



# Ultimatum2007

annual UK ultimate magazine





» My most important lesson: you have to push yourself into a state of personal aggressiveness before the game, but once on the pitch, you must learn to control it, or it will control you. I can't say I have always succeeded.

~ Tammo Rieg



#### Tour 2 Final, Chevron Vs Fire

He [Rob Sherwood] got the disc, but went through my shoulder to get it. I was quite vocal at the time, partly because I got hit pretty hard, but also because it was a total surprise - I had no idea he was so close. Looking at his position in the first photo he made up some serious yardage. He possibly could have made the play on the disc without going through me - but he didn't - so I called the Foul. We didn't agree on the events, so the disc went back. We scored.

Steve 'kenny' Kennedy

Photos © Mark Early 2007, [picasaweb.google.com/earley.mark](http://picasaweb.google.com/earley.mark)

## editor's note

All work and no play makes me a dull boy, but luckily I get to edit this fine publication. This year it's been a gas gas gas thanks to all the help I have received - for the first time ever, people actually approached me with ideas and written articles, which has saved me a lot of back ache! Another boon is the dedicated community of photographers out there which seems to be growing faster than a magic beanstalk.

Some people think of me as a bit of a lad (possibly due to the incident with Jill), but this year I have really tried to get out of the box. I've had to do some pretty nimble editing, and I'm pretty quick with photoshop - but I'm no master of these trades. I would especially like to thanks Rich Hims and Si Hill for their input, without whom I'd be like a knave with a broken crown. Time to hit the road!

Elizabeth Swann once asked "Do you think he plans it all out, or just makes it up as he goes along?" In fact it's a bit of both. I generally ask my contributors to tell their own jackanory rather than try to be objective - there's no point in padding out the whole magazine just to make sure every single team feels equally represented (I never could eat no fat). So I'm sorry if you feel left out - all I can say is this; come forward next year and make a contribution yourself. What a good boy am I?

*Jack Goolden*

## chair's bit

I would like to extend a quick word of thanks to all the volunteers who continue to devote their free time to the organisation and development of Ultimate in the UK. Your efforts are very much appreciated. I would also like to congratulate all those teams and players who have achieved success both domestically and internationally this year and have continued to raise the standard of British Ultimate across all divisions. Good Luck for 2008!

*Laura Pierce - UKUA Chairwoman*



Inspired by real events. Any resemblance between the people herein and persons living or dead is purely coincidental. Names may have been changed to protect the innocent.

### Front Cover

**Tour 2 Final**, Gareth 'gaz' Shaw misses the D but finds a muddy puddle instead.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

### Le Tournoi.

Photo © Jon Brookes 2007

[www.o-o-o.co.uk](http://www.o-o-o.co.uk)

**EUC**, Jamie Cross gets a point block?

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

**Mixed Tour 3**, Emo vs Discuits.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

### Back Cover

**EUC**, Jack Goolden on D.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

**Mixed Tour 3**, Byrony Hall, Discuits.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

**Jestival**, Flaming Galahs

Photo © Michael Peberdy 2007

**Mixed Tour 2**, Sophie Watson.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

**EUC**, Silvano Puliafito, Switzerland.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)

**EUC**. Euro-slaps, GB and Switzerland.

Photo © Tom Styles 2007

[www.tom-styles.co.uk](http://www.tom-styles.co.uk)

» The 'Spirit Of The Game' was explained to me in the following sentence "the rules are only there to ensure that what would have happened happens". All rules should therefore be subject to this general understanding. In other words if a turnover happens and something else happened that didn't affect play then it should be a turnover etc. My only problem with Spirit in this country is with those players who try to analyse the rules to the nth degree and interpret them as if the syntax of the rule itself is the most important thing - it isn't, the rules are there to guide us, not control us. Every time the rules are clarified there will always be ambiguity, stop trying to exploit it! Truth is it's a pretty simple sport really, and we should be trying to play to the Spirit of the rules rather than the letter.

~ David Greyson





# callahan!

Of all the amends and clarifications in the 2007 WFDF rules, the "Callahan Goal" - *scoring a goal by intercepting an opponent's pass in the endzone you are attacking* - was the most high profile and eagerly anticipated. Having been used in student tournaments in the UK for a few years, and getting wholehearted endorsement, no player in the UK this year can have missed the additional buzz it created.

With the rule change coming into force on the eve of Tour 0, everyone on my team was acutely aware of the fame and fortune that would be bestowed upon the scorer of the first Callahan. Sure enough, five minutes into the first round of games of the season, Rich Hims scared an unnamed player into throwing the disc straight to him(s!) and the first official Callahan in the UK was scored.

They say no-one remembers who finishes second, but I always will, because in somewhat unusual fashion, it was yours truly! Ten minutes later, a pass floating loose in the endzone attracted a crowd of players, and it was Chris "Aussie" White, my teammate, who jumped highest. Before he landed, an offensive player knocked the disc from his hand straight to me. My glare

trumped his strip call, and the second official Callahan was mine.

It did not take long for the first Callahan to be scored in a Tour final either, with Keith "Troll" Hogdson of Fusion meriting a Clip of the Day for his effort against Clapham at Tour 1. Callahans are certainly moreish, and Troll also scored one for GB Open at EUC. Not everyone was able to successfully integrate the new rule into their psyche: the GB Mixed team, and in particular JJ, suffered from a spate of 'dropped' Callahans at EUC, before Josh Wardle eventually caught one. JJ was to suffer further Callahan trauma in the final, throwing the dreaded Callahan Assist to a flying Czech player.

The regularity with which Clapham players are involved in Callahans is probably a marker of their success, and a defining moment of Clapham's trip to the US this year came in sudden death against Chain Lightning (2006 UPA semi-finalists). Following a Clapham turnover, Chain were pinned back in their endzone by the tight Clapham defence and at stall nine a desperation pass went straight to Sam "Scando" Webber's midrift (right in the bread basket) as he stood 5 yards inside the zone. Triumphantlly,

Sam double-handedly whacked it straight into the ground with a thud. Only after the disc thudded into the ground - and several team mates called over "Er, Callahan?" - did the full calamity of his action dawn on him! In days of old, getting a block in sudden death to win the game made you the hero, but now 'block' has become 'dropped Callahan' and a new standard has been set.

