disc. Each thrower is permitted 10 seconds to release the disc. The stall count must be called aloud by the marker. The stall count cannot start until the marker is within 10 feet of the thrower.

**Strip** – When a defensive player initiates contact with the disc after an offensive player has gained possession of the disc, and the offensive player loses possession as a result. This is a foul.

**Travel** – When a thrower fails to establish a pivot at the appropriate spot on the field and keeps in contact with that spot until their throw is released. This is a violation.

**Violation** – Any violation of the rules other than a foul.

Tournaments

Teams will generally pre-register or qualify for a tournament. Tournaments are usually Saturday and Sunday with each team playing approximately 2-4 games per day. Games are played to a certain point total (a game to 15 is standard) or until a time cap is reached (often between 75-105 minutes). Each team plays other teams in a predetermined format with the winning teams advancing to the finals. Teams eliminated from contention for the finals will often be scheduled to play placement games.

Watching from the Sidelines

Some tournaments will provide water or have vendors selling food and drinks, but many may not. It is always a good idea to come prepared. Here are health and safety recommendations to keep in mind while watching on the sideline.

Check the event website ahead of time to see what amenities will be available.

- Keep yourself and personal items, including but not limited to coolers, tents, strollers, bags and chains, 16 feet (or whatever distance is designated by the event organizer) away from the sideline.
- Seek shelter during a lightning delay.
- Drink water; stay hydrated.
- Items you may want to bring:
  - folding chair
  - sun block
  - appropriate clothing for weather
  - camera and/or video camera
  - USA Ultimate Spectator Guide
  - event program/game schedule

Spirit of the Sideline

On an ultimate sideline, encouragement and support are stressed. Cheering is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect for all players, fans and officials. Friends and family can support their teams in many ways. Some things you can do to show support:

- Create and share a team roster with other friends and family.
- Provide team drinks and snacks to maintain energy necessary for competing and remaining healthy.
- Bring iced tea or iced coffee to stay cool.
- Cheer for the team and individuals.
- Encourage spirit and conflict resolution amongst players by listening quietly when calls are made and permitting them to make the final decision without receiving feedback from the crowd.
- Take pictures to share with the team after the event.
- Wear team colors and make posters or banners.
- Stay positive! Celebrate good plays and defend; refrain from booing or negative comments.

SPECTATOR’S GUIDE TO Ultimate

USA Ultimate
1-800-872-4384
www.usaultimate.org

Spirit of the Sideline


www.usaultimate.org