

STARTING AN ULTIMATE CLUB AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

Ultimate is the greatest sport in the world. We love it! You love it! In addition, others will too. Although starting an Ultimate team can be time-consuming, the benefits are excellent. You will be introducing a brand new sport at your school. You'll get to play on a team and know you're the reason a new Ultimate team exists. Moreover, as long as recruiting efforts are made, the team will survive.

Starting a High School Ultimate Club

While starting a new team, work "Ultimate" into your daily life. View situations with "How will this help me start a team?" When someone asks you "What's new?" mention, you are starting an Ultimate team. At a party, if someone asks you "What's up?" tell him or her "I'm starting an Ultimate team." Show your passion for Ultimate and others will become infected.

Tell your friends about the new team. Carry a disc around. Pass out handmade brochures. Encourage everyone to play. If you are in a conversational Spanish class and your teacher asks you what you did yesterday, mention the Ultimate team. Got to gym classes and look for recruits. In short, think and act Ultimate. Become a fanatic. If you have the mental energy, then, believe it or not, starting a team is easy.

If you are in high school, you are in luck. Starting a men or women's team is easy. To start a team, you need to get fellow students to try it. No one makes a major commitment before trying something. Some students simply will not be interested. Pay these people no mind and forge ahead. Realize that those who do try Ultimate will like it, and they will want more. Ultimate is an amazing and addictive sport. Once people play, the sport will sell itself. Before you know it, you will have a bunch of Ultimate fanatics ready to play.

The best method to building a high school Ultimate club is to schedule a kick-off game one week in the future. Tell all your friends to show up; have P.E. teachers make announcements; and put up notices around campus. The most common excuses you will hear are "I'm not good enough"; "I don't know how to play"; "I don't know how to throw." Encourage everyone: "You'll get better"; "No one know how to play, yet"; "We'll teach you to throw."

The Bureaucracy

Along with recruiting new players, your club needs to become part of your school's "Bureaucracy." Most high school clubs need an advisor. Recruit a young teacher that will play Ultimate. Becoming an "official" club may entitle you to some benefits, such as reserved practice fields, cones, meeting rooms, audio-visual equipment (to show Ultimate videos), and various other perks. In addition, if your school has a newspaper, you can obtain free publicity. Take some photos, write your own article and

present them to the newspaper's editor. Your team may even get into the school yearbook.

Recruiting

The most effective recruiting technique is the personal touch. Tell everybody you know to join the team. Do not be the only recruiter. Have recruits bring a friend to the next practice. Have gym teachers make announcements. Ask your advisor to make an announcement in his/her class

When asking someone to join the team, imagine inviting that person to a party. Getting somebody to try Ultimate is no different from any other social situation. Make people feel good about themselves and happy to be involved. Be positive. Initially it might be tough. Nevertheless, after your recruiting starts, other will follow. Before you know it, you will have an Ultimate club.

Another effective way to recruit new players is by the written word. Use the school paper. Plaster the school with posters. Be a fanatic. Keep a bunch of posters in your daypack, pass them out, and tack them up around your school.

Planning Ahead

The most important goal of starting a new team is survival. Keep recruiting new players. Encourage existing players to keep coming out. They will do this if they are having fun. If you are fortunate enough to have too many players, start a second or "B" team.

Do not schedule practices when attendance will be low. It is far better to have a fewer good practices than many bad ones. If too few people show up to play a game, do not call off practice. Spread out and toss the disc around. Do drills. Plan how to get more people at your next practice. Calling people beforehand may be a pain, but it is a great way to insure a solid turnout.

Ease people in. They will get involved and stay involved because of social aspects. Sure, the fitness aspects of Ultimate are excellent. The competition can be great. But people keep coming for the fun. A new Ultimate team can be an easy, non-threatening way to meet people and make friends. Keep in mind and encourage the social aspects of Ultimate. Bring in a music box to practice. Create team psych and cheers. If you do, you will be amazed how quickly people forget what life was like before Ultimate.

Your First Meeting

After your kick-off, have a club meeting. Start the social aspects early. Explain how to play Ultimate. Show an Ultimate video. A video can serve as a teaching tool, pointing out cutting, dives, and team strategy. You can borrow a video from the BCDSS

library (look at their website www.bcdss.bc.ca) Before the meeting ends, decide when and where future practices will occur. Be sure to create a team phone list.

Your Early Practices

Playing games is what Ultimate is all about. But do not forget the fundamentals. Start practices off slowly. First, teach the basic throws and catches. Try to be patient with new recruits. Rather than being negative, use positive reinforcement. Take time to explain the correct way to perform a skill.

Along with drills, be sure to play a game of Ultimate at each practice. At first, it may look out of control, but new players need to get a sense of the game and how much fun it is to play. New players will have fun playing Ultimate no matter how many turnovers occur.

Warm up your body and stretch before playing. People will think twice about coming out to practice if their body still aches from the last practice. Have group stretches before and after practice. Stretching prevents injuries. Make sure you discuss the importance of stretching.

Be a leader. If you are the captain, then, like it or not, you are the role model. If you do not run hard at practice, you cannot expect others to do so. If you get frustrated during games, others will too. If it is difficult for you to run hard, appoint a teammate to be the “drills coach.” Let this person motivate you and others during practice.

Be positive. Others have to believe that you have the “master plan” and that things are progressing well. Be confident in yourself and your team. Be proud of what you are doing. You are doing what every Ultimate player greatly admires: promoting the sport we love.

Find a Local Club Player

Get some expert help. There is a wealth of local experienced Ultimate players willing to coach your team. The BCDSS wants every high school to have an experienced player “adopts” a new high school team. Use the BCDSS to assist you in finding a coach.

Pass on the Team Once You Graduate

Keep your team alive after you graduate. Before you graduate, appoint a non-senior to become the new team leader. Train this person to continue the recruiting efforts. Contact the BCDSS so we can be in touch with the new high school contact.

Ultimate in Your P.E. Classes

For Ultimate to really grow, it needs to be taught and played in P.E. classes. Talk to your gym teachers. Explain to them the wonders of Ultimate and ask them to include it in their classes.

Ultimate is perfect for high school P.E. classes. It is inexpensive to play. All you need is a disc, a field, some cones (or other line markers), and some students. No referees are needed. Ultimate is a great source of pure physical exercise. The action is non-stop, and everyone is involved. There is no “right fielder” that gets less action than the others do. Ultimate encourages people to work together as a team, rather than emphasizing the individual.

Other reasons why Ultimate is a great high school P.E. sport include: it is great fun to play, it has simple rules, it teaches coordination, it can be played co-ed, it can accommodate more or fewer players by increasing or decreasing the field-size, and everyone can achieve some level of proficiency.