

WHAT MAKES AN ULTIMATE HALL OF FAMER?

Updated Guidelines for Player, Contributor, Mixed, and Special Merit Candidate Selection for 2022

PLAYERS

Player Category Eligibility Criteria:

- Women's division players must be the minimum age of 39 by December 31 for the year under consideration.
- Open division players must be the minimum age of 42 by December 31 for the year under consideration.
- Mixed division players must be the minimum age of 39 for female-matching players and 42 for male-matching players by December 31 of the year under consideration
- Instituted in the 2018 Ultimate Hall of Fame (HoF) process, the requirement that Player candidates must be retired from their primary division of play was eliminated.
- Deceased candidates are eligible in the year that they would have reached the eligibility age.

Context:

- In the early years of the HoF process, there were up to 8 candidates reviewed (Slate of 8) including players and contributors. Voters selected between 4 to 6 inductees each year.
- Beginning with the "catch-up" phase from 2016 to 2018, and continuing to the current year, players were voted upon separately from contributors.
- For the 2016 to 2018 catch-up phase, up to 20 player candidates were considered. There were 2 contributor candidates in 2016 and 2017, none in 2018. Look Back Player candidates were first considered in 2018; 2 per player division were inducted that year.
- In the 2019 process, up to 14 candidates were considered; 7 candidates from each player division and up to 3 inductees were selected from each player division. There were no contributor candidates.
- In 2020, up to 16 candidates were considered; 8 candidates from each player division and up to 4 candidates selected from each player division. There were no contributor candidates in 2020.
- In 2021, up to 16 candidates were considered; 8 candidates from each player division plus 1 Contributor, 2 Look Back Contributor, and a Special Merit candidate were voted upon.

- The current goal for the Hall is to induct up to 30 candidates per player division over a 10 year period. The variation in the number of candidates considered each year is tied to progress towards this goal.

For 2022, the selection process will include up to 20 candidates with up to 10 from each player division and **up to 5 inductees inducted from the Open and Women's player divisions**. In this first year of the Mixed division, there will be a Starting Class slate of up to 8 players and contributors from the first 12 years of the division.

Criteria for Consideration:

Prospective Ultimate Hall of Fame candidates include age-eligible current and former players with a distinguished record of competitive achievement at the highest national and/or international levels during the Peak Playing Years for the respective year of the Hall process.

While some 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, when identifying and voting upon Hall candidates and consideration of Hall-worthiness, the focus must be on **what they did at their best against the best in their primary division of play during the current Peak Playing Years**.

Hall of Famers in the Open and Women's divisions are evaluated with the following 7 criteria in mind. They should rank very highly in most, if not all categories.

- **Dominance** - Dominated the game on offense and/or defense despite being matched up against the other team's best players. As a result, was widely known, acknowledged, and feared as the best (or one of the best) on a nationally competitive team.
- **Leadership** - Demonstrated exemplary team leadership on and off the field. When you think of their team's success, their leadership was an obvious and major factor.
- **Spirit of the Game Under Pressure** - Exhibited exemplary sportsmanship and fair play in the biggest games. Made the right call, maintained composure, and earned the respect of opponents.
- **Stature** - Earned respect and admiration across the Ultimate community over the years; their induction would enhance, strengthen, and honor the Hall of Fame as an institution.

- **Longevity** - Performed at a high level against elite competition in the Club Division for over a decade; was not a player who shined brightly for only 2-3 years of elite play.
- **Athleticism** - Was physically superior to other players. Ran faster, jumped higher, threw better, blocked more often, caught just about everything.
- **Team Performance** – Led team and excelled in big games at major championships (highest priority placed on Nationals and Worlds).

