



Tournament Director Guide

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Contributors

INTRODUCTION

In the USA Ultimate Level I Coaching Clinics, one of the common topics of conversation for coaches is athlete retention, given the vast number of sports and activities from which to choose. Often one of the participants will chime in with something to the effect of, “take them to a tournament.” What is it about the tournament experience that is such a selling point for ultimate?

The tournament experience highlights the second “C” in USA Ultimate’s Mission Statement: “To advance the sport of ultimate in the United States by enhancing Character, *Community*, and Competition.” While tournaments are definitely not unique to our sport, they seem to be more prevalent in ultimate across all skill levels and throughout the whole season. Single games outside of tournament play can address both Character and Competition. It is the exposure to a tournament: numerous teams, immersion in the sport and one’s fellow athletes, both teammates and opponents, for a day or longer that demonstrates and builds the community. Think about your own experience in the sport and that of your friends. What was it that hooked you? For many, it is the tournament experience.

As a Tournament Director (TD), it is your job to make the tournament experience the best it can be, not just for the bank account of whatever group will benefit from organizing the event, but for all of the participants and the ultimate community. That is why this Tournament Director’s Manual has been produced. The men and women who have helped create this manual have directed hundreds of events over the years of all shapes and sizes. They have faced, worked around and overcome almost every challenge a tournament director might face. They have used their experiences to create this manual in the hope that more tournament directors can provide the best tournament experiences to our community.

Note that this document is part of the broader [USA Ultimate Tournament Director Certification Program](#) focused on educating and providing assistance to event organizers. Additional materials outlining event quality standards are available on the USA Ultimate website and are referenced throughout this manual. Please be sure to click on the links in the sections below for specific guidance and especially for requirements for running USA Ultimate sanctioned events.

PART 1: PRE-PLANNING – FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

Goals—Why have a tournament? Why be a TD?

It is critical that you and your fellow organizers are clear on your goals for hosting a tournament or being a tournament director. Some do it for the money, and there isn't anything wrong with that, as long as you are providing value for your participants. Tournament profits can be used to pay event staff, provide funding for your team or local disc organization, or be donated to a charity. This is a capitalist, market-driven society, and ventures that don't generate adequate revenue are destined to fail. A tournament should make money. Again, *a tournament should make money*. That may come as a surprise to some given the beginnings of ultimate culture, as most TD's like the feeling they get from providing something that others will enjoy. Make no mistake directing a tournament is a lot of work and there should be some tangible reward for these efforts. Often, that is monetary.

That being said, there are other reasons for directing tournaments. It can make your team or league stronger. You can bring in teams at different competition levels to challenge your own, to expose your team or local community to higher levels of competition, or simply to promote the sport and create new opportunities for the future. Be sure to think about what kind of opportunities you are providing and to whom. Demand might be higher for some divisions than others, and while that is an important consideration for event finances and viability, it's also important to provide opportunities for new or underserved parts of the community. This will help grow the sport, and likely your event, and reflects broader goals of community building and inclusiveness that are key features of the tournament experience.

Sometimes tournament directors are motivated by other goals. Some have been underwhelmed by other events they've attended. They want to provide better fields, amenities, competition, parties, or any number of things. Most think that they can provide a valuable service to the community and want to demonstrate that in a real way.

Before you take on the role of tournament director, be clear on your goals, your mission, and your vision. Share them with your fellow organizers, your crew, and your partners. Belief in your goals will keep you motivated and help you through the challenges ahead.

Research

Putting on a high-quality ultimate tournament isn't a simple matter. It takes time, money, and other resources, and you don't want to waste any of those. How do you avoid this? Do your homework.

On the supply side, you will need to determine when your fields are available. Additionally, you will need to know the availability of your key collaborators as well as your other volunteers. On the demand side, look at past years and look at the current year's calendar. Determine if there are other events that have traditionally been scheduled around the time that would draw teams away from your event. Consider if there are events that have been traditionally scheduled that would draw teams to your event. Find out if they are happening again. Talk to the teams that you want to attend. Learn if they will be interested in coming to your tournament. Consider all age groups and divisions. Perhaps a "hat" tournament could be well attended. A "hat" tournament is a tournament where players register individually rather than as

teams and is so named because, in some instances, teams are randomly made by choosing the names of the players from a hat or hats, perhaps separate hats for different types of players.

You need to know if your desired location and time-frame are a good fit for the teams you want to attract. If not, you don't want to expend resources to throw a tournament in which nobody competes. Find the right time and place to give the best chance for those supply and demand curves to intersect.

Resources

All the goals and great ideas won't amount to much unless you have the resources to realize them. What are some of those? First off, and don't discount them, are time and energy. If you don't have those, it doesn't matter what else you have. And it won't be just your time and energy. You will need help to put on a tournament, regardless of size. Many tournament directors' first calls are to other people who might be interested in helping out. Described below are a few resources that are critical or can be extremely helpful in deciding whether the event is a good idea, and whether it will be successful.

Facilities - Certainly the most important tangible item you will need is the space for your fields. No matter if your fields are sand on the beach, space in a gym, or wide open grass spaces, without your fields, you won't be able to have your tournament. The primary focus of this manual will be outdoor grass tournaments, but most all of the same principles apply to indoor and beach. A full-sized grass ultimate field is 110 yards long by 40 yards wide. [But you need more room than that](#) to safely play ultimate and we are still just talking about a single field.

While standard ultimate fields are 110 yards by 40 yards, you will need more space for each field. In ultimate, a lot of action extends outside the boundaries of the fields. Players run, lay out and slide several yards out of bounds and out the back of end zones. Curving discs can fly a long way out of bounds before coming back to the field. Consider vertical space as well, and not just for indoor events. Utility lines and trees over or around fields can hamper play. There also needs to be plenty of room on the sidelines and between fields for players, spectators, tents, and other equipment.

If your field space has predefined fields, it is easier to evaluate how safe the space is. Consider if the spaces are 120 yards by 50 yards. If they are, then you have room for your field with at least five yards of safety buffer to start with. If your field space doesn't have a predefined layout (e.g. a parade ground or a polo field complex), you will need to take time to walk and measure the space to determine how level it is, and map out where you will place your fields.

How do the fields handle wet weather? Do they have a rain cancellation policy? Are there some fields that can be utilized regardless of the weather conditions (barring lightning)? If so, investigate using those fields. With fields being a primary resource for your tournament, it is good to be prepared with backup options should they become necessary.

It's important to note that artificial turf fields have increasingly become part of the sports facility landscape. When evaluating a field site, consider the pros and cons of using turf instead of, or alongside natural grass. The latest generation turf fields have a lot of pros, including consistency and durability, specifically in terms of more flexibility to use them under most weather conditions. But there can be cons as well, such as increased temperatures on hot days and increased abrasiveness relative to soft grass

fields. Consider the time of year for your event and your likely participants, and think about what space makes the most sense for your event.

Friends – We'll get into staffing and finances in more detail later, but it's worth mentioning up front that people are important resources for any successful event. In terms of people, you want to be sure that you have a pool to draw from, including people close to you to take on larger responsibilities, and a larger pool of people to help with smaller tasks.

Finances - How will you handle the finances for your tournament? Be sure to check on whether or not taxes will be owed on any sales or income. You should give this careful consideration. It is a good practice to keep event finances independent from personal finances, to avoid commingling funds. You may be taking on additional liability by accepting funds into your own personal account. If you aren't already affiliated with a league or organization, consider doing so or consider forming one, so that event finances are handled through an organization's account. If you can't find a partner, you should investigate setting up an independent way to manage finances and risks separate from you as an individual.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) - DMOs can be a huge help in running a tournament. They can offer services that benefit your tournament such as scheduling of your tournament with the facility or facilities, hotel room blocks, marketing and promotion to the community, maps and visitor guides, food and beverage, and grant funding among others. Do yourself a favor and at least explore those options with the appropriate DMO for your tournament.

DMOs are usually a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) or Sports Commission. If you haven't worked with one before, you might be wondering what they'll want from you, what additional work they'll put on your already full plate, and how much they will cost. Well, here's a pleasant surprise for you—they exist to help you!

DMOs want to bring visitors and their dollars into the community, and your tournament will do that. If you are drawing teams from farther away than driving distance from their homes, especially if your tournament is more than one day long, your participants will need a place to stay.

DMOs can identify and assist in the field reservation process. These groups have working relationships with local facilities and can not only help you identify your options, but can often help with negotiating access, scheduling, and pricing on your behalf. They will likely also know about other events that might be going on in your area, which could either create conflicts or opportunities for your event.

DMOs are experts on the hotel and lodging market. They can find out from the hotels about their availability and pricing for your timeframe. They can even help negotiate a room night rebate with the hotel(s) and/or CVB (often \$5 or \$10 per room night) and/or complimentary (comped) room nights (one per 15 to 30 are common comp rates). Some DMOs even have grants available that may help your tournament budget in several areas including, but not limited to field rental, marketing, and transportation.

DMOs can also help with restaurant and other entertainment options. A frequent question that tournament directors get is "Where can my team go out to eat together?" Even if you know something about nearby options, your DMO likely knows a lot more.

Local Ultimate Organization - Another great resource is your local ultimate organization. If you are not already working with them or for them, reach out to them to discuss your plans. See if they want to get involved. They likely have much of what you will need from field contacts to cones to volunteers. They can also help with licensing, handling finances, insurance, and even promotion.

Additionally, your local ultimate organization might want you to do things in specific ways within the community for very good reasons. They will have experience which will help prevent mistakes, but, more importantly, they also want to protect the reputation that they have cultivated in the community. If someone were to run an ultimate event poorly, even if the local organization has nothing to do with it, their reputation can be damaged by association.

DMOs and local ultimate organizations can be great partners both in terms of providing human and financial resources. Don't go it alone!

Take an inventory of your resources. Do you have what you need to run your tournament?

- *Time*
- *Energy*
- *Fields*
- *Friends*
- *Finances*
- *DMO Support*
- *Ultimate Organization Support*

Can you get what you are missing?

Risks

There are risks in running tournaments beyond the time, money, and other resources that you commit. Safety should always be at the forefront of planning any event, where players, volunteers, spectators, or others can become injured or ill, and property can be damaged. It is your responsibility to minimize the risk of injuries and damages by taking steps to prevent them. It is important that you make good decisions that will protect not only your participants, but you and your event staff from financial, legal, or other ramifications.

