

## 2021 Update for the Ultimate Hall of Fame Process Improvement Initiatives:

The Ultimate Hall of Fame (HoF) has incorporated incremental process improvements over the years and continues to take the long view on these updates. We recognize that additional revisions can be made and endeavor to evaluate and amend process steps each year. Summarized below is a synopsis of historical adjustments and improvements being announced for the 2021 HoF Selection Process.

### Ultimate Hall of Fame Process Improvements from Inception to Date\*:

The original Ultimate HoF organizing committee was established in 2004. In August of that year, a proposal was presented to and approved by the Ultimate Players Association Board of Directors. Included in the approved proposal was an operational plan, formal criteria, eligibility guidelines, and a process for both a permanent selection committee structure and induction process to the Hall. The organizing committee then identified candidates, gathered information about the candidates, and selected the Inaugural HoF inductees and one Special Merit inductee ahead of the first Hall of Fame induction ceremony and alumni gathering at the 2004 Club National Championships.

Including the Inaugural Class from 2004, there are 95 individual Hall Members; 51 from the Open division (including 2 Look Back inductees), 32 from the Women's division (including 2 Look Back inductees), and 12 Contributor members. Through the Special Merit category, there are an additional 3 members from The Founders (2005) and 29 (5 of whom were previous individual HoF inductees) with The Johnny Appleseeds (2014). Added to the Special Merit category is the 80 mold disc from Wham-O in 2004 and the Discraft Ultra Star in 2011.

Beginning with the second year of the Hall, and to ensure that players from the early years of Ultimate got fair consideration, the age eligibility rules enacted for the 2005 selection year were based on the UPA Masters age plus 15 years (48 years old for Open division by December 31, 2005, and 45 for Women's division players) and decreased by one year, each year (47/44 in 2006, etc.), until it reached the current age thresholds of Masters age plus 10 years (43/40) in 2010.

Since 2009, the **Call to Community** was formally incorporated as part of the Hall selection process by providing a forum for anyone in the greater ultimate community to voice their opinions about Hall candidates via a survey shared by the UPA/USAU. The community is asked for candidate feedback, both laudatory and critical, that helps the Hall voters know more about the candidates and supports (or not) the candidate's entry into the Hall. All feedback is kept strictly confidential and made available only to the voting members of the Hall as part of their deliberations.

The Hall has a history of convening **working groups** to explore and recommend steps to improve the selection/induction process. The 2015-2016\*\* working group reasserted the need to continuously refresh the peer pools and to focus the 2015 Hall selection on candidates who competed in the 1989 to 1994-time frame. The working group also recommended the institution of a "catch up period" over the 2016 through 2018 induction years to ensure that consideration of Hall candidates was keeping up with the defined eligibility period, which was advancing each year. The number of candidates considered and inducted in each of those 3 years was increased to up to 8 to 10 new inductees per year (up from a maximum of 5 inductees per year).

The 2016-2018 catch-up process yielded the addition of 33 new HoF members and resulted in the determination that the Hall was "caught-up"; defined as the ability to consider candidates for induction into the Hall in their first year of eligibility. Also enacted with the 2016 process was that the proportion of Open to Women's division candidates be balanced each year and Contributor-candidates be considered

and voted upon separately from player-candidates. Additionally, an eligibility rule that "player candidates need to be retired from their primary division of play for a minimum of 5 years" was eliminated in a 2018 rule modification.

Another key change in eligibility requirements instituted with the "catch up period" from 2016 to 2018 was that "eligible" Hall candidates' careers would need to overlap with a focused window of time, known as the **Peak Playing Years**. The Peak Playing Years focus on an 8-year window of time that advances by one year each year and continues to be the guiding principle for the current Hall of Fame selection process.

Following the completion of the "catch up" period at the end of the 2018 selection process, the respective Peer Pools and Hall of Fame members were surveyed to determine the number of HoF player-candidates to be considered each year. Those surveys confirmed that the number of HoF player-candidates considered each year to be a maximum of 3 per year from Open candidates and 3 per year from Women's division candidates with a target of 30 inductees per division over a 10-year period; this guideline was applied for the 2019 Hall selection process. Based on the 2019 Hall selection process where only 1 Open division Hall member was inducted, the Vetting Committee, in collaboration with the Hall membership, determined that the number of inductees per year needed to be raised to 4 per year per player-division for the 2020 Hall selection process to ensure progress towards the target of 30 inductees per player-division over a 10-year period.

A significant change for 2020, that continues to guide the work of the Hall, was the establishment of The Ultimate Hall of Fame as a standalone not-for-profit organization, separate from USA Ultimate, with its own Board of Directors. The Board was established through an election process held in December 2019 in which 13 Hall members were elected to the Board and a variety of committees were established. The organization obtained IRS recognition as a nonprofit 501 c 3 organization making contributions and donations tax deductible. The Board members and various committees are detailed at the end of this document.