In 2017, the Women’s and Open Peer Pool members were asked to rank order these HoF Qualities/Criteria. The following is the resulting rank order by division:

Open Peer Pool Survey Results (56 respondents):

1. Dominance
2. Leadership
3. SOTG Under Pressure and Longevity (tied)
5. Stature and Athleticism (tied)
7. Team performance

Women’s Peer Pool Survey Results (64 respondents):

1. Dominance
2. Leadership
3. SOTG Under Pressure and Stature (tied)
5. Athleticism
6. Longevity
7. Team performance

MIXED – Starting Class

Category Eligibility Criteria:

Prospective HoF candidates include age-eligible current and former female-matching and male-matching players and contributors with a distinguished record of competitive achievement or significant contributions at the highest national and/or international levels during the first 12 years of the Mixed division starting in 1998 to the end of the current Peak Playing Years (2010). Candidates must have dedicated their competitive play to the Mixed division for a minimum of 3 years.

Hall of Famers in the Mixed division are evaluated with the following 7 criteria in mind. They should rank very highly in most, if not all categories:

Game Changer - Widely known as a high-impact player and teammate on a great team. Individually, they consistently made outstanding plays at key moments, routinely standing out when it mattered. They executed their team's strategies with discipline and forced opponents to adjust. As a teammate, they were able to bring the best out in their peers through superior facilitative leadership in practice and competition. They found ways to lift up their teammates, improve their performances, and create a healthy winning culture.

Stature - Earned respect and admiration across the Ultimate community over the years for their performance and actions on and off the field. Contributed to their team's success while strengthening the standing and standard of the mixed division. Their induction would enhance, strengthen, and honor the Hall of Fame as an institution.

Spirit of the Game - While playing at the highest level, these players were universally recognized and admired by their fiercest rivals and closest teammates as exemplars of fair and clean play. Displaying and earning mutual respect throughout years of competition, regardless of the stakes, they played with steadfast integrity and full accountability for their actions.

Longevity - Performed at a high level against elite competition in the club division for a prolonged period; was not a player who shined brightly for only 2-3 years of elite play. Players who were dedicated to playing in and bettering a division during their peak playing years.

Leadership - Demonstrated exemplary team and community leadership on and off the field. Not limited to formal leadership titles. This player's leadership is an obvious and major factor in a team's success and stature.

Athleticism - Was physically superior to other players. Ran faster, jumped higher, threw better, blocked more often, caught just about everything. Difficult to guard or get open on.

Team Performance – Led their team and excelled in big games at major championships (highest priority placed on Nationals and Worlds).

Here are some questions (with no "right" answers) to ponder in considering whether the Mixed Player candidate merits Ultimate Hall of Fame recognition:

- Was the Player ever regarded as the best player in the Mixed division?
- Was the Player the best player on their team?
- Was the Player the best player at their position?
- Was the Player the best at a particular skill (e.g., person defense, break mark throws, skying)?
- Did the Player have an impact on a number of Nationals?
- Did the Player display the Spirit of the Game by upholding the standards of sportsmanship and character contained therein?
- Was the Player a good enough player that they could continue to play regularly after passing their prime?

- If the Player were the best player on their team, would it be likely that the team could make/win Nationals?
- Was the Player a team leader or strategist whose teams seemed to outperform their abilities?
- Was the Player held in high regard by teammates and opponents alike?
- Can the history of the Mixed division Ultimate be written without including this Player?

CONTRIBUTORS

Category Eligibility Criteria:

Individuals who have made exceptional contributions that furthered the growth, reputation, and character of the sport, in the development, administration, media, and coaching of ultimate.

Context:

Candidates in the Contributor category will be reviewed separately from candidates in the Player category. In the early years, when there were up to eight candidates considered and five selected, it was anticipated that there might be 1-3 contributor candidates considered out of the eight and 0-2 actually elected out of the five. In the “catch-up” phase from 2016 to 2018, 1 to 2 contributors may or may not be included in the Final ballot, and if included, were voted upon separately from the player candidates. There may be no contributors inducted in any given year.

Types of Contributor Candidates:

As a broad category, there can be many different types of contributions considered. Candidates may have made contributions in one or more of these categories. The following outlines several broad categories, although it is not necessarily all-inclusive.