On that note, the following list of risks will not be complete. This is meant as a starting point. You will need to consider the risks that apply to the tournament *you* will be running. You will want to understand the risks of what you are undertaking completely, as they are unique to your event.

Liability and Permits – Even when all best practices are followed, injuries can and will happen. For that reason you will want to reduce the risk to yourself and your fellow organizers with appropriate insurance. Many facility providers and some vendors will even require it. USA Ultimate offers insurance as part of its sanctioning program to leagues, practices, and tournaments. [USA Ultimate offers insurance as part of its sanctioning program](#) to leagues, practices, and tournaments.

For similar reasons, as well as to ensure you don't end up getting shut down, determine what licenses or permits might be needed to run your tournament. You don't want to run afoul of any local ordinances that would put your event at risk, such as noise ordinances, field permits, vendor licenses, etc.

Field Safety - Safety is of paramount concern. You will need to scan the fields for broken glass and the like. Are there manhole covers or similar obstacles in your site or on your fields? You will need to ensure that the fields are adequately spaced, as well. Refer [here](#) regarding appropriate field spacing. For instance, the minimum space between fields does not take into account space for equipment, especially shade tents that usually have a 10' by 10' footprint. For that reason, besides the equipment buffer lines, you will also need *additional* space between fields to allow for equipment. More and more often there is a media presence at ultimate tournaments. Often the media outlets, especially photographers or videographers, will want to use ladders or build scaffolding to get a higher angle view of the action. Be sure to consider their needs and related safety issues when laying out your fields, especially around showcase fields.

Weather - You need to have a clear understanding of how weather, especially in your area, can impact your tournament, both in terms of safety planning and contingency planning.

Wind can not only be a challenge for players, but a safety concern. Ensure that tents are secured appropriately, dependent upon field complex rules related to staking or weighting down tents. This applies to tents that are assembled by a rental company, tents put up by your staff, and tents that teams bring. Please reference the [USA Ultimate Wind Policy](#) for more details on planning for wind safety.

You will need to immediately stop play should lightning be in the vicinity. Refer to the [USA Ultimate Lightning Policy](#) for guidance on when and how to stop play. More facilities are installing and utilizing lightning detection systems. If that is the case at your facility, be sure you understand how it works, what their policies are, and how you and the facility will together manage decision making about lightning. There are also lightning tracking apps available for computers and mobile devices, which can provide a readily accessible way to monitor storms and lightning.

Likewise, you will need to consider the heat and humidity conditions specifically in regards to what types of players are at your event. For instance, 90 degrees with 50 percent humidity (95 on the heat index) is brutal in many parts of the country, while for well-conditioned athletes in Texas in July, it is a cool day. [See heat-related recommendations and requirements for USA Ultimate events.](#)

Weather conditions can cause cancellation, re-scheduling, or abbreviation of your tournament. Be sure you understand the facility's policies on closing the fields due to weather or field safety/damage concerns, and that they are spelled out in the contract with your field provider. You will need to communicate with your participants about the cancellation policy and be very clear when communicating with them about your refund policy. Many of your costs will likely not be recoverable due to weather cancellations. If participants understand that up front, it will help to avoid confrontation and/or confusion later.

Equipment - Consider the kind of work associated with your event, including the use of tools and the movement and setup of equipment like tables, water coolers, and tents. Be sure you're considering the safety and abilities of the people taking on these tasks, including their age and physical fitness. You should only let appropriate persons (licensed drivers who are not under the influence) operate any golf carts/utility vehicles you rent.

Medical - Injuries can and will result from competitive ultimate being played. Even on the best fields, athletes will get injured. For that reason and because other injuries can happen, you need to be prepared by having the [appropriate medical staff and equipment](#) at your event or, if the event is very small, to at least know how to quickly get medical help to your tournament or to get the injured/ill to medical help.

Food and Beverages - It is your job to minimize the risks of other injuries and illnesses occurring at your tournament, and at any associated events such as a tournament party, dinner, etc. If you are having a social event that includes alcohol, you will want to abide by local laws and follow best practices around how it is obtained and served. Be sure to secure any necessary liquor licenses or permits. IDs should be checked. People shouldn't be over-served. And if the party isn't happening where your attendees will be staying for the night, you will want to provide transportation, encourage designated drivers, and/or make available taxi information (a partnership with a transportation service could also produce some event revenue; see [Finances section](#) below).

If you are arranging for food at your event and/or party, be sure to research and follow applicable health codes. If you are going to provide food for participants (e.g., fruit, bagels, etc.), create team food packages that contain prepackaged food (bags of bagels) and unpeeled fresh fruit, rather than bulk food items that are shared in a public space, which can be both unsanitary and wasteful. Keep in mind that if you want to have food vendors at your event, they also need to have the appropriate permits and should provide you with proof of liability insurance, naming you as an additional insured. It is always best to err on the side of caution with health codes.

Youth – If your participants include minors, there are some additional risk management and safety measures to consider. USA Ultimate's requirements are outlined [here](#) and include having a background-checked chaperone for each team that has minors on it, as well as having parent-signed waivers for every minor. Chaperones are also responsible for carrying a medical authorization form for each minor in their care, as well as [other responsibilities](#). Scheduling should also take into account the age of participants. It's also important to be familiar with and implement [Safe Sport guidelines](#) for your event. This and other requirements are covered in more detail on the USA Ultimate website.

You are putting on the event for any number of reasons, but having your family or organization facing financial ruin is likely not among them. Your athletes and other attendees are coming for a number of reasons, but mostly to have fun. They are trusting you as the event organizer to provide a safe environment. Protect them and protect yourself.

Finances

So, you've done your homework and decided you have a site, a date, a staff, the resources, an understanding of the risks and rewards, and a group of teams that are interested in coming to your event. Since you are going to be officially inviting teams to compete in your event soon, you need to be ready to answer one of the questions that will certainly be asked, "How much will it cost?"

Before you can figure out how much it will cost per team or per player, you need to know how much your tournament will cost to run. You need to have given some thought to how many fields you have. This determines how many games you can schedule in order to guarantee that participants get their money's worth in terms of games per team.

You also need to consider whether there are opportunities to generate revenue other than just participation fees. Sponsors, advertisers, merchandise partners, and food vendors may be able to generate revenue or provide budget relief. Keep in mind that relationships with partners should provide value to the event, not just to the partner. Sponsorship deals can be created that provide a package of exposure benefits to the sponsor (e.g., website, event guide, signage, booth, on-site sampling, public address (PA) announcements, and naming rights). Selling advertising piece-meal is another way to include smaller or less invested groups, but is not as efficient as sponsorship deals. Food vendors and merchandise partner deals should be based on either a percentage of sales, or a flat fee. Be sure to put in a minimum guarantee.

Partners can provide money, value-in-kind (VIK), labor, supplies (discs, water, ice to name a few), venues (party location), discounts (bars and restaurants might provide discounts to your participants and possibly a percentage back to the tournament), or entertainment (a band that needs a live audience). Remember, budget relief is just as good as cash, provided it is relief for essential items you were going to pay for anyway. If a partner is providing VIK that isn't providing budget relief, be sure they are actually adding value to the event.

Once you have an idea of what revenue might be coming in, consider how much money will need to go out. You will need to have an understanding of the costs of your fields and any other facilities, your rental equipment, your labor, food and beverage, awards and gifts, supplies, and social events (reference the [Budget Expense Categories appendix](#) and the [Equipment and Supplies Checklist appendix](#)). Those are the broad categories, but you will need to delve into the details; take observers as an example. If your tournament will be using observers, you will need to think about money for their transportation, housing, food, and perhaps a stipend. If your site is large, you may want walkie-talkies to communicate and/or carts to help you move equipment and people. Factor in taking care of volunteers and other event staff, including snacks and beverages, meals, thank-you gifts, or even stipends for higher level staff. Often it's possible to get volunteer assistance from a partner organization in exchange for a donation to their group. This is more research, but do your best to know your expected costs early on so that you can budget appropriately.

You should then consider how much profit you want the event to make. Or looking at it from another perspective, how many teams/players do you need to have pay to make the event produce the expected profit? If that number of teams/players is x and the total expected cost (including your modest profit margin) for the event is y , then should your team/player fee be y divided by x ? Probably not. A better practice would be to give yourself a buffer in case you don't get that many teams/players, or in case your cost estimates turn out to be low. If you later find that your profit was more than you expected it to be, you are in a good spot and can decide the best use for that money.

The bottom line is just that, the bottom line. Do your homework and budget with an understanding of what costs will be and what you need to bring in based on costs. If you give folks a quality experience and show them the bang for their buck, they won't have reason to question your tournament's fees or budget.

Contracts

Besides finance and insurance, another area where you might need some expertise is contracts. Contracts are instruments meant to define obligations of various parties to those involved. They are usually authored by attorneys for one of the parties and will reflect that party's interests. Odds are, you will enter into several contracts related to your event; among them will likely be ones for field/venue reservations, hotel room blocks, rental equipment like portable bathrooms, utility vehicles, tents, entertainment, security, etc.

It is in your best interest to have someone with knowledge of these areas review these contracts. An attorney of your own is definitely worth considering, or, at the very least, someone that understands the fine points of the specific agreements so that you don't find yourself entangled by something like a hotel's attrition clause in a room block agreement. Do you want to pay for rooms that went unoccupied during your event because you guaranteed them (that's pretty much what an attrition clause binds you to)? Probably not. Many contracts have language in them that can be removed or otherwise altered or amended. Remember, a contract is an *agreement* between two parties, so it needs to contain mutually agreeable terms. As much as possible, enter into contract discussions from a position of strength. If you have options, and someone wants your business, then they will be easier to work with than if they know they are your only option. You also want to be reasonable because you are creating a partnership for the event. It doesn't hurt to ask for changes and it is not binding until you have signed it.

What agreements should you have in place before announcing your tournament? Your field(s)/venue(s). You should, at the very least, have a document confirming that the fields are yours for your date(s) and an understanding of the price of the fields. Be sure to consider and communicate any setup/cleanup time when reserving your fields. If there is a chance you won't get the teams to make your event happen, it may be best for you to have just this until your teams have confirmed their participation and sent their payments (see Team Registration Timeline below). Be sure your contract includes language about cancellation policies and the impact of cancellations on deposits and refunds. In your contracts with vendors, try to get mutual indemnification language included, or get named on the company's insurance policy. (Note: This can be tough for field providers, especially from government organizations, but is often possible with other partners, and helps share risk and responsibility.)