Whatever you think about the Callahan goal, I suspect it is here to stay and the cries of "CALLAHAN!!" from the sideline are a useful reminder to spectators that something exciting could happen at any second.

Jaimie Cross

Rich Hims  
Photo Jack Goolden © 2007

EUC, Stepan Materna after scoring the callahan against GB in the Mixed final.  
Photo © Paul Hurt 2007  
<http://pope.smugmug.com>

Tour 2, Clapham Vs Fusion  
Sion 'brummie' Scone.  
Photos © Graham Bailey 2007  
[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)





# catch that block!

When Hickey first came to Clapham he was always asking silly questions, but within two years he was voted GB's best player. Always ask!

One of the things he said he couldn't do was 'lay out on defence'. He never had a problem laying out on offence, but would just never time it right on defence. This gave rise to the following bit of advice which I have since given to a lot of players.

If you've played for a few years you've probably experienced this situation:

*...you're on offence playing dump or looking for a short pass from the handler. As they release the pass you realise that it's gone astray and almost been thrown to your defender, who's going to get the disc if you don't do something about it. The result is an amazing play from you - you lay out and save the disc...*

Why did you manage to do this? It's simple: because you were on offence and that disc was thrown to you, so mentally you believe that disc is yours, and someone else is about to take it

from you. It helped that you were watching the disc being thrown and realised where the disc was going to end up and that you'd need to layout to get it...

So, why not always play disc like you're on offence? Have your head up, be in a position to see the disc being thrown and be able to read it in that split second. You want to catch the disc, not just stop the other guy from getting it.

Dougie Milne



» Actually being on your toes DOES keep you on your toes; appearing in every aspect ready and hungry for it on offense and defense can be enough to psych out your opponent.

~ Alize 'bob' Clough



# women's ultimate

## A LLLady's Perspective

This year the Women's Tour and Nationals saw a shift to regional geo teams with a total of 17 different teams entering, the highest number of women's teams in the history of UK Ultimate. We also played in peer pools for the first year, making it the most competitive season yet.

The Irish ladies made the trip over twice and the GB Juniors entered two teams, both for pre-Euros training. MU and Icení showed their depth by sending two teams to nearly every tournament and Strange Blue demonstrated a consistency throughout the Tour finishing 8th at all Tours and winning Spirit twice.

The Women's season also saw a whole new field of finalists emerging. Bristol, Icení, Leeds and Swift all made it to at least one Tour final. What a change from Bliss and Icení battling it out last year!

This season was also unforgettable for another reason: the weather! With the best of the weather during Mixed Tour, Women's Tour had the worst rainfall levels since records began with extreme flooding, making for some very wet and muddy pitches!

## The International Scene

Before we start with the Tour we just wanted to give a quick update on the pre-season international scene which was dominated by British club teams. For us personally, Wonderful Copenhagen was where we achieved our best ever result in Europe so we thought it was worth a mention.

This year the tournament became a warm up event for the National teams going to EUC, so we expected some tough games. Using the Swiss format, where every point counted, proved very beneficial for Leeds as it

helped us focus on what became our team mantra on Tour: *"One point at a time!"*

One of our favourite memories of the weekend was a quote from a player on Espoo (top Finnish team) who asked *"When did you guys get so good?"* Our original aim was to be in the top 6... not competing for a place in the final, so it must have happened there. Who knows? But things seemed to be working and we went on to beat the Germans in the semi to meet Icení in our first international final. The final marked the start of a long battle that was to go on all year and although we had come runners up it gave us confidence to take into the season ahead.

## Women's Tour

Our first domestic tournament was a warm up for the women's Tour held in Bristol alongside the open seeding event, Tour 0. The women didn't have an official Tour 0 but we couldn't resist going down to Bristol for the first event of the season, so 6 teams met up to play a mini one-dayer. It was a good practice event before Tour for all teams, and for us it was a success as we beat Icení in the final!

Both Tour 1 and Tour 2 had 16 teams entered, an unprecedented number for Women's Tour. This was a big achievement. There were lots of new teams with strong representation from across the country.

**Tour 1** - aside from the heavy downpours - was a close-run tournament. We found ourselves in three sudden death games, only winning one. Bristol fought hard to beat Icení for a place in the final, where they found themselves up against the other Icení team. Icení came out on top however and looked set to dominate the Tour.

Swift, the hotly tipped team for the season, lived up to expectations and came out fired up for the first Tour, showing everyone that they were

a team to be reckoned with. We narrowly beat them in our peer pool and looked forward to many more tough games to come.

**Tour 2** will be mostly remembered for the mud. It sure was muddy. After the domination of Icení at Tour 1 things seemed to change at Tour 2. Not only were there changes at the top but also in the middle placings. We made the final beating Icení in the semi and Bristol then went on to beat the same Icení team to take third place. Swift dropped to 7th with the Irish Ladies (Biddy Murphy) and MU 1 finishing in 5th and 6th place. After that the standings looked similar to Tour 1.

For us the Tour 2 final was one of the highlights of the season and it was a mud bath to say the least! Captain Sally Fraser's inspirational words summed it up perfectly, *"Just cut in straight lines, that's all you can do to stop falling over!"* Not only was it epic trying to run through the mud, points were full of turnovers with people unable to wipe their hands or the disc: there wasn't a clean part left on their body!

Yet again we were in sudden death, Icení starting with the disc. With a throw into the endzone for the score they turned over and Leeds picked up. Sophie 'Watto' Watson did a huge layout scooping the disc up from within an inch of the mud. The disc was laid-off to Sally for a huge backhand huck to um...no one...! Well that's what we, along with most of the crowd, thought, but sprinting down the far sideline was Gemma 'GY' Youlten who easily pancaked the disc for the winning score. There was a pitch invasion and huge cheer and Leeds had won their first Tour of 2007!

**Tour 3** was the decider for the Tour title and Leeds, Icení and Bristol were all in the running. Over the same weekend players from the top four UK teams had gone off to play some Japanese and Americans in Seattle.





