

# ULTIMATE TEACHING CURRICULUM

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Ultimate is the sport of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! This teaching curriculum is to assist you in teaching Ultimate to students. Many physical education (P.E.) teachers include Ultimate in their classes. We hope you will too.

For too long people viewed a flying disc (“Frisbee” is a registered trademark; a “disc” is the object thrown) as a toy which you toss to a dog. Actually, Ultimate is an intense sport, stressing physical fitness, coordination, and cooperation. For students, Ultimate is the ideal sport.

## **What is Ultimate?**

Ultimate is a fast-moving field sport played with a flying disc. The game combines the passing and scoring of football, the cutting and guarding of basketball, and the non-stop movement of soccer. Every Ultimate player is actively involved throughout the course of play since each player constantly acts as a quarterback, receiver, and a defender.

Ultimate is played on a field 70 yards long by 40 yards wide with 25-yard endzones. Each team has seven players on the field, with substitutions allowed between goals.

The object of Ultimate is to score a goal by completing a pass in the opponent’s endzone. Running with the disc is not allowed. After making a catch, the player must stop and establish a pivot foot before attempting the next throw. In the meantime, receivers cut for the player with the disc (“thrower”), often running established plays and patterns. The disc may be thrown in any direction and there are no offsides.

One point is awarded per goal and a new throw-off (“pull”) occurs after each score. A typical game lasts to 15 points but can be played to a time limit. On defense, no contact or tackling is allowed. Rather, the defending team tries to force a turnover by guarding the thrower and receivers. A turnover results when the disc is not completed (e.g. caught by a defensive player, knocked down, goes out-of-bounds, touches the ground.) A turnover results in an immediate change of possession.

Ultimate’s unique use of the flying disc adds a dimension not seen in ball games. Unlike a ball, a disc floats, hovers, and curves. A skilled thrower can guide it over and around defenders.

An Ultimate game is filled with dives, leaps, blocks, one-handed grabs, short give-and-go passes, and field length bombs. Action is intense, exciting, continuous, and contagious.

## **The Spirit of the Game**

Another unique feature of Ultimate is self-refereeing. A high priority is placed on sportsmanship and fair play. Players are responsible for their own foul and line calls. This element, “The Spirit of the Game,” is greatly valued by players because it creates an etiquette and camaraderie not found in other sports.

Ultimate players resolve their own disputes. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play. Actions, such as taunting, intentional fouling, and “win-at-all-costs” behavior are contrary to Ultimate’s spirit. Playing with this spirit builds and reveals a player’s character.

## **History of Ultimate**

Ultimate was created by students at Columbia High School in Maplewood, New Jersey. They sought to combine the fun of playing with a Frisbee with the challenge of conventional competitive sports. From its birth in a high school parking lot, Ultimate spread to local high schools. Columbia graduates introduced the game to their respective colleges. The first intercollegiate Ultimate game was played in 1972 between Princeton and Rutgers, exactly 103 years after the same colleges played the first intercollegiate football game.

By 1975 the first intercollegiate Ultimate championships was held. The sport grew, with highly competitive clubs forming. Ultimate’s first national championship was held in 1977. In 1989, the British Columbia Discs Sports Society (BCDSS) was formed to organize, promote, and direct the sport of Ultimate in the province of BC.

Currently, the BCDSS has over 3,000 members, including some of the best men and women’s teams throughout the country. Players compete in a variety of divisions, including Open, Women’s, Masters, College, and High School divisions. The annual Junior and Senior Provincial Championship is the BCDSS’ “Super Bowl” for Juniors Ultimate.

Ultimate is established in Canada, the U.S.A, Western Europe, and the Pacific Basin. It is developing a solid presence in South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. Ultimate is presently played competitively in twenty-five countries. National teams, including high school teams, from around the world meet every four years for the World Flying Disc Federation Ultimate Championship.

## **Let the Students Play**

Ultimate is perfect for high school students. Everyone is involved. In Ultimate there is no “right fielder” who gets little or no action. Every Ultimate player is constantly part of the action.

Ultimate is simple and inexpensive to play. All it takes is a disc, a field, some cones (or other line markers), and a group of students. Ultimate is fun, builds character, teaches coordination and emphasizes fitness. It can be played co-ed, and every player achieves a level of proficiency. An Ultimate game can accommodate more or fewer players by increasing or decreasing the field-size. Also, Ultimate can be played indoors and outdoors.

### **Learning Sequence**

Now that you have a basic understanding of Ultimate, here's how to convey it to your students.