Try to maximize your own flexibility while minimizing the other party's flexibility within your agreements. Contracts can give you leverage and assurances. If you communicate to teams about your event before you have the site(s) confirmed, what is to stop the field owner from changing the price for the fields? The same can be said about the room rates with hotel room blocks for events that will require some teams to stay overnight, or rentals for tents, etc.

Contracts are a necessity even if they can be onerous. Find the proper help that you need to protect yourself and to maximize your flexibility. Be sure that you have the absolute necessities in place (venues) before you make your announcement. Bottom line, don't assume anything, and get all agreements in writing!

Team Registration Timeline

The tournament you have planned on running is now some number of months away. You need to make some decisions about your timeline in advance of your announcement of the event. You'll need to figure out dates that work for you and your team for the following:

- Application deadline – By what date will teams need to apply?
- Team announcement/waitlist – By what date will you tell teams if they are “in” or waitlisted?
- Team acceptance/deposit deadline – By what date will teams need to confirm their acceptance by paying their fee, or some portion thereof? Some tournaments collect even more than the eventual fee for the tournament and will return the overage upon completion of play at the event. This, even more than collecting the deposit or fee, helps assure that the teams are serious about competing in your event and can ease your financial stress. Be sure to set this deadline far enough in advance of the event that you are giving yourself and teams on the waitlist enough time to fill any vacancies.
- Waitlist confirmations – Now that original teams have confirmed, you may have some additional spots to offer waitlisted teams. Now is the time to work with those teams to confirm their spots with payment. Think strategically about your wait list. You want teams on it that will be able to actually attend if another team bails at the last minute. That's less likely to happen with teams that have to fly or drive a long way. Local teams often make much better wait list teams.

When your tournament is full, inform the remaining teams on the waitlist. This is a courtesy, but your continued communication throughout the process will be appreciated even though their team won't be able to compete. These teams are still potential customers for future events.

Be organized when you are ready to communicate with the prospective teams. Be professional in your communications and have an idea about which teams you will accept. You will need to be ready to make the tough choices of who gets in and who does not. Insist on getting money from your prospective teams. A financial commitment is more firm than an e-mailed indication of interest.

Branding

You know the vision you have for your event. It is now time to figure out how you will communicate that through the name of the event, the logo, the website, etc. In other words, you need to think about building your brand identity. Think about some of the brands that are already out there

Take the old “Chicago Tune-Up” as an example. They wanted to offer club teams a chance to prepare for the Club Championship Series just before it began. They were able to convey that with their name. When the original lead tournament directors decided, after a decade of running a fantastic event, that they were done, they announced that that year would be the last. That left top staff that wanted to see the event continue with a branding decision. They wanted to convey continuity of both the concept and execution. They settled on “Chicago Heavyweight Championships” and continued to run a high caliber event on the same weekend and at the same site for many years.

Both versions of these events reinforced their naming with their logos. Chicago Tune-Up included gears and tools in their designs in the early years. Chicago Heavyweight Championships utilized boxing imagery and even had title belts made.

One thing worth considering, is to include “ultimate” in the name of your event. In a time when ultimate is still working to expand in the mainstream market, you should consider including “ultimate” in the title of your tournament to help indicate the sport to those in the local community.

Consider what you want to convey in naming your event. You can reinforce that with your logo and in other ways. Also consider including “ultimate” in your event name. Helping to grow the sport can only help your event.

Publicity and Announcement

You’ve already put in a lot of work for your tournament. If you want it to be successful, you have to let folks know about it. No one comes to a tournament they know nothing about.

In the [Research section](#), we talked about speaking with teams about their interest in attending. Now that you’ll soon be announcing, give them the details and see if they will commit to coming to your event. Having some key teams committed and/or endorsing your event will make your announcement that much better. It is especially important if other teams aren’t familiar with your event or your fields. If you tell them something that is familiar and desirable (e.g. teams they want to play against), that will strengthen your announcement and credibility. Teams that have committed to your tournament will want to face certain teams as well. They will become your unofficial partners, helping you bring in other teams. They can provide contact information and may even help you in asking them to participate.

Be sure to include in your announcement the site, date, and divisions/competition levels you are looking for. If you have committed teams, be sure to include that information along with any other positive details. Do you have sponsors? Do you have hotels locked in at a great rate? Do you have a great ancillary event to discuss (party, showcase game, etc.)? Be sure to also tell them how to get questions answered and how to commit to the tournament. Don’t forget to include your policies around cancellation, refund, and the like (see [Risks section](#) above).

A web presence is a must. USA Ultimate sanctioned tournaments have a basic website template to convey information through, including name, dates, competition schedules and information, travel and lodging, fields and directions, logos, and more. USA Ultimate sanctioned tournaments are also featured on the [Tournament Calendar](#).

Take advantage of message boards, calendars, and networks to get in touch with your prospective teams. Be creative and make a splash on social media. Make your announcement fun and worthy of being “liked” or “upvoted.” The more creative your message, the more likely it will be shared and seen by those who you want to see and consider it. You can answer questions over social media as well, but give careful consideration to your posts. You do not want to find yourself dragged down by an ongoing social media conversation of minutiae when you could better focus your energies elsewhere.

Let everybody know about your tournament. Tell them the Five Ws of newspaper leads: who, what, when, where, and why. Make sure that they know how to commit to competing in your tournament. Do everything you can to “sell” your tournament and make it attractive. Ensure you have a web presence for easy reference. Announce through traditional channels, but also be creative.

PART 2: PLANNING – PUTTING THE PIECES IN PLACE

Preparation and Communication

The following portions of this manual will deal with the preparation for your event now that it has been broadly announced. The overriding themes of these sections are *logistics* and *communication*. Think of logistics as the coordination of resources. Coordination without communication is impossible. Note that the following things do not have to be done in exactly the order written. That being said, getting your key volunteers and collaborators established first means that you aren't the only person handling the other items. You may attempt to choose an order in which to tackle them, but they will likely overlap and intertwine.

Event Staff

Be sure to enlist your key volunteers and collaborators at this point if you haven't already done so. What roles you need to fill will depend on what you want your tournament to be and what your site has to offer. See below for examples.

Lead Staff – In addition to your responsibilities as the Tournament Director, here are some things to consider and some roles that might go with them. Note that depending on the size of the event and each specific job in relation to it, you may not need a separate person for each role. However, even if you do have people taking on multiple positions, defining these positions goes a long way towards clarifying responsibilities and communication channels.

- If you will need volunteers, find yourself a **Volunteer Coordinator** with whom you can work closely, but also who can work independently to recruit, train, schedule, and manage volunteers.
- You may want to have a **Competition Coordinator** who can handle caps, rules questions, tie-breakers, and the like. If you have multiple divisions, you may want more than one competition coordinator.
- If you will be using observers, you should have a **Head Observer** who can recruit the other observers, communicate with, schedule, and coordinate them.
- Do you plan on providing food or entertainment to your teams? You might consider getting a **Hospitality Coordinator** who can hire food vendors, organize a party, etc.
- Do you want to get media coverage for your event? You might consider a **Media Coordinator**. Perhaps s/he can run your social media and web presence as well.
- Do you want to get sponsors for your event? You might consider a **Sponsorship Coordinator** to oversee that aspect. S/he might also coordinate branding, logo(s), and merchandise for the event. S/he will need to coordinate with other key staff persons to be sure that the sponsorship obligations are met.
- In order to collect scores, and especially if you want to keep scores updated on site and/or online, you will want to have a **Head Scorekeeper**.
- Likewise if you want to record and report statistics, you will want to have a **Head Statkeeper**.
- In addition to tracking game scores, you may want to track Spirit of the Game ratings, in which case it's a good idea to have a **Spirit Coordinator**.
- If your site has limited parking, or it needs to be managed for other reasons, you will want to have a **Parking Coordinator**.

Field Staff - Additionally, you will want to have volunteers out at the fields monitoring what is going on during play. They can keep/report scores, report injuries, monitor water levels and the need for refills, and also communicate messages (i.e., lightning delays) back to the teams. If you don't need to keep score on each field, then these can act as field marshals and report back to the volunteer coordinator. If you want to report scores more frequently, besides a head scorekeeper, you will likely want at least one volunteer scorekeeper per game. That scorekeeper can also record statistics, although this is made easier with a second volunteer score/stat keeper per game.

Set-up/Breakdown – You don't want to be out there by yourself in the morning setting up cones or at night picking up trash. These jobs involve pre- and post-game hours. Get a handful of trusted people to come out early to make sure the venue is set up and to deal with last minute snafus. Likewise, be sure you have a crew assigned to stick around after games are over to break things down for the night and to leave the venue in great shape after the event is over.

Water/Trash/Recycling - Does your field site collect trash and recycling or distribute water? If not you will want to have volunteers help with these tasks. These tasks are often less enjoyable for the volunteers than the field monitoring duties above. For that reason, you may want to rotate these responsibilities. Then again, you may have some volunteers that are perfectly happy to help with these roles and prefer them to overseeing games. Be sure you think about who gets tasked with responsibilities that involve driving utility carts (licensed drivers) or heavy lifting (physically able).

Food - Some facilities have food concessions and others will allow you to bring in your own. You or your hospitality coordinator should investigate these options, including food trucks, and potentially arrange for food vendors. If you are able to bring someone in, you should further investigate getting a percentage of sales, discounted or free food for you and your volunteers, or both. Again, be sure any food vendors have the appropriate permits and insurance.

If you are providing tournament food for participants, remember that it is more sanitary and less wasteful to create food packs for teams, rather than put bulk food out in a public space. It may be important to provide food packs if there won't be food vendors at your event. It's also important to understand that food vendors are going to have their sales impacted if you are giving away food packs. Be sure to communicate the food situation to participants before the event so they can plan accordingly. Will there be team food packs or food vendors? Are there restaurants or grocery stores nearby?

Medical - A medical plan is an absolute necessity and this will likely include having certified athletic trainers on site for your event. See [USA Ultimate specific requirements](#) based on size and other factors. These professionals can help athletes with taping their ankles, bandaging cuts and scrapes, icing injuries, and assess potential concussions and other serious injuries. While not required for medical emergencies, massage therapists are a great addition to an event, and can provide important services to athletes. Massage therapists will often work for tips at adult events, where the participants are aware of the benefits and have the money to take advantage of them.