It sounded like they were having an easy time of it... Americans and Japanese aren't fast are they...???

Anyway, back on home soil, only eleven teams had been able to make it out to Tour 3 and therefore we weren't in peer pools. Iceni and MU only entered one team and the Irish Ladies and GB Juniors had finished their pre-Euros training.

The top four teams; us, Bristol, Swift, and Iceni all held their seedings on the Saturday and after final pool games on the Sunday semis were lined up as Swift versus Bristol and Leeds against Iceni. The North took it to the South as both Leeds and Swift came out eventual winners. In the final the experience and depth of Leeds could not be undone by the younger Swift players and we gained our second Tour victory. Iceni beat Bristol to take third place and Brighton Ultimate - a new team previously coming ninth in both Tours - beat MU and Strange

Blue to take 5th place. The results from this meant that Leeds had won the UKUA Tour 2007 and jubilantly celebrated with a bottle of champers, most of which went over Fiona Anderson!

### UK Nationals

Despite being the qualifying tournament for EUCF there were no foreign teams entered (...maybe we put them off after Copenhagen?) so there were four qualifying slots available for UK teams. However, with only nine teams entered it was the worst turnout of all the tournaments. This shows that women's Ultimate still has some work to do to achieve consistently good attendance at all events.

Our first match of the weekend was against Bristol and with an early lead it looked like we should take the game. However, with the arrival of the Bristolian men and a typically

determined spirit, Bristol fought back with huge sideline support to narrow the margin to two points. The game finished 14-11 to us. We won our remaining pool games easily and, looking over to the other pool, Iceni seemed to be on course for the final. We managed to beat an energetic Swift side, trading initially and then dominating in the second half. Iceni also remained unbeaten and secured their place in the final.

The Nationals final for us was a disappointment. After so many closely fought games and success on Tour we were hoping to perform much better than we did. We were unable to work the disc around Iceni's advanced defensive tactics and although we turned them, struggled to convert our offence. All credit to Iceni, they really showed their strength in this tournament, proving that they still are the team to beat and we came away with plenty of things to work on over the long dark winter months.

So with one Iceni team coming top at Nationals and the other Iceni team finishing 7th but with the spirit prize in hand, what will 2008 hold in store for women's ultimate? Will Iceni split their teams again? Will Leeds come back after a winter's training ready to take on the Iceni defence? Will Swift and Bristol continue to develop and come out with a first Tour win? Who knows what 2008 will bring, but we can safely say that 2007 was definitely the most competitive Tour yet!

*Helen Bowker and Ellie Dawkins*

#### Tour 2

Sheffield Steal's Philippa Sturt after a tough day at the office.

#### Tour 1

Lucy Bryne, Nice Bristols!  
Photos © Dave Sanders 2007  
<http://ultimatephotos.org>





## The top 8 in 2007

**Paul 'Voodoo' Waite, who captained Clapham 2 this season, gives us the lowdown on the toughest Ultimate the UK has on offer - the 1 to 8 bracket in The UKUA Tour.**

May I first start off by saying that moving the Tour to later in the year certainly has paid off? Gone are the days of battling out the first Tour in Bristol with torrential rain. Yes - the sun was out in full force - all we had to worry about was keeping the gingers in our teams out of the rays!

### Tour 1, London

Tour 1 always proves to be a rapid learning ground for new comers and the usual suspects alike. A good start to the season is essential: it's the early points that usually dictate the top four for the season. When there are five possible teams for the top 4 spaces, tensions are high and sudden death games become frequent. Tour 1 proved to be no exception.

Leeds showed some class and came out strong against Clapham, taking the half only to lose the game. Afterwards they went on to lose a very tight game against Fusion which dropped them out of the top 4, this left them with a highest possible spot of 5th, a position they couldn't

improve on till Nationals (I'm sure they would always take the Nationals spot over the Tour any day). Fusion also went on to another extremely tight game against Fire from which they crawled out as the winners. Maybe it was down to Clapham's tight defence line, or maybe it was down to Fusion's close games, but Clapham cruised the final to take top position at Tour 1.

Outside the top four, the top eight relegation games were being hotly contended. The most notable was the defeat of Tour 0 winners, Clapham 2 (yes, my team) by Discuits. Yet another sudden death game that took its toll on both teams. Discuits went on to be taken apart by Brighton, although having spoken to a few of them, they were chuffed to break into the top eight.

Despite the inclement weather the pitches held up extremely well and play throughout the weekend was of a decent standard.

Winners: Clapham  
Spirit: Fusion

## Tour 2, Mansfield

Yet more rain and mud, mud glorious mud! Could Clapham win two back to back Tours and seal up the Tour or would someone throw a spanner in the works? Group games couldn't have been tighter notably with Paddy Murphy getting their first win over Leeds, Paddy were looking to peak at Euros and gave themselves a good start. After group stages Chevvy, Clapham, Fire and Fusion took the semi final spots. Chevvy lined up against Fusion and Fire against Clapham. Some die hard attitude and great defence from Fire helped them throw a monkey wrench into Clapham's faltering offence. In the other semi, a decisive conversion of D to O helped Chevvy take down a rain battered Fusion. A much closer final than Tour 2 saw Chevvy gutting out the win to scupper Fire's Tour dreams.

Lower down in the A Tour, Leeds avenged their group loss against Paddy to rescue the 5th spot. Other notable movements were Fire 2 beating Brighton to gain top eight status and Discuits once again beating Clapham 2 in sudden death to hold on to their top eight spot.

Winners: Chevron Action Flash.  
Spirit: Fusion

## Tour 3, Cardiff

Now where can I go to escape this rain?... I know, Wales, that's known for its dry climate... Hmmmpf

With Chevvy winning Tour 2, the Title was to be decided in Cardiff. Tied on points, whoever between Chevvy and Clapham finished higher would take Tour. Could the Tour be decided in the final? Fire mathematically had a chance but would require both Chevvy and Clapham finishing out of the top eight. As it happened, the Tour was decided by Fire of London. Chevvy were beaten by Clapham during their group game clash which meant they (Chevvy) met up with Fire in the semi, Fire had clearly not read the script and booked themselves a spot in their second final of the season. In the other semi, having lost Sam Lord to a nasty injury against Leeds, Fusion were looking very shaky. Clapham walked this game to line up against Fire in the final. Clapham looked the more complete and organised squad, despite a fairly messy final Clapham held out to take the Tour in style.