### **2021 Hall of Fame Selection Process:**

For 2021, the Vetting Committee has again been expanded to include additional Hall members; Lori Parham Ewald (HoF '19) and Vivian Zayas (HoF '20) have joined with Dominique Fontenette (HoF '18) as co-leaders of the Women's division Peer Pool. Jeff Cruickshank (HoF '17) has joined with Keay Nakae (HoF '12) and Steve Dugan (HoF '17) as co-leaders of the Open Peer Pool. Chris O'Cleary (HoF '13) and Bill Rodriguez (HoF '15) continue in advisory capacities to the Vetting Committee. They join Suzanne Fields (HoF '04) as Vetting Committee Chair, Nob Rauch (HoF '06) as Contributor Coordinator, and Steve Mooney (HoF '06) as USAU Board Representative to this committee. Ultimate HoF Board of Director President, Pat King (HoF '09), also participates in the Vetting Committee. Of note, Pam Kraus (HoF '17) stepped away from leading the Women's Peer Pool and now continues on the Vetting Committee as an advisor and in leading a Mixed Division Task Force.

In preparation for the 2021 HoF selection process, two working groups were convened. One was an Open division working group\*\*\* convened by co-leaders of the Open Peer Pool to determine how best to tighten up Hall player-candidate eligibility rules. The second was a Contributors division task force\*\*\*\* to explore alternatives for that division's selection process; the group was convened by Contributor Peer Pool coordinator, Nob Rauch, who invited current Contributor members in the Hall to confer on selection process improvements and make contributor-candidate recommendations for 2021.

For the 2021 HoF selection process, the number of HoF player-candidates considered will again be a maximum of 4 per year from Open candidates and 4 per year from Women’s division candidates. The Contributor selection process and parameters are being revised.

**Key initiatives and selection process steps that have been added, amended, or continue to be incorporated for 2021:**

- 1) Refresh the Peer Pools (PP); continue to add new elite-level competitors to join the respective Peer Pools, including peers who competed at Club Nationals during the Peak Playing years but may not yet be age-eligible. Please refer to the Peer Pool Process document for additional details about PP member selection criteria.
- 2) Enrich the Peer Pools through the addition of those voting members who have deep knowledge of the HoF prospects, i.e., Regional Coordinators, local/National tournament organizers, team captains, and/or coaches.
- 3) Continue to utilize eligibility guidelines/peak-playing timeframes for the HoF process. To be eligible for nomination, the player-candidates must meet the age-based eligibility guidelines (Masters age plus 10 years) and can be currently-active players in their primary division of competition. These guidelines do not rule out consideration of the obvious candidate(s) in their first year of eligibility:

<u>Induct:</u>	<u>Peak Playing:</u>	<u>DOB: Open/Women</u>
2016:	1992 to 1999	1973/76
2017:	1995 to 2002	1974/77
2018:	1998 to 2005	1975/78
2019:	1999 to 2006	1976/79
2020:	2000 to 2007	1977/80
<b>2021:</b>	<b>2001 to 2008</b>	<b>1978/81</b>

- 4) The Open division working group developed the following refinements for candidate eligibility:
  - Potential candidates **first** become **eligible Hall candidates** (and appear as such on the Peer Pool ballot) in the year they reach age 43
  - Candidates have a **maximum** eligibility of **10 years**, although eligibility **may be fewer years** based on playing history in the Open Club division
  - Any individual who first becomes an eligible candidate in the year they reach age 43 will be an eligible Hall candidate for a **minimum of 3 years**, regardless of playing history.
  - 2021 will serve as a final rule-transition year, granting waivers that allow for a final year of eligibility to candidates who would otherwise be ineligible under the new rules
  - The burden of responsibility for validating HoF candidacy (and the ability to utilize the full 10 years of eligibility or minimum of 3 years) is on the former players and teammates, not the HoF Vetting Committee
- 5) The Women’s division peer pool coordinators analyzed and refined the composition of the peer pool membership with the goal to balance representation across the regions and add representatives from teams who competed at Club Nationals during the Peak Playing Years. The following steps were taken:
  - Players with multiple team history were assigned to one primary team to equalize regional representation
  - Members of the Peer Pool who were not active in the Women’s division during the Peak Playing years or who did not have adequate knowledge of players in the Peak Playing years were retired from the Peer Pool
  - Members who were inactive and non-communicative in the last year were removed from the PP

- Players were added to the PP from teams who were underrepresented in the metric goal of 3 individuals per team per year at Club Nationals
- 6) The player peer pool vote methodology requires each voter to select their top 5 Hall candidates and to rank order their votes from their 1<sup>st</sup> to their 5<sup>th</sup> choice. The top vote-getters are then considered by the Vetting Committee with the goal of creating the 2021 Slate of candidates that ensures fair representation by playing era, division, and region. This final slate is presented to the ultimate community at large via the **Call to Community** survey and thereafter, considered by the eligible voting members of the Hall.
  - 7) The HoF member vote is completed in 2 rounds; the first round to identify each HoF member's top choices and the second round to cast a Yes/No vote for each candidate on the final slate to achieve a "supermajority" of 2/3rds for the candidates to advance to induction.
  - 8) Division of play-based voting initiated in 2018 will continue such that those competitors with the "best knowledge" of those whom they played with and against will be selecting their division's inductees. Continuing from the 2018 process, HoF members have the option to designate in which player category they will cast their ballots. Voting in the first and second round by HoF members elected in the "Player" Category will be separated along player division lines. Open division competitors will only vote for Open Player candidates and Women's division competitors will only vote for Women's Division Player candidates. Both divisions will vote for Contributors and Special Merit candidates, if any. HoF members elected in the "Contributor" category will have the option to vote in either Open or Women's division player categories, both player categories, or neither player category. Any such Contributor members who choose to vote in either player division will self select themselves as qualified to do so, based on their individual experience and knowledge of player candidates in that division, i.e., history of coaching that player division. Such HoF members must declare their intention as to which division they will vote in before the voting takes place.