Security - You may need overnight security for your event. Even if you can put most of your supplies into a locked room or truck, you may have rented tents, tables, and/or chairs that are being left out. You should check with the facility personnel about their experience and recommendations. If you are serving alcohol in conjunction with a social event, or if you expect large crowds, security services can help ensure that rules are being followed and people are behaving in a safe and respectful manner.

As your number of key volunteers increases, so does the need to communicate so that everyone will stay on task and on the same page. Many organizers utilize online collaborative tools to “passively” communicate. Volunteers can work on their own time and update these shared documents for all to see when they need them. This can help minimize the need for in-person meetings and/or conference calls which, as your key volunteer crew grows larger, become harder to schedule and less efficient. That being said, be sure to check on and check in with your key volunteers to make sure that progress is being made. Also, a meeting just before the event with all the key volunteers is an excellent idea. This is the team that needs to come together to execute your vision. Getting them all together to discuss the tournament just before it begins not only gets everyone on the same page, but also gives them a chance to meet and get to know one another.

You will need other people, both volunteer and not, to achieve your vision for your tournament. Make arrangements to get your key personnel sooner rather than later and give yourself the peace of mind that you have those positions filled. Having key volunteers in place gives you the ability to distribute the workload and delegate tasks. Now working out all of the details and managing all of the relationships won't fall solely on your shoulders. Be sure to communicate with your key volunteers and collaborators throughout the planning process.

Registration and Communication

Now that you have announced your tournament, teams will want to register to participate. They will be sending in their fees. Be professional in the handling of these payments. Be sure to acknowledge receipt and inform/remind teams about the timeline that you determined earlier. Let the teams know what to expect and how you will keep them informed. Will you communicate with team organizers by email, Twitter, Facebook, and/or some other means? Organizers of USA Ultimate sanctioned events are able to utilize USA Ultimate web resources for tracking teams and players. Again, a web presence is a must. USA Ultimate sanctioned tournaments will have a basic website template ([example](#)) to convey information through. Continue to update it so that not just your contacts will have access to information, but the rest of their teams, as well as the remainder of the community. If you do a good enough job of communicating beforehand, you may decide you don't need an in-person captain's meeting. If you do decide to have a captain's meeting the morning of your tournament, keep it concise so that captains can get the information they need and then can get back to their teams.

As your tournament date gets closer, teams will expect to learn more about the competition – when they are playing, who they are playing against, and the competition format. If you are directing a USA Ultimate event (including sanctioned tournaments), they will also expect to receive a completed version of the Event Medical Plan which includes information about what medical services you will have available and how to access them as well as information about the closest medical facility, and the Inclement Weather Plan, which includes information about contingency plans. Templates for both of the above that you can download, complete, and distribute can be found [here](#).

Be professional in your communications and transactions with teams and organizers. Be proactive and responsive and make information available. Remember that you want athletes and teams to enjoy themselves at your tournament.

Scheduling

There are many things to consider when putting your final competition schedule together. Primary considerations for scheduling, including the assignment of fields, are efficiency and fairness.

Keep in mind that you want to provide a quality experience to your teams, and a big part of that involves the [competition schedule](#). You will want to have a good number of teams, meaningful games, and a sensible format. That means having enough teams to populate a division while not ending up with a number of teams that is unwieldy. It is important to take into consideration not only the number of fields that you have, but also how the number of teams will affect the schedule/format of games. Try not to end up with a number of teams that makes things awkward.

Once the final slate of teams is set, you will need to determine your format for each division. From there you will need to determine your schedule. At this point, you will need to know the number of fields with which you are working and how they are laid out. Create a preliminary field map so you will know where the fields are in relation to one another and your tournament central. Most teams will probably expect to play 5 to 7 games over a two-day tournament. Usually teams play fewer or the same amount of games on the second day of a tournament than they do on the first. Note that youth events have specific guidelines to help safely limit the amount of play (see [Special Considerations for Youth Tournaments and/or Youth Athletes Appendix](#)).

For tournament formats that aren't simply round-robin, you'll also want to seed your teams. An excellent resource for tournament formats and schedules, albeit one written for non-youth play and designed for USA Ultimate Series events, is the [Manual of Championships Series Tournament Formats](#). It, along with many other excellent organizer resources, can be found [here](#). For formats for youth events, USA Ultimate has authored some additional safety constraints with youth in mind. For formats for youth events, USA Ultimate has authored some [additional constraints](#) with safety in mind.

Try to keep the divisions grouped together on the fields. As the tournament progresses, perhaps you have the top teams on one portion of your fields and the remainder in another. Even in that circumstance, keep the stratified portions of the divisions together.

Minimize team movement between fields each day. Normally, a top seed in a pool does not move during pool play as the other teams come to their field. The second seed in a pool only leaves their field to play the top seed. If you have a mix of grass and turf fields, though, consider rotating teams through the fields to minimize individual teams' use of the turf fields. (Note: This advice originates from feedback from teams competing in hot and dry conditions when grass fields are in great shape, and may change in cooler and wetter conditions).

If you have showcase fields, you may need to move teams more than you would otherwise. Teams are usually accepting of this as they enjoy being showcased. Often your showcase fields will be your championship fields. Put these close by your tournament central or where there is seating. As you have fewer games toward the end of a day or at the end of your event, schedule those games on the fields closer to your tournament central. That will bring everyone closer to the amenities and vendors and allow your volunteers to clean the outlying fields.

Another important consideration in your field assignments is fairness in terms of gender and/or divisional equity. Unfortunately, there have been cases over the years where men/boys have been given better

fields than women/girls, and mixed and masters have also been given secondary consideration. Perhaps this has been because there are more men/boys teams, or that the event organizers were affiliated with that division. You can do better than that. If you have a multi-day tournament, with two divisions, swap the fields that the divisions are using each day. Do not relegate a division to fields that are far away or of lesser quality for the entire tournament. If you have a single-day event, you may have to make difficult choices, but be especially cognizant of treating genders equitably, and give consideration to divisions as well.

Teams competing against each other should play as identical schedules as possible. Have all of the pools play their games in the same order. Don't have A1 play 2 then 3 then 4 while D1 plays 4 then 2 then 3. Pool-play schedules do not all have to be exactly the same, especially if you will have byes in your schedule. That being said, if you are crossing over the A pool with D pool at the end of the day, try to have the A pool and the D pool have their games and byes at the same times. The only time that it is fair to have parallel games (games that lead to the same spot like a quarterfinal leads to a semifinal) at different times is if those games are the last games of the day for those teams. For example, at the USA Ultimate College and Club Nationals, the semifinals take place at different times, but the finals are the next day. Considerations around byes and scheduling fairness are outlined in detail in the [Manual of Championships Series Tournament Formats](#).

Give careful consideration to your scheduling. Remember that you want athletes and teams to enjoy themselves at your tournament. Get the right amount of teams for your site, seed them appropriately, and give them a fair and reasonable tournament format and schedule so that they will have the right amount of games and meaningful outcomes. Assign fields in a fair and balanced way while minimizing the movement of the teams during a day.

Equipment and Supplies

The following is a list of equipment and supplies you will want to consider utilizing for your event. The list is not exhaustive, but describes items that are either critical or can help enhance your event. You or your event staff will need to consider options for locating, renting and/or buying, and organizing these items.

Discs – Will you be supplying discs for the competition? Do you intend to offer discs for sale? Will you offer them as gifts for your volunteers? Discs, especially custom discs with your logo, will take more time than most supplies and equipment. Early on you should check with your source for discs to understand their ordering and delivery timeframes.

Cones – Coned fields will be the lowest expectation of your teams. Cones can be borrowed or easily purchased. Collapsible/safety cones are recommended.

Field Lining – Beyond cones, will your fields be lined? Does your field provider allow for the fields to be lined? Lining fields is recommended for all but the most casual events. Don't forget the brick marks and player and equipment lines, too. Consider where you will get paint or other lining materials appropriate for use on the fields. Discuss with your field provider. Fields can be lined very well and they can also be poorly done. Poorly lined fields (faint lines, wavy lines, distances that are off, angles that aren't correct)

are a waste of supply, labor, and time. Does your field provider offer lining services? If not, it may be worth the time and money to find some other professionals to line your fields, otherwise this can be a difficult and time-consuming task for volunteers in the days ahead of your tournament. Port-a-fields are another option for getting fields lined relatively easily, but they do require an initial investment. Please see the Field Lining Appendix for more detailed tips on field lining.

Scoreboards – Will you be providing scoreboards for each field? At the very least you will want to have large-sized printouts of your pools/bracket in a central area that you update round-by-round. The large sized printouts should also include a large version of your field map. Flip scoreboards for fields can be purchased online. Schedules and field maps can be printed by sign-making companies on vinyl banners, which are a good idea because they are portable and weather-proof.

Horns – How will you communicate round start and end times? Most use air horns. These can often be found at sporting goods and boat supply stores. Be sure you have back-ups. Consider noise ordinances, depending on where you are. Ensure your field site allows your chosen method.

Bathroom Facilities – Does your field location already have built in bathrooms? Are they conveniently located for all of the fields? Are there enough? A good rule of thumb is one toilet per 60 persons at your tournament. You may need to arrange for porta-johns. If you rent these and have a multiple day tournament, have them cleaned before your teams arrive each morning. Most tournament directors will also have a backup supply of toilet paper on hand just in case. You might consider hand washing stations or hand sanitizer as well.

Golf Carts – Think of them as utility carts and don't rent the golf ones that are designed to carry golf bags. If you have need of them, perhaps to help distribute cones, water, yourself, the trainer, etc., get the cargo-hauling type or perhaps the convertible kind that either seat four or can fold the seats down to carry equipment. Consider the advantages/disadvantages of gas versus electric. If your electric cart dies, you are down a cart until it can be recharged. A gas cart can be refilled, but you will need to plan on being able to get extra gas. Except in the case of very small field sites, it is highly recommended that you have a cart prioritized for your medical staff so they can quickly respond to injuries and be able to transport injured individuals.

Radios – You may need to communicate over a large space with your field volunteers. How will they report injuries on fields back to the trainers? If your tournament is large, it's recommended that you obtain walkie-talkies. Walkie-talkies, outside of a public address system, are a very efficient way of communicating with many people at once. This is especially helpful for routine things like clarifying timing horn calls, but also for more emergent situations like rising winds or lightning delays. If you do plan to use radios, be sure that they are charged for each day and on the same channel. Have backup batteries and/or the ability to quickly charge them available. Alternatively, cell phones can be used to communicate individually or to a group of volunteers, via text or similar applications. If you choose to use cell phones, be sure that phone numbers are collected and distributed. If you plan to use a group texting application, be sure that everyone has that application and knows how to use it. Regardless, be sure you have a plan, the equipment, and the know-how for communication around your field site.