Finally, despite two previous efforts, Clapham 2 attained top eight status, this was helped by an eight man Paddy Murphy who were still celebrating Ireland success at Euros (congrats to the Irish boys). Also





breaking into the top eight were Mild Mannered Janitors, a well seasoned team whom beat Discuits, dropping them out of the top 8 for the first time. Congratulations to The Brown who manage to finish 12th, a great result for their first season. Good to see another northern team emerging. Leeds manage to secure yet another 5th spot.

Winners: Clapham  
Spirit: Chevron

#### Tour Champions 2007: Clapham

Well, thanks to the combination of three wet and muddy Tours I will be re-ordering my white (now a pinky brown) kit from Lookfly. Lastly, may I congratulate both Fusion and Chevron on their spirit wins during the Tour? It's good to see first class teams competing at such a high level and winning spirit.

Paul 'Voodoo' Waite - Clapham 2

» To quote Wigsy: "Think about the one thing that you are doing, and do it really well. Block everything else out." Surprisingly difficult - but really effective.

~ Matt 'Hickey' Wood

#### Top 16 compared to 2006

Clapham 1	↩ =
Chevron	↗ 3
Fire 1	↘ 1
Fusion	↘ 1
Leeds	↘ 1
Discuits	↗ 2
Clapham 2	New entry
Paddy Murphy	↗ 1
Brighton	↘ 3
Janitors	↗ 7
Fire 2	↩ =
Blue Arse Flies	↘ 2
Bristol	↘ 1
Ltd Release	↘ 1
EMO	↘ 8
The Brown	↗ 22

#### Tour 2, Fusion Vs Clapham

Danny Hoyle tries to squeeze a break force pass to Andrew "twig" Duncan.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

[www.photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://www.photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)

#### Tour 2, Mud

Photo © Kate Orwin 2007

<http://ultimatephotos.org>

#### Tour 2, Clapham Vs Chevron

Photo © Dave Sanders 2007

<http://ultimatephotos.org>





# the drop zone

**One of the exciting things about the Tour is that there are lots of important sub-competitions throughout the entire field. Winning is the most obvious, and breaking the top 8 is another. In fact if wanted to copy American trends, we'd call our top 8 "elite ultimate".**

You can't just rock up and get into the top 8. Although to an outsider I'm sure first impressions of some teams make it look like you can! Name another sport where (some) athletes have championship standard beards? Anyway, this top 8 barrier has always existed - remember the original Tour was designed around a top 8 and was even given the cool name of "Ultim8" to reflect this.

This year, however, we have seen two other mental barriers become significant; the top 12, and the A/B Tour split. Both of these, in part, are due to new scheduling ideas but they are also becoming significant because the talent pool of UK Ultimate has increased yet again.

In case you haven't been in the 12-16 zone, here's what you need to know. The schedule is set up with two pools of 8-16 seeds on Saturday. This format provides teams searching for a top 12 finish with two important games against superior opposition on Saturday. I think only BAF drifted down from the top 12, the other 9-12 teams such as Clapham 2, Fire 2 and Janitors all had a real grip on that section. Sunday is tough, with every

game counting in the battle to avoid relegation. If you don't make it into the top two in the group on Saturday (i.e. top 12) you have a four team round robin on Sunday. Three teams get relegated which means you must win all three games on Sunday to not get relegated (death or glory).

If you do get relegated to the B Tour, the standard drops off quite fast meaning you have a pretty lightweight Saturday but a tougher Sunday ahead of you. It's a huge motivation to not get relegated. Also, having three teams go down means that it took the whole Tour to decide which teams really deserved the 13-16 slots. It also meant you had to wait a while to get a crack at certain opponents.

So what happened that makes this article worth writing? Well in summary, three of the more traditional top tier

teams got relegated and a couple of teams you don't hear much of showed that they are well worth watching. Oh, and it rained constantly. But you knew that already.

**Tour 0** had its part to play in the proceedings. Southampton's Ltd Release sent a skeleton team to the event and ended up playing in the B Tour at Harlington. When a bolstered squad came together at Tour 1, they spent the whole weekend beating opponents, not having more than seven points scored against them in any of their games. Flyght Club and Devon were the other two promotees leaving Leeds 2 frustrated in the B Tour despite being one of the teams showing the desire to get to the A Tour (unfortunately this never manifested itself as an actual promotion). Up in the A Tour, Strange Blue and The Brown got knocked straight back down to the B Tour, along with EMO who took their first relegation pretty hard much to Bristol's delight, after a tough final game between these two rivals, played on a distant muddy pitch while most teams were already heading home.



» Excuses are the nails that built the house of failure.

~ Kenny Dobyns





This took us to **Tour 2** and Mansfield. Saturday was sunny and things went to seed with Bristol, Devon, Flyght Club and Ltd Release all ending up in the round-robin-of-near-certain-relegation. Devon and Flyght couldn't hold out against Ltd or Bristol meaning that it all came down to the muddiest game of Ultimate ever witnessed in July. On the furthest pitch from the clubhouse, played whilst the other finals were going on, Bristol and Ltd battled in a game that ended up being about energy. Ltd had more va-va voom to stop Bristol's progress and then efficiently threw long to score. This happened repeatedly to send Bristol down to the B Tour for the first time ever. It was a game with utter disappointment at the end as Bristol realised they were not immune to the B Tour. At the top of the B Tour, EMO bounced straight back up bringing Strange Blue and The Brown with them.

