

A SPECTATOR'S GUIDE TO

ULTIMATE



RECOGNIZED SPORT
ORGANIZATION



INTRODUCTION

Ultimate was developed in 1968 by a group of students at Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J. Today, ultimate is played all around the world. Ultimate is unique in that it is a self-officiated sport, even at the highest level of competition. Self-officiation relies on Spirit of the Game, a core philosophy in the sport that means competitive play is encouraged but never at the expense of mutual respect among players, adherence to the rules and the basic joy of play.

USA ULTIMATE

USA Ultimate, a not-for-profit, is the national governing body for the sport of ultimate in the U.S. and the world's largest membership organization devoted to ultimate. Founded as the Ultimate Players Association in 1979, USA Ultimate strives to promote the sport of ultimate; support its players, coaches, and fans; and increase participation at all levels. USA Ultimate's mission is to advance the sport of ultimate in the United States by enhancing and promoting Character, Community and Competition.

WHERE IS ULTIMATE PLAYED?

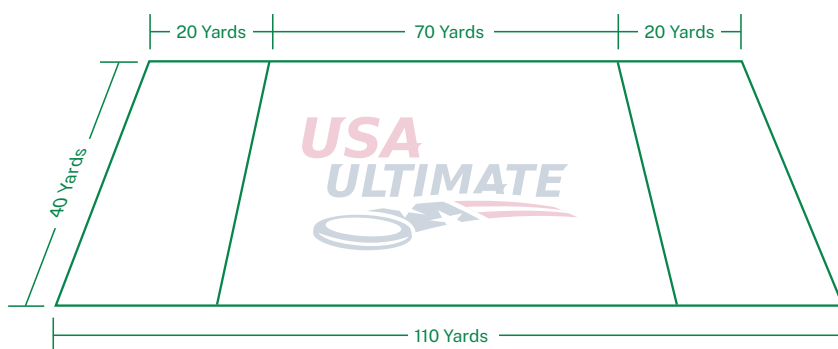
Nationally, ultimate is played by people of all ages, from recreational pickup games to a competitive series of national events attracting the best players from across the country. Many cities have a local ultimate organization that runs leagues, pickup games, clinics and tournaments.

There are a variety of ultimate formats that allow play on grass, at the beach and indoors. There are also variations on the game based on the number of players on the field and for younger players. Ultimate gender divisions include men/boys, women/girls and mixed. USA Ultimate values a diverse and inclusive community and affirms the ability of players to participate in the division where they feel most comfortable based on their gender identity. USA Ultimate oversees high school state tournaments, a college season and series, and an adult club season and series. USA Ultimate hosts the Youth Club Championships, College Championships and Club Championships as well as Beach and Masters Championships.

Internationally, ultimate is played in over 100 countries. The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) holds world competitions featuring hundreds of teams from around the globe. USA Ultimate hosts tryouts for National Teams to participate in U-20, U-24, World Championships and World Games competitions. Historically, the United States has been very successful at international championship events.

THE PLAYING FIELD

A regulation ultimate field is 70 yards long by 40 yards wide with end zones 20 yards deep. Play and scoring must occur within the playing field. Perimeter lines are out of bounds. The official rules recommend that spectators and gear should remain 15 feet away from the field of play to keep the perimeter safe and clear during play. Field size can be adapted for smaller-sided games (i.e., 3 v. 3 or 4 v. 4).



PLAYING THE GAME

Ultimate is a non-contact sport played by two teams of seven players. The offensive team moves the disc up the field by completing successive passes while the defense tries to stop their progression. Players are not allowed to run with the disc. A point is scored when a player catches the disc in their opponent's end zone. A typical game is played to 15 points and usually lasts about 90 minutes.

The Official Rules of Ultimate include adaptations for youth play, including smaller team sizes, shorter games, a smaller field and flexibility on some violations.

Ultimate is played with a plastic disc weighing 175g. For players 12 and under, there is a smaller disc that weighs 145g. Discs can be purchased at local sports stores or through USA Ultimate.

