



The Year 2008 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the sport of Ultimate in Maplewood, NJ – a fitting event for the Ultimate Players Association to adopt its first strategic plan, the Ultimate Revolution.

Prior to making this step forward, the UPA took a look back, spending more than a year listening to the Ultimate community at large through more than 25 local community forums; thousands of responses to seven online surveys; and 4 regional summits to gather ideas from Ultimate players, organizers and suppliers on where we should go next.

**Our objective going forward: To advance the sport of Ultimate by enhancing and promoting Character, Community, and Competition.**

**Character: Increase integrity and accountability for competitive Ultimate**

More than 84% of players at all levels of the games believe that Ultimate, without Spirit of the Game, would not be Ultimate.

Improving rules knowledge among Ultimate players is essential to reducing the number of erroneous calls and contests and stoppages of play, and therefore would lead to an improvement in the watchability of Ultimate and its marketability to mainstream media.

Results from our research strongly indicated that players are happy with the current Observer system but would like to see improvements and experimentation in order to facilitate the ideal blend of player accountability and responsibility, fair play and exciting fast-paced action.

**To this end the UPA commits to:**

- Prepare a written document which *clarifies and defines Spirit of the Game* and can be used for marketing both internally and externally
- Implement *spirit rating system* based on Observer, coach, spectator input
- Produce and maintain *online rules resources* including abbreviated rules, annotated rules, rules quizzes, video enactments, cheat sheet of outcomes
- Implement *rules quiz requirements* for a) coaching certification, b) UPA Championship Series

- *Increase the number of and quality of observers* across the country through increased training clinics (goal: 75 new observers per year) and implementation of an observer pay scale system.
- Revise the *Observer evaluation program*; develop recertification criteria and procedures; explore a *tiered system of certification based on documented quality*
- Ongoing *modification of the role of Observers* in Competitive play. In year one Observers will implement active force-out calls, 90% certainty rule for Observer rulings, and experiment with active up-down & travel calls and hand signals.
- Partner with existing college and club tournaments to *experiment with an expanded scope for Observers*.
- Promote use of *UPA established Spirit rating systems* and awards at non-UPA events.

**Community: Support others to grow, develop and promote the sport.**

As a small national organization, the UPA cannot do it all. However, the UPA can take a leadership role in creating community amongst current and former players, and developing materials and training others to make Ultimate happen at the local, state and regional levels.

Youth Ultimate continues to be the area of strongest interest for development, however it is also obvious that action is needed if we are to have successful, sustainable college programs, ties with alumni and parents, increased participation by girls and women, and meaningful partnerships with local organizers and their players.

**To this end, the UPA commits to:**

- *Expand the role of State Youth Coordinators* to increase development of local high school and youth league programs and improve competition at the state level
- Stimulate a *pilot for local Ultimate programs for underserved youth*
- Create a *Youth Ultimate Promotional package* containing youth/high school Ultimate video footage, promotional booklet with information about Ultimate, how to start a school team or local youth league, basic skills. Distribute free to YMCA's, Parks and Rec Depts, PE teachers.
- *Revamp Coaching education offerings* to be better targeted and more accessible; review HS/ MS curriculum and rewrite if necessary
- Form a *league advisory council* to facilitate ongoing structured interaction between UPA and league leaders/; research and develop a league affiliate model
- Create *online community for league organizers*; develop biannual electronic communication for league organizers.
- Design and conduct a regional *leadership training program for women* interested in teaching and organizing Ultimate on the local level.

- Develop *relationships with College Club Sports Administrators and team faculty advisors* in order to build on-campus support for Ultimate
- Implement "Friends of Ultimate" membership for parents, alumni, etc; explore *additional membership levels and services* (including opportunities for play)
- Provide *Alumni reunion benefits* at Club Championships during Hall of Fame inductance years
- *Organize parents group* to increase understanding of the sport and encourage attendance at Ultimate events
- *Create online fields database* for use by league and UPA organizers

**Competition: Develop and enhance competitive opportunities at all levels.**

Players have told us that that they want more opportunities to play, and that UPA opportunities can and should help to showcase the sport. In existing divisions there is demand for greater structure and legitimacy.

**To this end the UPA commits to:**

- Explore the need and structure for *non-school based youth play*, and the potential role of the Youth Club Championships in that structure
- Plan and implement a *Division II College Series*
- Form partnerships to develop *UPA College Pre-Series (Regular Season)* competition program
- *Redraw sectional/regional boundaries and adjust bid allocation system*
- Create *UPA Grand Masters and Women's Masters* Experimental Championship Event(s)
- Implement *roster limits* in the Club Series
- Plan and implement *UPA Club Pre-Series (Regular Season) Competition program* with goal to create showcase events and an environment where high level Ultimate is made more accessible to fans
- *Plan and implement Division II Club Series*



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