**Tour 3.** And it rained... on Saturday! An evil weather trick since so many people were camping, everything took so long to dry out. Still the bouncing and shuffling occurred: this time BAF decided they liked the idea of a tough Sunday and decided to drop out of the top 12. This left The Brown a gap to move up in to the top 12 for the first time. To give them full credit, they did this by beating Ltd Release in a very similar fashion to the Bristol/Ltd game. On the furthest, muddiest pitch, played until dusk set in, Brown had the extra legs to dump Ltd into the round robin. This time it didn't matter too much who won the round robin, although points meant places in the overall scorings. BAF triumphed, picking up some subs for Sunday and moving back up in the rankings.

At the top of the bottom, Bristol won out over Devon, and ABH crept into the rankings, not being quite as successful at cracking the A Tour as in 2006.



And so yet again it came down to the mental game. A Tour vets Bristol, Ltd and EMO won the B Tour without too much trouble because in themselves they felt they should be in the A Tour. The other teams that keep popping up had some great games but also some bad games. They are perfectly capable of cracking the A Tour but it's the teams that can show consistency and strength that deserve a top 16 / top 12 spot.

Next year is sure to be exciting. With The Brown coming from a large city, they will improve rapidly. Strange Blue shouldn't be under-rated, and Devon always has a lot of desire. This means teams like EMO, Southampton and Bristol must look at their structure, decide where they want to compete and work towards that. They do have a historical and, therefore, a mental advantage. The key to using that advantage is not being complacent.

A relegation zone is like a homework deadline. Sure, you can do the work the night before and survive, but if you want to achieve more you need to set a target and work harder than your opposition to gain it.

*Will Parker - Ltd Release*

**Tour 3, Brighton**  
Nathan 'baby' Marshall  
Sorry mate... great bid though!  
Photos © Graham Bailey 2007  
[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)

**Tour 3, Bristol Vs Devon.**  
Dan 'fetus' Evans in the B Tour final,  
GB Junior faces up to GB Master.  
Photo © Dave Sanders 2007  
<http://ultimatephotos.org>

» Something I have learnt that has improved my game is to study the player you are marking. Work out what their favourite throws are and what they resort to under pressure. Most players rely on a few specific throws the majority of the time. By watching them you will be able to put a more effective mark on them next time round.

~ Dave Sealy





**This year, the University of Warwick Ultimate Frisbee Club (also known as Warwick Bears) celebrated 30 years of student ultimate with a hat tournament and anniversary ball attended by almost 100 Bears from past and present.**

It is widely believed that the Warwick University club was the first student ultimate team to be set up in the UK. The club was founded in October 1976 by Richard Hicks and friends when they arrived at Warwick University. (Funnily enough, Richard also founded Ultimatum and says he still has the first few issues, written by typewriter, somewhere in his loft!) At the time there was already one other known club in existence - the Ally Pally Tossers, who all lived near Alexandra Palace. Several of Richard's friends from school went to Cambridge University, and founded a team at Cambridge. During the first year Warwick played Cambridge both home and away, which were their only competitive matches of the year. Then in the summer 1977 there was a oneday event in Dulwich, the "National Championships", which Richard recalls included individual disc sports - MTA, distance, accuracy etc. - as well as Ultimate.

Although the Cambridge team was founded at the same time as Warwick, this club did not continue when the original players left - so the club does not have the same continuous history as Warwick.

Since then, Warwick Bears have gone from strength to strength, and have always been a driving force in the promotion of student ultimate. Legend

has it that the 3 pint challenge record was even set at Warwick University at the end of the 1990s!

The club now recruits around 150 freshers annually, and regularly enters both serious and more fun tournaments. It was a great achievement in their anniversary year to win more than 5 tournaments, including both Open and Women's university indoor regionals, showing that even after 30 years the Bears are still a force to be reckoned with. The anniversary celebrations included a hat tournament and it was fantastic to see the founders playing alongside our newest members, not to mention the different versions of the Bears kit from along the way! The anniversary ball in the evening gave a chance for old and new members to meet, reminisce and listen to speeches from Bears of different generations: thanks to Richard Hicks, Derek Robins and David (Thrash) Stobbs for some great speeches. Many people will remember Thrash's enlightening speech: "Yes, so things have changed just a little at Warwick in the past 30 years: we now have 'tactics'".

But I think that Richard summed up the feelings of so many Ultimate players out there: "What I have always been proud of is the way in which Warwick players have been such a constructive force in British Ultimate, going on to found and play in so many other teams. I just happened to be the bloke who started it - the amazing achievement of keeping it going for over 30 years is down to the hard work of all the rest of you."

*Gemma Sarjeant & Richard Hicks*



The current Warrick Bears team  
Photo © Nick Hudgell 2007

**Paganello** Anna Wilks.  
Photos © Chris White 2007  
[www.flatballphoto.co.uk](http://www.flatballphoto.co.uk)

**EUC: Russia Vs Denmark**  
Daniel Ocariz catches.

**EUC: France Vs GB**  
Faissoil M'Bai makes it look easy.  
Photos © Tom Styles 2007  
[www.tom-styles.co.uk](http://www.tom-styles.co.uk)





# sports nutrition for frisbee players

**You may have recently seen Nick “Hargreaves” Bildner promoting a new range of nutrition products from the sidelines, in-between playing games for his team The Clapham Harriers.**

Off the field he has been busy with two friends from university setting up Pulsin’ Ltd, a company that develops, manufactures and sells these products containing nutrient- rich premium ingredients.

Currently there are 3 products in the range; Energy Bombs, Bliss Bombs & Goji Bursts, which are all designed to optimise the natural lift given by the active ingredients. All 3 contain raw chocolate (cacao) which is one of the most nutritious foods on the planet containing very high levels of anti-oxidants and natural stimulants. Most of these beneficial nutrients are destroyed when the cacao beans are roasted during the processing of regular chocolate bars.

Energy Bombs are fortified with a synergy of functional herbs to complement the cacao including guarana and ginseng. One of Hargreave’s colleagues, Ben Lewis, a qualified nutritionist says: *“We have 2.8g of guarana and ginseng in each 60g pack so that people actually feel a metabolic boost from the combination of these active ingredients.”*

The product is a step beyond a standard sugar and calorie loaded energy bar or drink because the main source of energy is from the herbs rather than carbs. It can also improve stamina and mental focus making it useful for office workers as well as gym users and professional sports people.