**Reinforced for the 2021 Hall of Fame process:**

The eligibility for and composition of the respective Women's Division and Open Peer Pools must align with the current **Peak Playing Years**. For **2021**, Peer Pool members and Hall candidates must have competed at the highest level of competition in their Primary Division of Play between **2001 – 2008**.

While some Peer Pool members and Hall candidates may have extended their playing careers into the Masters, Grand Masters, and Great Grand Masters divisions and longevity is one of seven Hall of Fame Criteria for Consideration (refer to [What Makes a Hall of Famer document](#)), when identifying and voting upon Hall candidates and consideration of Hall-worthiness, the focus window of time must be on **what they did at their best against the best in their primary division of play during the current Peak Playing Years**.

To ensure that the Peer Pool is "current" with the current Peak Playing Years, new peer pool members are added and those whose competitive playing careers ended before 2001 are rotated off of the Peer Pool, unless there are compelling reasons to remain on the respective Peer Pool. Those continuing to remain in the Peer Pool may include coaches, regional coordinators, or other activities where the Peer Pool member continues to be connected to the sport at the highest levels and has first-hand knowledge of top tier competitors in the Primary Division of Play during the Peak Playing Years.

Of note, Hall candidates who age out of consideration may be included in future years as part of the Look Back process that will be administered at least every 5 years, if not more frequently.

As reference, in 2018, a "look back" process was initiated for those candidates who fell into two categories; 1) those who previously made the slate of finalists but fell short of induction and 2) those

who may have been overlooked for a variety of reasons, including unanticipated and identified shortcomings in the selection/nomination procedures. Effective with the 2020 Hall voting criteria, Look Back inductees will not be eligible to participate in the Final Voting process.

These things in particular have been reinforced:

1. Reforming the selection process is a continuous effort that will be accomplished incrementally.
2. There are many who believe the process needs to be refined and improved, but there is little consensus on the problems, how to prioritize these concerns, and what the best solutions to these concerns should be. We encourage input from the community, at large.
3. Where feasible, we will build increasing transparency into the process.

We will continue to engage Hall of Fame members and the ultimate community to contribute to process improvement initiatives, as the need arises. We are dedicated to exploring and recommending incremental process improvements as the Hall evolves. You can direct comments and suggestions to Suzanne Fields, HoF member, Ultimate Hall of Fame Board member and Administrator, and Chair, HoF Vetting Committee, to triage to the appropriate people within the HoF organization. [ [ultimatehalloffame@gmail.com](mailto:ultimatehalloffame@gmail.com) ]

\*For a complete review of the history of the Ultimate Hall of Fame since its inception up to the 2018 selection process, please go to <https://ultimatehistory.com/vol3/> User Name: ultimate Password: history

\*\* 2015-2016 Working Group members: Keay Nakae, Mike Glass, Chris VanHolmes, Jim Parinella, Lori VanHolmes, along with additional input from Nancy Glass and Ann Cohan.

\*\*\* 2021 Open Division Working group members: Open Peer Pool Co-coordinators Keay Nakae, Steve Dugan, and Jeff Cruickshank, plus Hall members Stu Downs, Greg Husak, Jim Ingebritsen, Pat King, and Jim Parinella.

\*\*\*\* 2021 Contributor division invited Task Force members: Nob Rauch, Contributor coordinator, plus Mary Lowry, Tiina Booth, Andy Borinstein, Brian Murphy, Michael Baccarini, and advisor, Suzanne Fields

2020-21 Ultimate Hall of Fame Board of Directors:

Pat King (Class of 2009) President and Chair - Executive Committee

Lori Van Holmes (Class of 2015) Vice President and Co-chair – Principles Committee

Robert (Nob) Rauch (Class of 2006) Treasurer, Chair - Finance Committee, Contributor Peer Pool Coordinator

Brian Murphy (Class of 2007) Secretary, Chair - Bylaws Committee

Suzanne Fields (Class of 2004), Administrator, Chair - Vetting Committee

David Blau (Class of 2017)

Dominique Fontenette (Class of 2018)

Kelly Green (Class of 2005)

Tom Kennedy (Class of 2004)

Pam Kraus (Class of 2017) Women's Peer Pool Coordinator

Keay Nakae (Class of 2012) Co-Chair – Principles Committee, Open Peer Pool Co-coordinator (with Steve Dugan)

Chris O'Cleary (Class of 2013)

Bill Rodriguez (Class of 2015)

June 21, 2021 FINAL

