



# Project Brief

Status: In progress ▾

Timing: Announce in Fall 2026, Launch in Fall 2027

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## Overview

This document and all documents linked below are a draft of a proposal. As was done with reimagining YCCs, this draft is based on results of the surveys and conversations we have had over the past few years. And, while it is not perfect for all communities, we believe it will create a structure which will provide new pathways for athletes who want to play ultimate and help create growth.

Even with the current restructure of the Youth Club Championships, there is still a bottleneck for growth and development in youth club ultimate. The current structure does not allow for the development of a youth club season or for robust regional play<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the current structure is geared towards teams organized by local disc organizations, which excludes teams which might form differently, from a Boys & Girls Club for example.

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<sup>1</sup> In our surveys, town hall discussions and conversations organizers, coaches and parents repeatedly expressed a desire for more regional (and local) play.

The goal of this proposal is to create a youth club series, with a youth club national championship event, that supports robust local and regional youth club play and is accessible to a wider range of teams and participants,<sup>2</sup> especially communities that are just starting down the path of youth ultimate. While the national championship will be fun and exciting, the real focus of this proposal is the growth of regional play and, hopefully, the ripple effect of local mixed club tournaments and/or leagues.

To achieve this we are proposing a single mixed division<sup>3</sup> youth club structure to be held in the fall. This structure would have a large number of regions which feed into a national championship event and allow space in the calendar for local play to develop.

## Objectives

### Company objectives

- Develop more youth local and regional playing opportunities.
- Increasing the number of FMPs and providing opportunities for teams to develop in more diverse communities.
- Make ultimate accessible to underserved communities.
- Increase the youth coaching population.
- Increase retention rates as athletes leave high school.
- Increase youth participation.

### Project objectives

- Create regional and national playing opportunities, encouraging local play.
- Grow youth ultimate.
- Create a place for teams in ultimate “deserts” to participate.
- Provide an onramp for youth who are unable to access through school based play or other existing pathways.
- Highlight mixed play.
- Increase coach certifications.
- Build a youth club season before someone else decides to do it for profit.

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<sup>2</sup> In our surveys, this idea was rated highly by players (5.6 out of 7), fairly highly by parents (4.8 out of 7), but not highly by organizers (3.8 out of 7). Unlike YCCs, this proposal encourages teams to be created outside of the LDO structure, meaning the existing organizers do not need to feel obligated to organize and run teams for this season.

<sup>3</sup> Players rated the idea of a single, mixed division very highly, a 5.6 out of 7.

# Strategy

## Approach

Building a new competition season is hard. It requires a lot of effort from organizers to run events and for organizers and/or coaches to build teams, all with the shadow of uncertainty. Will teams form? Will teams show up? Will events be run? What is this going to look like?

Our goal is to be able to present this as a finished product, including a calendar, guidelines and locations<sup>4</sup> for as many events as possible. This says to the community that this event will exist and then give them time to build teams, recruit players and get coaches. It gives the community time to process and then act on the fact that this event is not attached to YCCs in any way.

“Juniors” will be a new club season, where eligibility is based on age. This allows a wider range of athletes to participate in ultimate. This allows individuals who are unable to access school-based play to find a home in ultimate.

Juniors will run as a single division in the fall. There is no perfect place to put this season, but in surveys and conversations with the community fall has been identified as the best choice available.

Running regionals and nationals with a single division simplifies the events, making them easier for LDOs to organize and run.

This proposal calls for mixed to be removed from YCCs. Running boys and girls at YCCs and then mixed in the fall will help create a clear distinction between these events. YCC teams can't just continue from YCCs to Juniors. If mixed was included at YCCs or all three divisions were held at both YCCs and Juniors, Juniors would simply become a second version of YCCs.

This season will also highlight the mixed division. This encourages growth that is gender balanced. Since there is no open division, FMPs will become paramount to the creation and sustainability of teams over time. This means that teams will have to build programs that attract FMPs and then retain them. Making sure that FMPs have a positive experience will be crucial to building sustainable teams.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Initially, locations could simply be the commitment of a LDO to run regionals the first year of Juniors.

<sup>5</sup> An additional aspect of this, which is based on conversations with organizers but does not have statistical evidence, is that removing mixed eliminates a major stress on FMPs and YCC participation. A

## Target audience

- U20 players (see questions below about whether this should be a u19 or a u20 division)
  - Especially players who have been unable to access any of the current competition structures

## Measurement

- Youth Memberships
- FMP memberships
- Number of communities with youth ultimate programming
- Number of teams competing at regionals
- Retention rates
- Growth of teams and programs in new areas

## Roles

Role	Name
Presenter	Dan Raabe
Owner	Josh Murphy
Approvers	Dan Raabe, Kevin Erlenbach
Contributors	Antonia Van Twisk, Jack Kennedy, Jamie Wolf, Joe Strong
Informed	Sam Callan, Gervon Williams, Will Deaver, David Raflo, Byron Hicks, Stacey Waldrup, Julia Lee, Andy Lee

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number of organizers have said that they have had FMPs choose not to play YCCs rather than have to choose between playing with their friends on a mixed team or other friends who are playing in the girls division. Coaches and organizers have talked about the pressure uncommitted FMPs can face from both of these teams that need more FMPs to exist/succeed.

# Milestones

Date	Milestone	Description	Expected outcome
1/16/26	Public Announcement	Announcing the 2027 Series. A chance to get feedback.	Guidelines and a method for response
9/1/26	Site Commitments	Getting commitments from LDOs to run Regionals and the location for Nationals (again, as with the item above, the earlier we can do this the better. Can we get some affiliates to commit before the January announcement?)	Have a site for nationals and as many regional sites as
11/26	Finalized guidelines	A final version of the guidelines for 2027	Finalized guidelines

## Resources

[Needs and Solutions](#) - This document looks at some of the needs seen by the ultimate community. It then looks at how the proposal provides solutions to these needs.

[Hypothetical Implementation](#) - This is a mental exercise in thinking about this proposal in a more detailed fashion.

[20-Region Map](#) (rough draft idea, at best) - A 20-region map. As with all of this material, this is a draft proposal.

[Drive Times with each region](#) - Based on the 20-region map, this looks at the drive distance from one end of a region to the other end.

## Open questions

These questions can be answered via a Google Form (each question has its own form). You do not need to complete any of the Google Forms to be able to see the responses and you may also comment on Responses.

When you complete the form it will collect your email. This is so your response can be emailed to you in case you would like to edit it. In all of the response documents the email column will be hidden and locked so that responses remain anonymous.

The form will also ask you for your state. Again, this column will be hidden. Its purpose is for us to look at answers using different filters.

Feedback questions are not in any particular order.

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What are your overall impressions of this proposal? Do you think this proposal will achieve the goals it has set out?

Nationals and Regionals and the inclusion of a u17 or u15 division

Should Juniors be U19 or U20?

What are the pros and cons of removing mixed from YCCs? Do you think this would be the best thing to do?

What is the correct number of regions?

Do we allow any out of region players?

Do we need to add regulations to try to prevent or reduce athlete burnout and overuse injury? If so, how do we do this? The fall Juniors season could be a chance for athletes with currently fewer options to play ultimate, but it could also be another season vying for the participation of athletes with many options already (tempting them to play more than is healthy).

Since this is an entirely new series, it might be a good place to experiment. What rules changes or tournament structure changes do you think should be considered?

Looking at the items above, are there any you feel should be introduced gradually? This could be having the item in question not introduced at all for a period of time, or introduced gradually.

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