This concept seems to be catching on as the Energy Bombs are becoming increasingly popular with Clapham team-mates and players from other teams, many of whom now use them to prepare for the big games.



For a good post-match detox, the players each take a few Goji Bursts containing cacao and Chinese goji berries which are rich in vitamin C and amino acids. Goji berries also contain significantly higher levels of protein than most fruits, making them the perfect accompaniment to a good protein shake for muscle recovery after games.

For information and orders go to the Pulsin’ website at [www.pulsin.co.uk](http://www.pulsin.co.uk) or call 020 8558 9200. Frisbee players will qualify for a special discount.



» Play ‘Mini’. It’s fast, furious and intense, Mini teaches you a host of skills relevant to full pitch ultimate; throwing under pressure, decision making when fatigued, breaking the mark, moving the disc quickly, and communication. A staple of Clapham Ultimate training, Mini allows the young-bloods to go toe-to-toe with the veterans and forces them to step up and make plays: you can’t hide on a pitch 20 x 30 x 6. See details at [www.claphamultimate.com/mini/mini.html](http://www.claphamultimate.com/mini/mini.html)

~ Josh Wardle

# brand power

## the secret of longevity?



**As our beautiful sport moves ever forward through the passion and relentless hard work of its participants, we have seen club teams evolve from unidentifiable rabbles into slick, professional and distinctive clubs that are run like businesses.**

A 'Brand' is defined as an outstanding image or identity which reflects the product, values and personality of a company (or in this case a club or organisation). The power and importance of a clearly defined 'Brand' is widely understood within the business community. I only need to describe a successful logo and you know who it is, what they sell and in some cases what image they represent. For example: a silhouette of an apple with a 'byte' taken out.

Those that buy into a desirable brand feel they are joining an exclusive group and that this brand reflects their own values and identity. Indeed, some brands focus less on 'desirability' and instead create a sense of trust, heritage or 'something different' to set itself apart from similar rival brands.

Brand awareness in Ultimate was elevated by the infamous Furious George (Vancouver) whose monkey head logo is now instantly recognisable throughout the worldwide Ultimate community. At trading night, Worlds 1996, I witnessed a punter part with £100 for a used Furious George shirt and since then I have been intrigued by the power of their image.

The emergence of Ultimate-specific apparel brands was pioneered by Gaia in the mid-90's and they have secured a solid position in the clothing and accessories market. As we have seen with Nike and Apple, successful brands have often joined forces to reinforce the values and image that they share. When Gaia adopted Furious George as their official team, both brands grew in credibility and gave Gaia another marketing vehicle. Gaia paved the way for companies such as VC and Lookfly who have worked hard to reinforce their own brand image to set themselves apart from Gaia.

In the UK, we are experiencing a 'Brand Revolution' within the Ultimate community. At all levels, teams are not just developing their zone defence and set plays, but also their websites, logos, kit and public image (boosted by the introduction of strict kit regulations at UKUA events). This in turn has opened the doors to Lookfly

(among a few others) who have firmly established themselves in the European market. Learning lessons from the success of Gaia, Lookfly were wise to affiliate themselves with Clapham Ultimate who represent Lookfly off the strength of their own brand.

A strong 'brand' doesn't develop over night and is not a singularity. The strongest brands are established over years and often associated with a consistent attitude or performance. To establish a strong brand requires an infrastructure that communicates the image and values of the club or organisation e.g. discs, website, kit, style of play etc...

Why is branding important? And why, as the title suggests, is it associated with the longevity of our sport? The future of our sport is reliant on the continued recruitment of new players which in turn is heavily reliant on public perception.

It has been proven in various sports that successful implementation of branding can significantly improve general public interest. It is widely considered that branding in sport could be the most important tool that organisations use in order to find new growth opportunities.

» You can never have too much communication. A team that knows what each other are doing, even if it is not a great team, may well be stronger than a team with talented individuals who don't communicate well.. ~ Knott Shore







Back when I first started playing 12 years ago, family and friends used to watch the sport and comment on its apparent infancy ... now, as the UKUA and clubs take a more professional approach to branding, we have moved light years ahead in the eye of the public. Another perspective comes from Junior Ultimate. Perception of the sport by school kids is heavily 'image' biased. Many of the juniors that train with us admit that it was the image of the sport that first appealed and only appreciated other qualities of Ultimate after playing.

Branding is a trickle-down process, requiring strong and established branding at the top of the game and among the administration. New and smaller clubs will aspire to the brands they see and be encouraged to develop their club and infrastructure. At a local level, establishing a clear identity and goals early in your club's life will help with recruitment and keep players feeling associated with an institution 'here to stay'.

A strong brand is particularly powerful for University teams who work hard to keep their teams at a healthy size. In the face of continual loss of players and relentless recruitment of new ones, a strong brand and a permanent infrastructure gives your club credibility and can entice players away from regular uni sports. Warwick Bears & Mythago are both great examples of this.

The recent developments made to the UKUA website and administration are a perfect example of brand strengthening from the top giving greater credibility and reinforcing the position of Ultimate as an established sport. With regulations on kit becoming stricter and broader, the UKUA are consciously pushing the sport into the professional arena. In particular, Ultimatum is one of the UKUA's most powerful tools in reinforcing the

credibility and sense of belonging that the Ultimate community needs to grow.

In simple terms, successful branding of Ultimate as a sport and the teams within it allows the public to distinguish the sport from other 'alternative' team sports. The strong sense of association felt by an Ultimate player, being part of something different and special, is a powerful factor in keeping a player involved in the sport. If this belonging can be strengthened we can also reduce players leaving the sport.

Looking forward, there is huge scope for 'brand building' within the UK. Aside from distinctive club identities, event branding should be top of the agenda.

Past efforts to 'brand' events include the British Open by Nolan Taylor, Tour 3 by Jack Goolden and various events by Layout Dreams all of whom created a distinctive identity for the events they hosted. In the next few years I hope to see the Tour, Nationals and the Mixed Tour adopting their own individual brand identities, perhaps driven by the a sponsor for each league.