Water – You need to make sure that your teams can stay hydrated. Water, like bathrooms, should be plentiful and conveniently located. Ultimate players drink a lot of water. In terms of quantities, a good rule of thumb is 5 gallons of water per round per team. This can vary greatly depending on the weather, the size of the teams, and the level of competition, so just use this as a starting point. Be sure that you

have a plan for getting more purchased and distributed should your supply of water get consumed faster than you anticipated.

Water is heavy and is often distributed in utility carts. If you will be using coolers, be sure that they start clean and are kept that way. It is recommended that you use 5-10 gallon water coolers, which can be refilled throughout the event if there is a potable water source on site. While teams like to have these coolers on their sidelines, it is often more efficient to set up water stations that are shared by multiple fields. This keeps water tables, utility carts, and crowds safely away from sidelines, while also making checking and refilling coolers more manageable. Try to make sure water is only a short distance from any sideline, preferably not more than a field distance away.

If you do not have a potable water source on site, you may have to purchase your water. Try to get larger containers (e.g. 5-gallon jugs) both for efficiency in distribution, but also to reduce trash. Other options include getting a water sponsor, or renting an emergency service water tank. These usually hold several hundred gallons of water, so keep in mind that you will need a truck and a water source to fill it. If you go this route, be sure that the tank has been kept clean and is used for potable water.

Ice – You will want to have ice available at least for your medical staff. If you cannot get ice at your field site, find out where you can get it and be sure to check on their hours. Not every store is open when you might wish to buy ice early in the morning. You will also need ice chests/coolers to store the ice. If your tournament will be in very hot weather, you might also supply additional ice to teams and/or to your water crew to cool the water. Many tournament directors/volunteer coordinators will also keep drinks on ice for the volunteer crew. Another alternative to buying ice at a store is to rent an ice cooler/trailer and purchase a large quantity of ice through an ice company. Often the trailer/cooler rental will be provided along with the service.

Trash and Recycling – You will need a plan in place to handle all trash. Are there bins at your fields? Do you need to supply bags? Like toilet paper, many tournament directors will have a supply of garbage bags on hand just in case. Will you need to collect the trash and recycling or will your field provider take care of it? Do you need to arrange for larger dumpsters to collect the trash and recycling? You may need to rent these and arrange for their pickup and delivery. It is recommended that you have trash cans near each field, if not on each sideline, and place recycling and trash bins in pairs, with clear labels on each. Lone recycling bins will quickly turn into trash bins. Explore partnerships with local recycling companies who can help provide recycling resources, if the local waste management company does not. Events can generate a lot of waste, and as an organizer, you have the capacity and the responsibility to help minimize that waste.

Tents, Tables, and Chairs – These are often rented from the same company so they are grouped together. Consider what you need. You may want some of these for headquarters, volunteer lounge, player lounge, medical, massage, merchandisers, sponsors, concessions, sidelines (team areas and scorekeepers/field marshals), water stations, parking staff, etc. When considering your tent order, be sure to consult with the field provider about where the tents can go and how they can be secured (stakes/weights). The last thing you want is to be responsible for irrigation, power, or sewage lines being damaged. Also, be sure to talk with your facility provider about your tent setup and to what extent you can avoid having your equipment soaked if the fields are watered at night.

Deliveries and Setup – Many of the items listed above will need to be delivered to the field site and you or a designee will need to be on hand to accept delivery and place the items appropriately. For example

porta-johns and tents need to be set up in the proper places (and, again, you need to make sure that tents are staked/weighted properly). Be sure you've thought out a plan and put together a map that can be used by you and others for reference. Utility carts need to be signed for and then can be used to help with your setup. They also need to be parked and secured in a safe spot, with keys accounted for and secured.

This is also a good time to take a final inventory of all of your supplies. Once your fields are lined, you can place cones, scoreboards, water stations, signage, and other equipment. If your facility is secure and no weather complications are predicted, you may even choose to leave some or all of this in place overnight before (and/or) during your tournament. While you are placing the cones and other equipment, whether before or during your tournament, inspect the fields with safety in mind. Double-check again that all tents are staked/weighted properly. If you have pop-up tents field-side, it is a good idea to have them taken down or lowered overnight since you won't be able to monitor the weather and take action as easily as you can during the day. As always, better safe than sorry. If you have overnight security, be sure to meet with that person to review your expectations and their end time the next morning.

Basic Supplies – General tools such as hammers, screw-drivers, zip-ties, scissors, tape measure, etc. and office supplies such as paper, pens, scissors, correction tape, etc. are helpful to have handy. So, too, are garbage bags, sun-screen, and extra toilet paper. You may also need to provide some basic first aid supplies for your medical staff (they sometimes request to be provided with pre-wrap and tape for the parade of ankles they will see each morning).

The above paragraphs list a lot of various kinds of supplies and equipment. You may need some or all of it and you may need even more. You will need to think about how all of these supplies are getting to your tournament, how they will be safely stored during the tournament, and how they will get returned after. Many borrow or rent trucks, vans, or the like to take care of this.

Contingencies

Preparation is the key to success. Think about what might happen during your tournament and how you will deal with it should it occur.

A team may not show up to play. Be prepared for that contingency by knowing what format and schedule you will use should one team not show up, for two teams, etc. Tell teams that you want them to be present and ready to play even if they thought they were scheduled for a first round bye under your original format.

You should similarly consider what you will do should you find that some subset of your fields are rendered unplayable for whatever reason. Consider how you can consolidate your event onto fewer fields. That may require shortening your rounds.

Weather may require shortening your schedule. That can be done in multiple ways. Round times can be shortened. Other rounds could be removed completely while still crowning a champion and determining other places. For example, many sixteen team formats with four pools of four call for a

crossover or pre-quarters round of second versus third place finishers in each pool. This round could be eliminated. If needed you could go further and go directly to semifinals for 1st, 5th, 9th, and 13th.

Should lightning occur, what should people do? For many events, players can go to their cars. For others, especially those that provide shuttles, identify structures where people can go to be safe. Be sure to communicate that plan. USA Ultimate's Lightning Guidelines can be found [online](#).

Be prepared for as many contingencies as you can. If you have thought through possibilities ahead of time, you will be better able to adapt to circumstances. You will be ready to provide solutions to problems and keep your customers happy.

PART 3: PRODUCTION – MAKING IT HAPPEN

During Your Tournament

The following portions of this manual will deal with the execution of your vision for your tournament during the tournament itself. Some themes will continue: safety and communication. Others may become necessary: adaptation and problem solving. Remember you are the host and it is your responsibility to see that your guests (teams, vendors, sponsors, etc.) are having the experiences they are expecting. You will need to start your efforts early in the morning, before the teams arrive.

Pre-Game

Arrival – Be sure that you and any key staff arrive early at the field site. How early will depend in part on how much you were able to get done on prior days, how much you were able to leave set up, and how much set-up is left. Expect that players will begin to arrive one to one and a half hours before game time, or possibly earlier for more competitive events. You want to be ready for them when they get there. Early birds are likely to be looking for a trainer, bathrooms, food and water, and information about where they are supposed to go. Be sure these items are ready, and that there is someone available to answer questions. Give yourself plenty of time. An extra 15 minutes of time to prep is going to be more valuable than an extra 15 minutes of sleep, so get there early. That said, be sure that you also get some sleep the night before, and that you get a good breakfast and have snacks and drinks available for staff in the morning (many early workers will appreciate coffee).

Volunteers/staff – If you have even one other staff person, be sure to coordinate with them so that you are on the same page. Make sure that all of your staff know what you expect from them. Empower them to see to their tasks and make sure they know how to communicate about tasks outside of their purview. Communicate with them about whether or not you expect them to take initiative or to defer to you or other senior staff. If you have already taken care of this with a meeting or meetings before your event, so much the better. If not take the time to do this early (before your teams arrive) the first morning of your tournament. Make sure that they are aware of both the Event Medical and Inclement Weather plans so that they are prepared to assist in injury and weather situations. Be sure to distribute any contact information or equipment you will be using to communicate with your team. Depending on the size of your volunteer staff, this may require a meeting or meetings. For larger events, you may meet with your senior staff separately and entrust them with the responsibility to greet and train your other volunteers.

Safety Inspection – As mentioned previously, it is important that you inspect your fields and other places that your tournament will utilize to make sure that they are safe. Many tournaments are held on fields commonly used for other sports. Be sure that any equipment like soccer goals or things used to anchor them are properly removed from your field areas. Look for broken glass and/or other hazards on and around your fields. Double-check to see that tents are properly staked or weighted. Make sure that any bathroom and other facilities that you will be using are unlocked and stocked, for example, with toilet paper. The safety inspection is not a one-time or even a daily morning chore. It needs to be a state of mind for the duration of your tournament. With that in mind, be sure that your carts are used safely throughout the tournament. They should only be driven by your designated volunteers (these should be licensed drivers who are unimpaired), only for tournament purposes, and only in proper areas. Make sure your cart operators know what you expect by having them review and/or sign a utility cart operator agreement (see example document in Appendices).

Status Check – Having everything in place and ready before the athletes start to arrive makes a good impression and does not happen by accident. Some items to consider:

- Key Volunteers – Have they arrived and are they on task?
- Parking – If there is anything you need to do to facilitate this from signage to personnel, be sure that it is done and ready.
- Other Volunteers – Have they arrived and are they being welcomed and instructed? Later, are they in place for the start of competition?
- Medical – Ensure your medical staff is in place. Be sure that they understand your communication expectations and have any equipment that they might need (field maps/event guides/radios/contact information). Provide them with any documentation you might want them to have for you at the end of your tournament such as, for USA Ultimate events, [Participant Accident Claim Forms](#)).
- Water – Is it where you want it to be?
- Fields – Are they ready? Are cones placed? Scoreboards? Are any tents, tables, and/or chairs that are supposed to be field-side in place?
- Discs – If you are using specific game discs, are they ready to be distributed?
- Other materials for field-side volunteers – Are radios, score-keeping equipment (paper, pen, binder or clipboard) ready to be distributed? How about other items they might need like snacks, drinks, and sunscreen?
- Food – If you are providing any food for the athletes, is it ready to be distributed?
- Vendors – Make sure that they know where you want them to set up and how to get in touch with you.