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. **Starting Play:** Each point begins with both teams lining up on the front of their respective end zone line. The defense throws ("pulls") the disc to the offense. A regulation game has seven players per team.
3. **Scoring:** Each time the offense completes a pass in the defense's end zone, the offense scores a point. Play is reinitiated after each score.
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. The person with the disc ("thrower") has 10 seconds to throw the disc. The defender guarding the thrower ("marker") counts out the stall count.
5. **Change of Possession:** When a pass is not completed (e.g., out of bounds, drop, block, interception, stalled), the defense immediately takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense.
6. **Substitutions:** Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score and during an injury timeout.
7. **Non-contact:** Players must attempt to avoid physical contact during play. Picks and screens are also prohibited.
8. **Fouls:** When a player initiates contact that affects the play, a foul occurs. When a foul causes a player to lose possession, the play resumes as if the possession was retained. If the player that the foul was called against disagrees with the foul call, the play is redone.
9. **Self-Officiating:** Players are responsible for their own foul and line calls. Players resolve their own disputes.
10. **Spirit of the Game:** The foundation of the rules, which places the responsibility for fair play on the players. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play.





SELF-OFFICIATION AND OBSERVERS

There are no referees in ultimate. Spirit of the Game is based on the belief that respect and honor between competitors make it possible for control of the game to be in the players' hands. Each athlete is expected to learn and understand the rules so they can trust each other to make calls on the field when they believe there has been an infraction.

When a call is made, play will temporarily stop for it to be discussed. Players called for an infraction can either agree with the call ("no contest") or "contest" if they believe the infraction did not occur. If a "contest" is the outcome, the disc is sent back to the previous thrower, and play continues from there.

Games played at a higher level are usually accompanied by Observers. Observers do not make active foul or violation calls of a subjective nature as those calls are left up to the players. Observers resolve disputes when requested by the players and they make active calls related to conduct issues or some objective rules such as time violations or boundary decisions.



COMMON TERMS

Backhand: A throw that comes across your body, usually first throw learned.

Forehand (Flick): A throw from the side of the body, typically released around hip level.

Hammer: A high overhead throw which delivers the disc upside down.

Dump Pass: A short lateral or backward pass.

Foul: When a player initiates contact with another player and it affects continued play; play stops.

Contest: Outcome when an agreement cannot be reached between two players on a call.

No Contest (Uncontested): Outcome when the person on whom an infraction was called agrees with the call.

Contact: A foul called by the thrower on the marker; if not contested, the stall count automatically returns to zero.

Handlers: The offense's primary throwers.

Cutters: The offense's primary downfield receivers.

Mark(er): The defensive player guarding the offensive player with the disc. It is their responsibility to count to 10 for the stall.

Pick: When a player obstructs another player's movement, either by making contact or impeding their opponent's path. Play stops, and players reset to where they were before the pick occurred.

Pull: The throw from the defense to the offense to start each point.

Stall Count: The thrower is permitted 10 seconds to release the disc. The marker calls out the count when they are within 10 feet of the thrower.

Stall: A turnover occurs when the thrower has not released the disc by the count of 10.

Strip: A foul that causes a player to lose possession of the disc.

SPIRIT OF THE SIDELINE

Sidelines should be encouraging and supportive to all players, coaches and other game officials on the field. Cheering is encouraged but never at the expense of a respect for all players, fans and officials. Here are some ways to show support:

- Cheer for the team and individuals.
- Encourage spirit and conflict resolution amongst players by listening quietly and not giving feedback in the moment. It is the players' responsibility to make the call.
- Stay positive! Celebrate good plays. Refrain from booing or negative comments.
- Provide things like shade tents, snacks or drinks; wear team colors; or take action photos.



GET INVOLVED

Coach – At the youth level, you don't have to be an ultimate expert to coach; you just need to have enthusiasm for coaching kids and creating a positive and safe playing experience. USA Ultimate offers coaching education and certifications for different levels of play.

Chaperone – Youth teams should have a few chaperones to help cultivate a safe environment. Chaperones need to pass a USAU background check and complete SafeSport training.

Team Administration – Being on an ultimate team can take a lot of organization, from traveling to tournaments, rostering and planning team practices and events. If you're good at organizing and have some extra time, ask the coach or other team leaders if you can help them with some of the logistics.

Volunteer – Local disc organizations and USA Ultimate are always looking for people to be more involved in the community. Volunteering can mean anything from setting up cones before a game to organizing events to being a board member.

Contact your local disc organization or USA Ultimate to see how you can get more involved in your ultimate community.



USA ULTIMATE

(719) 219-8322

USAULTIMATE.ORG