There are some players out there that believe this 'commercialisation' of Ultimate could have detrimental effects on the unique position and nature of Ultimate. This is a really interesting discussion and I agree that there are a lot of challenges to be faced as we grow the sport, particularly on the subject of 'spirit'. However you see it, it's a very exciting time to be an Ultimate player.

*Chris Berry - Chevron*



Team MILF at Frostbite, which is held in January on Sandbanks Beach in Poole.  
Photo © Pieter Funnekotter 2007

**Tour 3**, Discuits Vs Strange Blue.  
Rowan Diamond.  
Photo © Dave Sanders 2007  
<http://ultimatephotos.org>



# tips from the GB coach

When preparing to make a pass, a thrower should ensure that they move their feet and not just their torso. A small pivot step will help maintain optimum balance, move the thrower clear(er) of the marker and make certain that the player has the best chance of delivering the required pass. Whilst many players will be capable of delivering a pass without any movement, against better quality opponents a fake followed by a step will make the throw more likely to succeed by reducing the opportunity for defensive interventions.

The key to catching consistently is keeping your eyes on the disc: if a player can keep their eyes on the disc until they see it stopped in their hands, they will catch it more often than not. Of course using two hands, whenever possible, and choosing the right technique will also improve the likelihood of completing any given catch.

There are three styles/types of two handed catching, each one requiring a change in the position of the hands. They are;

- High (above the shoulder): two-handed rim catch with thumbs underneath.
- Mid (between the shoulder and the waist): pancake catch.
- Low (below the waist): two-handed rim catch with thumbs on top.

By jumping, falling, stooping or diving the range of these catches can be extended but the basic concept(s) still apply. For example, a low pass may be caught using a pancake catch but the catcher should alter their body position so that the disc is in the range between waist and shoulders, rather than just bending down.

*Simon Moore - GB Open coach*

Some quotes from **'Ultimate: Techniques and Tactics'**, that I have used in my coaching material:

No individual and no team can be truly successful without understanding the value of possession. Curtailing preventable turnovers and maintaining possession of the disc must always be on an offender's mind. The principle of possession dictates that an offence must maximise its probability of scoring (or minimise the chance of a turnover), which means that a thrower must select only intelligent throws.

Perhaps more than any other skill in ultimate, catching is a mental skill. Of course, good mechanics are the foundation, but less quantifiable attributes such as focus, intensity and aggression play significant roles in determining whether a disc is caught.

Communication makes for team harmony. Without good communication, there is no team, no whole greater than the sum of its parts. Communication enables a group of seven on-field players to act in unison on offence and in concert on defence.

Any one-on-one defence built solely on winning seven individual matchups all over the field is destined to fail. The field is large, and a skilled offence will find holes. A good team defence tries to shrink the effective playing area of the field so that the offence scores only with great effort, strategy, good decision making, and proper execution. Let it be said: Defence is hard. Even against superlative defence, a good offence will score more than half the time.

*Parinella and Zaslow, 2004*



**Mixed Tour 3, York 2006**  
Matt McMillan. Flaming Galahs  
Photo © Michael Peberdy 2006

**Paganello**  
Tom White on D against Frizmi  
Photo © Roland Tomlinson 2007  
[www.snowspeeder.co.uk/ultimate](http://www.snowspeeder.co.uk/ultimate)



# throwing vs fitness

**In any sport at any level it is important to innovate to stay ahead of the competition. Recent innovations in ultimate have focused on fitness and game preparation. Just a few years ago we were being told that 'winners do track'. Now it seems that everyone does track and there is also an increasingly scientific approach to game preparation and recovery.**

However, what happens when teams are evenly matched in terms of athleticism and fitness? With high standards in these areas well established, it is perhaps now time to focus more on improving disc skills and combining this with more imaginative offence. Our offensive systems have become highly 'cutter-led' as distinct from European teams that tend to use more creative disc skills to progress down the field. We are more like the Americans in valuing speed and fitness above such 'flamboyant' offence.

This is understandable, seeing as GB's objectives have for a long time been to be good enough to compete with the top North American teams. The DVDs and books that are most popular among British Ultimate enthusiasts come from North America and this has contributed to similarities in the styles of British teams and some matches being boring to watch.

In many sports in Britain we tend to value playing games over working on technical skills. There are still remnants of an older culture that almost considers practising to be a form of cheating. It is also common to hear punditry in sports such as football and in both codes of rugby that bemoans our lack of skill compared with other nationalities and how our strategies are based on a high tempo and a certain degree of passion. Arguably, this is how GB Ultimate teams had success in Southampton this year.

We won with powerful, 'in your face' D and basic competence on offence. We can be as good as anyone on D, but our offence still has the potential to let us down.

More players should have the ability to send long passes that they can replicate many times over, and be allowed to show that ability. 'Forbidden throws' such as knives, hammers in the wind or cross-field shots into the endzone are so-called because people don't think it is possible to be good enough at making those throws every time. Why not try getting good enough rather than discouraging people from practising them? It is certainly possible to develop such skills because we see them from Scandinavian and Central European teams. Imagine combining the skills of the best Swedish or Swiss players with the pace and power of the British.

It can be difficult to improve your throws without much more time to practice and even very good throwers often comment that they don't chuck about as often as they did when they were younger. However, after asking some of the best throwers from this year's GB squads, it is apparent that *how* you practice throwing is as important as *how often*. These players set themselves high standards of accuracy and consistency when both practising and playing in tournaments. Some of the best handlers in the GB women's squad use techniques such as goal setting and visualisation in working on their throws. They will focus on quite specific sorts of throws, relating to distance, wind conditions, position of defenders and whether the target is moving towards or away from the disc.

This is all excellent advice, but we can also be more imaginative. This doesn't have to mean having every possible trick throw in your armoury, it

just means having a variety of throws beyond basic flat sidearms and backhands and a decent hammer. Rob Whitehouse, one of the most exciting throwers in the current GB mixed team, told me that playing other disc sports, such as disc golf, really helped him to develop his skills. Practising throws that are slightly different to the normal requirements of Ultimate can improve technique and also open up possible passes that can be very effective even if they are not exactly textbook.