Teams – As the teams arrive, try to be as accessible to them as your other responsibilities allow. Try to meet and greet the people who have been your contacts leading up to your tournament. This should be especially emphasized if you are not having a captain's meeting. If teams can easily see for themselves where HQ, medical, bathrooms, and vendors are, there is less need for a meeting. As mentioned previously, you have already sent them the Medical and Weather Plans so they are already informed about what to do when those contingencies arise. If you still choose to have a captain's meeting, you should have some other information to convey or objectives to achieve (distributing food or other materials for example) and you should remember to keep your meeting brief and efficient.

The preceding paragraphs dealt mostly with the timeframe of the first morning of your tournament. Many are to be repeated each morning and some, like safety, are constant throughout. This is an important time to make sure that everything is in place and as you want it. After your months of planning, this is when you get to see the realization of your tournament as you want it to be. Be attentive to the details and have everything in place when your athletes arrive. Make that first in-person impression as positive as can be.

During Games

It is always a rewarding moment when you hear the horn to signal the start of play at the tournament you have put in so much effort to bring to that point. While there is still work to be done, the initial pulls often bring relieved sighs from experienced tournament directors. Barring the unforeseen, your hardest work is now behind you and you may even be able to enjoy moments of the ultimate competition for which you have been working. That being said, there are still items that will require your attention.

Horns – Most tournaments will run to the sound of horns. Games will begin, and be capped, by blasts from air horns. It is a good practice to echo these horn announcements over your radio, PA, and/or whatever other method you might have of communicating with your volunteers as it is for them to relay the announcements to the teams. Delegate this duty if you can, perhaps to a competition coordinator, or at least have a back-up, in case you get pulled away. Set reminder alarms. Run your tournament on time. Your teams will appreciate it.

Score Collection – As games conclude, scores should be reported and posted both onsite and online. Athletes that are at your tournament will want to follow the action, as will all of those not able to attend in person. Post the results as accurately and quickly as possible. If you have multiple divisions, alternate the order in which you post results or update brackets. After pool play, update the standings in the pools. Between pool and bracket play can be a stressful time for your headquarters scorekeeping team, especially if there are teams in the same pool with the same won/loss record. Because this can be an uncertain time for teams who do not necessarily know their next game time, field, and opponent, many tournament directors will build in an extra 15 minutes between these portions of their tournaments. This additional time allows for games to conclude, scores to be reported, standings to be updated, brackets to be filled out, and for teams to make their way to headquarters to learn where and when their next games are before moving. Be consistent in the way that you are reporting scores and communicating about teams and games. Mention which division you are reporting on for all games. If you don't do this, it may appear that the division that you don't name is the primary division at your event and the other(s) that you need to specify are somehow secondary or lesser. It is important to break ties properly and consistently. USA Ultimate tie breaking procedures can be found in the [Tournament Formats Manual](#). During bracket play, advance teams through the brackets. Don't forget to also fill in the teams for any consolation or placement play.

Monitor – Throughout each day, you are still the gracious host for your guests. You need to be checking to make sure that your senior staffers have what they need to be doing their jobs. You need to make sure that water is being distributed and scores, trash, and recycling are being collected. Make sure to give all of your divisions the same level of service and attention. Don't make anyone feel secondary by focusing your attention on any one group. You need to periodically check in with your medical team and your vendors as well. Checking in frequently won't give problems a chance to fester and grow worse. The sooner you know about an issue the sooner you can address it. Be available, presentable, and approachable so that people feel comfortable approaching you with issues as well.

Pause and Reflect – Take a few moments each day of your tournament to enjoy the ultimate and reflect about the journey you have taken to make your tournament happen. This is amongst the finest of rewards for your efforts and memories of these moments will likely last longer than any profit your tournament might generate. These moments are also helpful when needing to put together any thoughts about your tournament and any awards ceremonies you might have for your teams or for the celebratory thank you dinner (or the like) that you should have for your collaborators.

This is also a chance to take a step back from all the specific tasks you've been dealing with to see the event from a different perspective. Be sure to get around to all the different areas of the event. Does it look and feel like you envisioned? Take some notes and mental snapshots of things you like and things that you think you might change going forward. Check in with partners, team captains, and facilities staff. Spending a few minutes together while the event is in progress is a great way to continue to build relationships for the future.

Flexibility – You and/or your competition coordinator may be approached by teams with requests to modify the schedule or change some other aspect of the event. Think about their requests and be sure to consider not just the teams making the request, but also the other teams that might be impacted. A common example is teams asking to play a game earlier than it was scheduled. You will want to consider if allowing them to start earlier will give them more rest than their opponents in their subsequent games. If you do not have a competition coordinator, it is a good idea to discuss these requests with an experienced staff person.

Conduct Issues – The summary of the [USA Ultimate Conduct Policy](#) states, “USA Ultimate expects all players to treat one another with respect, and to be truthful and considerate in their dealings within the organization and the greater ultimate community. These standards of conduct are maintained by the strong tradition of etiquette and sportsmanship within the ultimate community, and by good-faith resolutions of disputes among the parties involved.”

Should inappropriate behavior occur during your tournament, you will need to deal with it appropriately. USA Ultimate has a Conduct Policy to help you to understand how to do that. Conduct issues can take numerous forms including, but not limited to: abusive heckling, deliberate fouling, cheating, reckless or dangerous behavior (on or off of the field), and breaking tournament site rules. You, as the tournament director, are an “Acting Disciplinary Authority” under the Conduct Policy. Pursuant to that, you are charged with decision making regarding conduct at and during your tournament (you may not be the only Acting Disciplinary Authority at your event, especially if you are running a USA Ultimate Championship event such as a state championship or part of a national championship series). Investigate efficiently to the best of your ability before taking action. Then make your decision. As an/the Acting Disciplinary Authority at your tournament, you are empowered to enforce sanctions up to, but not limited to, the ejection of a player or team from a game or tournament.

If your event has observers, they are empowered to handle in-game misconduct, per the Misconduct System in the [Observer Manual](#). The Head Observer should be kept in the loop about issues during observed games, and any issues you become aware of as the TD. Be sure the TD, Competition Coordinator (e.g., USA Ultimate coordinator), Head Observer, and Spirit Director are communicating regularly about potential issues, as well as regarding decision making about issues that do arise.

If you are collecting spirit scores at the event, this can be another way to become aware of, and get ahead of, conduct issues. Try to review scores and comments as they come in, and certainly review them at the end of the day. Once aware of potential issues, find the appropriate way to communicate with the players or teams involved, both to learn more and to find the appropriate solution.

When issues do arise, and when warnings or sanctions are issued, it is critical to communicate clearly and respectfully with the affected players or teams. Be sure everyone understands the expectations, avenues for communication, and potential or actual consequences.

Prepare – You should be thinking ahead to the evening activities and making sure that all of the pieces are in place for those. They might include a meal or a social aspect of your tournament, and daily cleanup, if your tournament is multiple days. You should think about items you may want to bring up at a staff meeting to thank and check-in with your key staff members. You should take inventory of your supplies again to make sure that you will have on hand what you will need for any subsequent days. Perhaps there is shopping to be done for food packs for subsequent days as well. You should not do this during the competition hours. If it needs to be done then, you should have someone else take care of it so that you can stay on site ready to deal with any situations that might arise. You can often start doing some clean-up before the end of games.

The preceding paragraphs dealt mostly with the timeframe of during play of your tournament. Communication continues to be key. You need to be checking in with your staff as well as your guests. Make sure that you continue to run your tournament on time and that your staff has things well in hand. Take action should inappropriate conduct take place. Take the time to reflect, to enjoy the present moment, and to think ahead.

Post-Game

As teams wrap up games, they will head out to get clean and get food. You and your team still have some work to do before you can leave for the night. Be sure to prepare yourself and your staff mentally and physically for the post-game work, as you have to get set up for the next day.

Cleanup – Even though you expect to be back the next day, you should leave the fields in good shape before you leave each night. This clean-up can, and should, start before the end of the day. At the end of the day, however, have enough volunteer help to trash or compost the stray banana peels, to recycle the sports drink bottles, and to bring in stray items to your lost and found.

What can you do earlier to make this easier? Having your trash/recycling volunteers distribute bags to teams to police their own sidelines is a big time-saver. Also, many tournaments are smaller during the last rounds each day (championship games on the final day and showcase or crossover games on earlier days). Task volunteers to police the unused fields late in the day so that it does not need to be done at the end of the day. If you have pop-up tents field-side, it is a good idea to have them taken down or lowered overnight since you won't be able to monitor the weather and take action as easily as you can during the day.

Storage and Security – Your cleanup crew can also pick up other items if you aren't able to leave them out overnight. That can include cones, scoreboards, or other field-side items. Be sure that those items get to where they need to be so that they are secured for the night. If you have overnight security, be sure to meet with that person to review your expectations and their end time the next morning.

Evening Review – Make sure that you or someone from your senior staff is thanking volunteers as they leave for the day. If you have gifts for your volunteers and they won't be back again, see that those are being distributed. Even if it is just for a few minutes, gather your senior staff for a quick review round-table to make sure that everything is going well and/or to determine what you might be able to improve

upon for the next day(s). Be sure that all understand the timeline (arrival through departure) for the following day.

Social Events – If you're having a social event, it's important to have a reliable and responsible staff person assigned to make sure it goes smoothly, to be a point of contact for your partners and staff, and to let you know of any major issues. Maybe you'll get a chance to attend and relax a little yourself, but because there is often a lot to do at the fields to wrap up, and a lot to do the next morning, do your best to hand off this part of the event if you can.

The preceding paragraphs dealt mostly with the timeframe of after daily play at your tournament. You want to leave the fields in good shape. It makes a good impression on your field provider, neighbors, and anyone else in the area. Make sure that everything is secured (behind a lock and/or under guard) before you leave for the night. Conduct a review with your team and make adjustments as necessary. Make sure that everyone is on the same page for the coming day(s).

Last Day

Subsequent days of your event will be very much like the first day. Barring the extraordinary, you shouldn't need a captain's meeting on any day after the first. That being said, there are additional things to consider for the last day that will be a little different.