- **Founders and Developers:** These candidates would have played a pivotal role in developing the rules of the game and how it is played.
- **Administrators:** These candidates would have made their impact on the administration of the sport. This could include the provision of watershed strategic leadership, the fostering of new divisions of play, extended and material contributions in the day-to-day administration, etc.
- **Organizers:** This includes individuals who have made their mark in organizing significant play-related activities. This could include establishing and fostering the growth of significant summer leagues and clubs, organizing tournaments that defined the sport in their time, and generally promoting the growth of the sport by making something special happen.

- **Promoters:** This subcategory could include everything from contributions to the stock of quality media, the authoring of seminal print and electronic materials, doing effective groundbreaking public relations work for Ultimate, or having a significant role in commercial products related to Ultimate.
- **Coaches:** In the first couple of decades of the sport, player-captains served the role of coach, in defining new play strategy, and putting together championship teams. As the sport evolved, there were dedicated coaches whose role may be appropriately recognized in the Ultimate Hall of Fame.

Questions to Consider:

Here are some questions (with no “right” answers) to ponder in considering whether the contributions of a Contributor candidate merit Ultimate Hall of Fame recognition:

- Can the history of Ultimate be written without including this candidate?
- Was the way the game was played significantly impacted by changes introduced by the candidate?
- Was the way the sport was administered or organized significantly impacted by changes introduced by the candidate or by their contributions?
- Did the candidate make his/her impact over an extended period of time? Is that impact still being felt today
- Were the candidate’s accomplishments widely recognized at the time and/or did they become apparent only after the passage of time?
- Did the candidate have a significant playing career which, while perhaps not sufficiently outstanding to qualify for an Ultimate Hall of Fame spot solely on playing merits, nonetheless strengthens the overall candidacy?

WHO OR WHAT IS DESERVING OF ULTIMATE HALL OF FAME SPECIAL MERIT?

SPECIAL MERIT

Category Eligibility Criteria:

This category will accommodate all other potential candidates not included in the first two categories, whether teams, equipment, groups, individuals, or whatever, that defined the nature of the sport or its competitive spirit, or contributed to make Ultimate special, in the context of their day.

Because of the nature of the category, no more than one Special Merit inductee would be permitted in any year with the exception that there may also be a

Special Merit Look Back candidate. There is no requirement for a Special Merit inductee in every year.

Context:

Candidates for Special Merit would be reviewed separately from candidates in the Player or Contributor categories. The Vetting Committee would have the ability to recommend a Special Merit candidate if they so chose which would be approved only if they received no fewer than 90% of all the Ultimate Hall of Fame votes.

A Special Merit inductee does not count against the maximum number of Player and Contributor inductees permitted in a given year, and further does not include subsequent voting rights by Special Merit inductees for the Ultimate Hall of Fame.

Types of Special Merit Candidates:

This is a catch-all category and the high supermajority voting requirement should ensure that a very high standard of “specialness” is met. As defined above, the initial Organizing Committee felt that this category might include teams (i.e., Columbia High School or teams with incredibly successful runs such as New York, DoG, Godiva), equipment (the 80 mold, Discraft Ultrastar, the Master Frisbee disc), groups or individuals (such as the defining Glassboro zone defense of the late ‘70s). The idea is that there are stories that need to be told to fully describe Ultimate and its history that don’t get captured in an individual award.

Questions to Consider: Here are some questions (with no “right” answers) to ponder in considering whether a candidate merits Ultimate Hall of Fame Special Merit:

- Can the history of Ultimate be written without including this candidate?
- Was the Special Merit candidate recognized in his/her day as being “special?”
- Can the story about the Special Merit candidate be documented (in words and pictures) in a way that future generations can understand its significance?

What Makes a Hall of Famer updated June 2022 by the HoF Vetting Committee and previously in 2020. Prior What Makes a Hall of Famer criteria compiled by Nob Rauch, Jim Parinella, and prior members of the HoF Committee. An original source for HoF criteria includes the [Keltner List](#).