**Chalk Talk:** The first thing you need to do is explain Ultimate to your students. We recommend that you explain:

- How to play ultimate.
- The basic rules
- How to warm up and stretch

**Every Practice:** During every practice, be sure to at least accomplish the following:

**Warm Up:** Ultimate is demanding on bodies. Be certain to warm up before and cool down after playing. Most Ultimate players warm up by:

- Jogging 2 laps around the field
- Stretching their entire bodies, emphasizing quad, hamstring, and calf muscles

**Throwing Practice:** You can never throw enough. It is the most basic part of the game. Before playing, most Ultimate players:

- Divide into small groups (2-4 students) and play catch. Concentrate on basic throws: backhands and forehands.

**Play a Game:** Ultimate is fun to play. Even if there are lots of turnovers, students will enjoy themselves, exercise, and be excited about playing again.

### **Improving Skills**

As skills improve, Ultimate becomes even more enjoyable. If time permits, teach some drills. Try to learn one new skill per week.

**Offensive Skills:** A team advances the disc by throws, cuts, and catches. An offense that uses a strategy, based upon positioning, timing, and flow, will be much more effective.

**Throwing:** The quickest way to improve the quality of play is to improve throwing skills.

**Catching:** Ultimate's basic catch is the two handed "pancake" catch: one hand clapping down on top of the disc while the other hand claps up on the bottom of the disc. Catching skills are improved by concentrating through a catch.

**Positioning:** Receivers need to work together. Offensive teammates must give each other space to get open. The basic offensive positioning is 3 handlers (looking for short throws), 2 middles (looking for mid-range throws), and 2 deeps (looking for long throws).

**Timing:** The thrower cannot release the disc in all directions at once. Receivers need to stagger their cuts. When the thrower does not deliver the disc to a cutting receiver, s/he must leave the "passing lane" to make room for a teammate to get open. A receiver is open when ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The receiver has gotten open from his/her defender
- No other defenders are near the receiver
- The thrower is ready to deliver the disc to the receiver
- The thrower can make the throw

**Flow:** Once a receiver has made a reception, another one needs to be ready to make the next one. Keep the disc moving. Do not allow the defense time to reposition itself. With good positioning and timing, offense becomes easy.

**Defensive Skills:** Defense is more straightforward than offense. Basically, defense is guarding your appointed player. There are many strategies to aid defenders. These strategies involve teamwork in which the marker and defenders work together.

**Marking:** The Marker's job is to guard and pressure the thrower without fouling him/her. The marker must remain a disc length away from the thrower, communicate to fellow defenders which side of the field is being forced, and quickly guard the thrower once s/he releases the disc.

**Defending:** The best defender is always near his/her assigned receiver and over-guarding ("buffering") him/her on that chosen side. There are three main person-to-person defenses. Each one of these defenses helps put more pressure on the offense.

*Straight Up "D":* The standard defense in which the marker tries to block every throw. Defenders do not buffer receivers. They simply guard their receiver over the entire field.

*Force Sideline "D":* The object of the Force Sideline is for the marker to force the thrower to release the disc toward a designated sideline. When the marker pressures the thrower to deliver the disc to one side, defenders can concentrate on buffering receivers to that sideline.

Force Middle "D": The object of the Force Middle is for the marker to force the thrower to release the disc into the middle of the field. This causes the field to become very congested, making it easier to clog the passing lanes. Defenders concentrate on buffering receivers to the middle of the field.

### **The 40-Minute Lesson Plan**

Time is the great constraint. You can only accomplish so much per class. Below is one way to divide your class time. Be certain to warm up and practice throwing before every game. If you have more time, play longer games and perform a drill

#### **Warm-up:**

- Jog 2 laps around the playing field (4 minutes)
- Stretch (6 minutes)

#### **Throwing Practice:**

- Toss Disc/ Throwing Drills (5 minutes)

*Choose teams while throwing practice occurs.*

#### **Play Games:**

*If there are any subs, encourage them to practice throwing while on the sideline.*

**Variations:** If you have less time to play or want to get more action-time, try the following changes to the standard game of Ultimate:

- 1.) **Eliminate the pull.** By eliminating the pull, you will speed up the amount of action-time by reducing the downtime. Two ways to accomplish this are:

Start at your own goal line: After a score, the offense begins with the disc at the front of their endzone.

"Make it Take it": The team that scored keeps the disc and then tries to score in the other direction.

- 1.) **Speed up the action.** You can accomplish this in two ways. TO get the most action in the least amount of time, incorporate them both.

-Reduce stall count to five: Try five seconds rather than the standard ten seconds to throw.

-Three on three: Divide the field into half length-wise. Play games with only three players per team.