Fields and Lines – If you had painted lines and brick marks on your fields, are they fading? Consider refreshing them, especially for championship fields. If your tournament will have showcased games, often finals, with few or no other games happening at the same time, they will likely draw crowds. You should consider refreshing not just the field lines and marks, but also the player and equipment lines. The equipment lines can serve as a boundary for the crowds. Again, this is a safety consideration, for both the players in the games and the spectators. You have thought ahead and your championship field(s) are scheduled to be close to your headquarters and vendors, but, if the championship field is in worse condition than others, you need to consider relocating it to a better field. Again, safety needs to be your primary consideration.

Sponsors, Awards, and Public Address – For any sponsors you might have, you may also want to consolidate signage around your championship field(s). If you are giving awards at your tournament or even just getting team pictures, try to increase the value your sponsors are getting by having those pictures taken with their branding visible. Do the same for your own brand. Regarding awards, try to have them ready to be presented very quickly at the conclusion of the championship game(s). Once the final goal has been caught, crowds head for their cars very quickly.

If you have a public address system for the final game, use it to let people know that you will be giving out awards. Any that can be done at half-time of the championship game should be. This is also an excellent time to recognize your sponsors. Be sure to also thank your key collaborators and all of the volunteers. Many tournament directors will encourage the spectators to show their appreciation for the volunteers' efforts not just with applause, but also by their efforts to leave the fields clean. If you know you will be holding your event again next year, sell it! Perhaps offer free or discounted entry to next year's tournament to this year's champions.

Medical and Vendors – Be sure to get medical reports and any other paperwork that you wanted your medical team to prepare. Also check in with any vendors and thank them for partnering with your event. If you have made financial arrangements with them, get updated forecasts/projections and, if not too early, finalize those.

Cleanup – The cleanup on the final day is much like the earlier version, but this time more complete as everything needs to be collected and prepared for storage and/or return. For this reason, be sure that you have adequate staff to help with this. You will likely need to break down any tables and chairs and stack them neatly for collection. Make sure that you have the room in vehicles to take everything away from the fields. Be sure that any borrowed items are with their owner(s) or with someone that can return them. The same goes for any rental equipment that needs to be returned (if not getting picked up like tents, porta-johns, carts, etc.).

The “Campsite Rule” refers to leaving things in the best condition possible. Apply this to your cleanup, and not just to the field site. Clean your borrowed items and repair any damage you might have caused. If you cannot repair, be sure to disclose the damage and discuss possible remedies with the owner. This is all about responsibility. Even if you don’t ever plan on having another tournament, leave a positive impression of you and, by extension, the sport of ultimate.

Staff Dinner – Show your appreciation to your senior staff, and perhaps sponsors, vendors, or other key collaborators by treating them to a celebratory dinner the final evening of your tournament. The dinner doesn’t need to be expensive, but try to have a private room or a large table just for your group. This will better facilitate group discussion and allow you to be heard when you toast the partners that you could not have made the event happen without. This can also be an opportunity to gather feedback and, if you are planning another event, a chance to get early commitments to help.

The preceding paragraphs dealt mostly with the timeframe of the final day of play at your tournament. Finish strong and leave a good final impression with your customers. Like prior days, you want to leave the fields in the best shape possible. Make sure that everything is packed or otherwise prepared for return/retrieval. Take your key contributors out for a nice meal to express your appreciation and to discuss the tournament.

PART 4: POST-EVENT: WRAPPING IT UP

After Your Tournament

The following portions of this manual will focus on the final tasks of your tournament, those that need to be completed immediately after it ends. Common themes of this portion will be the collection and evaluation of feedback and expressing your gratitude.

Equipment Return and Payments – Be sure to pay attention to closing out the final details of your relationships with those who may have rented or loaned items to you. Be prompt and professional in

your dealings with these merchants. As stated before, disclose any damage that may have occurred and make whatever payments you might owe on time if not before.

Vendors – Even if you were able to thank your vendors in person before the end of your tournament, thank them again after for partnering. Talk to them about final sales data and whether they enjoyed themselves. Check in with them on when you might receive any commission or other payment due. They have likely been to many tournaments and other events, so ask them about the tournament and for ideas and constructive criticism.

Partners – Talk to other partners and prioritize your field provider. These were key relationships for your tournament. Find out how the weekend was for them. Is your field provider pleased with the condition and cleanliness of the fields? Are your sponsors pleased with the exposure or sales that they got from the tournament? Again, ask them for ideas and constructive criticisms. Start and end these conversations by expressing your appreciation.

Staff and Volunteers – Be sure to express your gratitude again to your staff and volunteers. Hopefully you or your volunteer coordinator have already distributed whatever gifts you had to these folks, but, if not, try to get those distributed soon after. If you have other items to distribute, such as any leftover merchandise that you aren't going to try to sell, consider sharing with your staff. Be sure to get feedback from your staff as well.

Teams and Athletes – In conversations with others, you have collected a lot of feedback, but do not overlook the need to thank and get feedback from your paying customers, the athletes and teams that competed in your tournament. Many tournaments gather feedback with internet survey tools (e.g., SurveyMonkey, Google Forms). USA Ultimate sanctioned events include access to feedback gathered with an internet survey tool. These are valuable for identifying trends in the feedback from a large number of teams and or athletes.

Evaluation – You have collected a lot of feedback. Be sure to evaluate it. How did things go? Are there elements that folks really liked? What are some key areas that could have been done better? How did the tournament do financially? Did it meet or exceed your projections? If not, where and why did it fall short? How do you feel after running your tournament? If you haven't already announced your plan to run or not to run the tournament again the next year, now that you have evaluated the feedback and finances, it is time to make that decision. Before you announce you will hold the event again, be sure to speak with your key partners and staff members so that you will have your fields and personnel.

Finish your tournament the way you started, in a professional and considered way. First impressions last, but so too do final ones. Finish strong and leave yourself well positioned should you decide that you are ready to do it again. Even if you know you won't do it again, finish strong for the sake of the local ultimate organization or others that might come after you.

APPENDICES

Budget Expense Categories

Event Expenses	
Facilities	
	Fields
	Stadium
	Staff Meeting space
Rental Equipment	
	Golf carts
	PA system
	Porta johns
	Radios
	Tables/Chairs/Tent
	Bleachers
	Trash/Recycling
	Video set-up requirements
	Water coolers/Ice chests
	Storage truck
	Trailer
	Generator
Labor	
	Medical
	EMT
	Trainers
	Observers
	Police/Security
	Field Lining and Supplies
	Logo design
	Website
	Shuttle Service
	Event Management
Staff Travel	
	Lodging
	Air
	Auto
Food and Water	
	Water
	Food
	-Participant
	-Staff
Awards/Gifts	
	Trophies and Prizes
	Trophies
	Medals

	Discs
	SOTG Prizes
	Player Packs
	Staff Gifts/Discs/Shirts
Supplies	
	Cones
	Ice
	Office supplies
	Shipping/Postage
	Scoreboards
	Game discs
	Medical supplies
	Observer supplies
	Trash/Recycling Supplies
	Miscellaneous
	Phone
Merchandise	
	Discs
	Other
Printing	
	Event Guide
	Advertising
Social Events	
	Facilities
	Equipment
	Food/Beverages
	Supplies

Equipment and Supplies Checklist

- Discs
 - Competition
 - Merchandise
 - Gifts
- Cones
- Field Lines
 - Paint and lining equipment OR
 - Portable fields and staples to hold them down
- Scoreboards
 - Central scoreboard and map
 - Field scoreboards
- Horns
- Toilets
 - Portable toilets
 - Toilet paper
 - Sinks and/or Hand Sanitizer
- Utility Carts
- Radios
 - Chargers
 - Batteries
- Water
 - Coolers
 - Water source
- Ice
 - Coolers
 - Bags
- Trash, Recycling, Composting
 - Bins
 - Bags
 - Dumpsters
- Tents
- Tables
- Chairs
- Storage space
- Basics
 - Hammer
 - Screwdrivers
 - Zip-ties
 - Scissors
 - Tape measure
 - Paper
 - Pens
 - Scissors
 - Sun screen
- First aid kit and/or other medical supplies

Volunteer Roles and Descriptions

Note: This does not include primary Volunteer positions, which are outlined in the Event Staff section of Part 2 of the main document.

Role	Description/Duties	Timeframe	Suggested # of people
Field Lining	Measure/lay out corners; paint – <u>Note: This should be included in facility agreement or hired out if at all possible.</u>	2-3 days before event (plan to finish 1 full day before event)	4-6
Player Packs	Assembly and organization of participant/volunteer packs	0-1 days before event	4-10
Pre-Event Field Setup	Put up signage, cones, tents/tables/chairs, etc.	1 or 2 days before	2-6
Daily Field Setup	Put up tents, cones, signage, PA, other daily prep activities	2-3 hours before game time	2-6
Daily Field Breakdown	Take down tents, clean up trash, move equipment/supplies	1 hour before end of last game til done (~1-2 hours post-game)	2-6
Water Cart	Keep water stations filled with coolers of water/ice; use utility carts (must be 16 with driver's license); involves heavy lifting	2 hours before game time through end of games	2-4 (1-2 carts)
Trash/Recycling	Monitor trash and recycling receptacles; clean up sidelines and other areas; empty receptacles as needed; sort as needed into dumpsters. Note: some facilities provide staff for trash/recycling	1 hour before game time through end of day cleanup	1-2 (can often be same as water; use same carts)
Scorekeepers	Keep game score and player statistics; report live scores; report injuries; eyes and ears on each field for issues	45 minutes before game time through end of games	2 per field
Dinner/Social	Help with setup/breakdown as needed; control access/take tickets; assist Social Coordinator; communicate with participants and caterers/vendors	1 or more hours before dinner/social through end of dinner/social	1-3 (depends on caterer, venue, and service plan)
Extra/Miscellaneous	Available for random duties (e.g. run to store) or as backup for missing volunteer	Variable	Variable

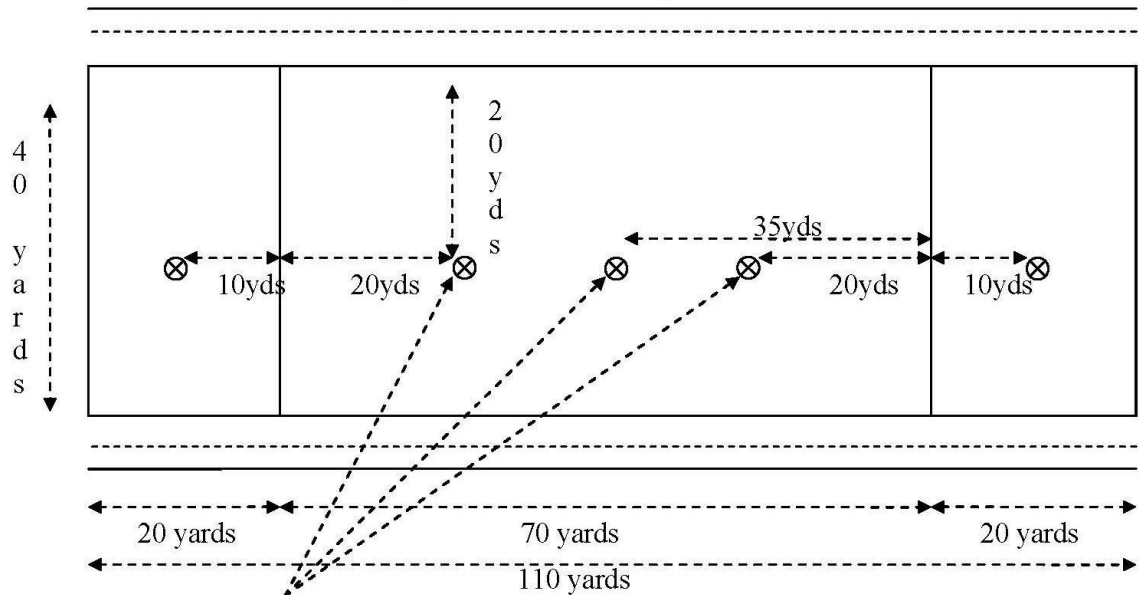
Field Lining

ULTIMATE FIELD LAYOUT

(with penalty marks, sideline buffers, 20 yard endzones)

Equipment line – solid line 3-5 yards off sideline

Player line – dashed line 2-3 yards off sideline



Brick and Penalty Marks – approximately 1 foot x 1 foot “X” with a circle around it

- Leave a minimum of 5 yards of buffer space beyond the back of end zones, and 10 yards to anything that might be dangerous to players.
- Remember that if you are putting another field with a parallel sideline to actually leave room for equipment between the equipment lines. 4 yards is a good minimum as it allows for the placement of 10' x 10' pop-up tents.

Example of a Utility Cart Operator Agreement

USA Ultimate Utility Cart Operator Agreement

In order to minimize the possibilities of both injuries and damage to property, utility carts at USA Ultimate events need to be operated in a safe and responsible manner.

- Operators must be licensed drivers
- Operators must be 18 years or older
- Operator must not allow others to drive carts unless they have also executed a copy of this agreement
- Operators must be completely sober and may not consume alcohol while assigned a cart
- Operator must remain seated and keep arms and legs inside the vehicle while moving and must insist that passengers do likewise as operator is responsible for the safety of any passengers
- Operator will ensure that cart is not overloaded with people and/or cargo
- Operator will ensure that the cart is only operated when passengers and/or cargo are safely loaded onto the cart
- Operator will use discretion in regards to speed taking into account the terrain, conditions, presence of pedestrians and other traffic, and the load of the cart
- Realizing that carts are subject to rolling over, operator will drive slowly through turns and on slopes on which they will drive directly up or down rather than diagonally
- Operator will give pedestrians the right of way
- Operator will utilize horns, lights, and turn signals appropriately
- Operator will apply the brake and put cart in neutral whenever exiting the cart
- Operator will minimize the amount of driving on actual playing surfaces
- Operator will maintain possession of cart key(s) while assigned cart
- Operator will return cart per the instructions of senior event staff while not utilizing cart
- Operator will also follow any site specific rules for cart usage

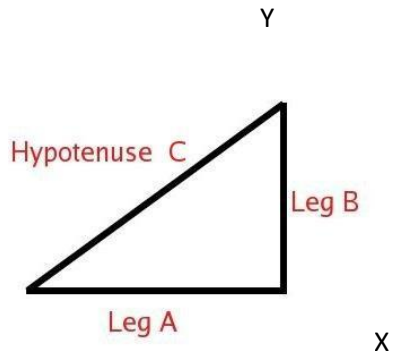
I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the above Utility Cart Operator Agreement.

Operator Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Operator Signature: _____

Instructions for properly putting down corners, brick marks, and lining fields

The field measurements are listed in the previous [Field Lining appendix](#). Here is a methodology for laying out your ultimate field with accurate right angles. It makes use of the Pythagorean Theorem: $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ or $3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$ or $9^2 + 12^2 = 25^2$ where A and B are the shorter legs of a right triangle (along the sideline/backline) and C is the longer leg (hypotenuse).



1. Start at the back corner of the end zone (X). Run a long string along the entire length of either the sideline or the backline you want to use as the starting point for your field. This may depend on what is constraining your field (fence, sidewalk, trees, etc.). Be sure of course to provide the required buffer space for this first line.
2. Run a tape measure along the string from the starting corner and make a mark with spray paint at 9 feet (3 yards) (Y).
3. Run a tape measure out from the same starting corner, along what you think is about the line where you will run the perpendicular sideline/backline. With the end of the tape measure secured at the corner, find the 12 foot (4 yard) mark on the tape and, holding the paint can at the mark and the tape tight, make a small (~1 foot) arc with the paint in the vicinity of where you think the line will go through. The bigger the arc, the more room for error.
4. Anchor the tape measure at the 9ft/3yd mark (Y) on the first sideline/backline and run the tape measure out 15 feet (5 yards) towards the arc you just made in step 3. Find the point where the 15 foot mark intersects the arc (Z). Mark that point. That is the point through which you should run the string so that it is perpendicular to the original string line.
5. Check your work:
 - a. End zone diagonals should be 44 yards, 2 feet, and 1.92 inches
 - b. Playing field proper (goal line to goal line) diagonals should be 80 yards, 1 foot, and 10.32 inches
 - c. Entire field diagonals should be 117 yards and 1.8 inches
 - d. Brick marks should be 28 yard and 10.08 inches from the front end zone cones
 - e. Reverse brick marks should be 22 yards, 1 foot, and 0.96 inch from the end zone cones
 - f. Mid-field mark should be 40 yards and 11.16 inches from the front end zone cones

Key Links on USA Ultimate website

The guidelines below include the crucial Health Safety and Liability Requirements and also additional links with guidelines used by USA Ultimate championship event organizers.

Guidelines for [Hosting a USA Ultimate Event](#)

- It is the goal of USA Ultimate that its events set the standard for high quality ultimate events both in the United States and throughout the world. The following set of guidelines serves both as a resource and an outline of expectations for event organizers who are hosting high school state tournaments, college conference and regional tournaments, and club sectional and regional tournaments. Note that the requirements and benefits vary depending on the type of event you are hosting. Event organizers will be working with a volunteer USA Ultimate coordinator to plan and manage these [events](#).
- [Benefits](#)
- [Competition Requirements](#)
- [Organizer Health and Safety Requirements](#)
- [Organizational Requirements](#)
- [Provisions and Amenities](#)
- [Team and Player Registration](#)

Event organizers hosting USA Ultimate championships will be working directly with USA Ultimate headquarters staff to plan and manage those events, using specific guidelines laid out in the bid documents and contracts for those events.

[Tournament Sanctioning](#) includes information about making your event an officially Sanctioned USA Ultimate event. It includes information on requirements, how to apply, frequently asked questions, and the benefits of sanctioning, including:

- USA Ultimate Liability Insurance Coverage
- USA Ultimate Staff Support
- Discounts on Merchandise and Resources
- Online Roster Management
- Listing of your tournament on USA Ultimate Tournament Calendar page

<http://play.usultimate.org/> is a common landing page for people logging into the website. The [Tournament Calendar page](#) is where USA Ultimate Sanctioned and Championship events are listed.

The Manual of Championships Series Tournament Formats can be found linked from [here](#). For formats for youth events, USA Ultimate has authored some additional safety constraints with youth in mind. They can be found [here](#).

Information on insurance for USA Ultimate events can be found [here](#).

Information on the USA Ultimate Conduct Policy can be found [here](#).

The Misconduct System can be found in the Observer Manual. The Observer Manual can be found [here](#).

Special Considerations for Youth Tournaments and Youth Athletes

For formats for youth events, USA Ultimate has authored some additional safety constraints with youth in mind. They can be found [here](#).

Paraphrased from the USA Ultimate Youth Competition Guidelines:

Minors participating in the USA Ultimate events must have the appropriate forms completed prior to participation (waiver, medical release). A team with minors on it must have an approved, background-checked chaperone listed on the team's official roster. **The medical release form is the responsibility of the chaperone; it must be brought to each USA Ultimate event and kept on hand by the chaperone.** This form will allow medical personnel to treat an injured minor without a parent/guardian having to be present. Without this form a doctor might not be able to treat an injured minor.

Chaperones

Each team with an athlete younger than 18 will have to have a USA Ultimate certified chaperone who has passed a background check. The chaperone will need to be listed on the official team roster. See [here](#) for more details.

Important Documents

The following documents can be found here:

- [Waiver](#)
- [Medical Authorization](#) (minors only)

Please also read the material linked in the Chaperones section above.

Special Considerations for Indoor Tournaments

Rules

An indoor specific rule set is being developed.

Meanwhile:

- Because the fields are often smaller, especially narrower, many indoor competitions are not played 7 on 7, but with fewer players per team
- Ground rules are usually established to clarify whether the walls, ceiling, and anything attached to them are considered out of bounds

Safety

When setting up field, sideline, and spectator spaces, be especially aware of the walls and other fixed objects. Space is, by definition, limited indoors, but establishes safe buffer spaces – 10 yards to anything that might be dangerous to run into/onto.

Special Considerations for Beach Tournaments

Rules

[USA Ultimate rules](#) apply and include an [appendix for Beach Ultimate](#).

Equipment

The field lines and other lines that might get painted on grass fields will need to be material lines such as Port-a-fields. The lines will then need to be anchored to the sand with deep stakes and/or weights to keep them taught. Be sure to keep safety in mind when anchoring the lines.

Safety

Beyond the above, note that beaches are often very windy so be certain to properly secure all equipment with stakes/weights.

For all lines and other equipment, be aware of trip hazards and the fact that many beachgoers will be barefoot. Fields need to be carefully inspected as dangerous items including glass, shells, and nails can be dug from the sand during play. Encourage your athletes to be current on their tetanus vaccinations. Trainers should be ready to deal with cuts and punctures. They should also be prepared to help athletes wash sand from their eyes.

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