In this country we have the desire to improve and the willingness to make the effort to do so. Channelling that obsession into practising disc skills and combining this with less predictable offensive strategies could provide the sort of marginal improvement that can win tournaments.

*Ben Mitchell  
GB Masters and Leeds Leeds Leeds*

» I bought a big pile of discs (around 30) to practice my deep throws. With so many discs you can make this session quite efficient - and I've no doubt that my hucks have improved as a result in terms of distance and consistency - although arguably from a fairly low starting base! It's important to think about what the flights of the disc should look like at the end in order to be caught easily by the imaginary receiver. This is also something you can do on your own; and is ideal for adding on to a fitness session. ~ Si Hill



**Mixed Tour 2, If vs Boom**  
Rob Whitehouse  
Photo © Roland Tomlinson 2007  
[www.snowspeeder.co.uk/ult](http://www.snowspeeder.co.uk/ult)









look for the



safe pass

or..



and hope



for the best

» Something I have learnt that improves my game is to not particularly listen to my captain or whomever happens to be whinging, and to think, 'actually I don't really care, it's only a game, and my prolific natural talent will more likely surface if I'm enjoying myself'. It doesn't always work, but if I stick with it I generally pull out a few gems over the tournament to keep my inner frisbee vanity at a healthy level.

~ Anonymous

**Tour 2, Fusion Vs Paddy Murphy**  
Sam Lord hucks to Niall Wilkinson.  
Photos © Graham Bailey 2007  
[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)



# Putting theory into practice

**“Practice makes perfect,” they tell us. So that’s what we do – hours and hours of repetitive skill learning, whether you’re a first-timer figuring out the sidearm, or an international starlet preparing for the next big tournament.**

But let’s be honest, we’ve all spent time ‘going through the motions’, not really sure if our practice time is doing any good, and perhaps wondering if there might be a better way of going about it – a short-cut to success without all the (blood,) sweat (and tears).

Well, I can’t promise any instant formulae for perfection, but what I’ll try to do in this article is set out some practical guidelines for efficient learning, based on the theory of skill acquisition. Whether you’re working on your own throwing and catching, or you’re responsible for your team’s training sessions, you should be able to apply many of the suggestions below to your needs. And, come next season, you’ll be better for it, I promise!

If you’re interested in exactly how the advice in this article came about, it’s the result of my own coaching ideas filtered through the lens of a standard textbook on motor learning\*. It’s a complex subject that is developing rapidly both theoretically and in practical coaching terms; as Ultimate players we’re mostly interested in what makes us better players, and that’s what I’ve attempted to distil below.

## One big gulp, or sip by sip?

In simple terms, the best approach for skill acquisition depends on the current level of the skill to be developed: what works well for the beginner doesn’t work so effectively at the higher levels of development.

Basically, it boils down to this:

- At the early stages of mechanical learning there are too many moving parts for your brain to control actively, thus it’s best to repeat the same movement pattern over and over again, so there’s as little variation as possible from one performance to the next. This is known as blocked practice (i.e. a single block of repetitions of the same skill).
- Once a reliable, repeatable movement has been established, you’re better off mixing up your skill learning, so that your brain has to come up with an entire movement pattern (say, for example, an inside out sidearm to a receiver running diagonally away), rather than just making a single adjustment to the previous throw (i.e. if you’ve already been throwing continuous sidearms, and the next one involves just a change of angle). This is known as random practice.

There’s plenty of research (which I won’t bore you with) to show that random practice results in better long-term skill development compared to blocked practice. Paradoxically, however, blocked practice leads to greater improvements during a single practice session, but these short-term gains are not translated into longer term improvements! It seems that the benefits of random practice are related to generalisation and memory retrieval. While blocked practice improves one single movement pattern, which is held in short term memory and modified from trial to trial, random practice allows the brain to come up with a generalised movement pattern, and improves your ability to retrieve that pattern from long term memory. In effect you’re trading rigid, short-term improvement for flexible, long-term ability.

To put it another way, we (or, more specifically, our brains) are lazy beasts,

and if we don’t have to solve a whole problem from scratch we won’t – we’ll merely make a small adjustment to the last movement pattern we made. So if you practice the same throw repeatedly, you’re actually learning how to make slight alterations to a movement, rather than learning how to recreate that movement as a whole. I believe this is one reason for the commonly observed phenomenon of being perfect in drills, but unreliable on pitch; nobody is going to care that you can throw a hundred successful sidearms in a row in practice, if you can’t complete the single two-yarder into the endzone to win the game...

So in terms of the smallest unit of practice time – from throw to throw – your choice of method is clear: if you’re a beginner, do the same throw over and over, but if your basic throwing action is already sound, vary your choice of throw each time. One good way of doing this is to always have at least two ‘improvement projects’ (i.e. different throws you’re working on) on the go at one time, and to choose the next one based on whether you caught the previous throw on your left or right side (or above or below the waist, or one handed or two handed, etc.).

Let’s apply the same logic to a few more common practice situations:

- The oft-used 70 throws-in-pairs drill (30 consecutive backhands – 10 flat, 10 roll-curve, 10 inside-out; 30 sidearms split the same way; 10 overheads) is ideal for beginners, but for players with decent throws it would be more effective to mix up the order (i.e. rotate through the seven throws, then repeat the whole sequence).
- Team drills generally will be more effective in the long term if they involve a random aspect, e.g. a change of force, or choice of cuts to pass to. This could be decided in advance, or – even more effective –

could be chosen at the last moment (either verbally, or via a signal).

- During a training session, don’t work on the same drill for long – switch often, safe in the knowledge that even though your team’s short term improvements may be less, in the long term they’ll be greater.

What about the next biggest unit of time – how long should practice sessions last, and how often should you practice? The advice from researchers is clear here: shorter, more spread out practice sessions are better than longer ones bunched together. This applies both within and between practice sessions: four sets of five minutes working on sidearm rollcurves (using random practice, as above) during the course of a two-hour practice session would be more effective than a single block of twenty minutes. Likewise, half-an-hour’s throwing practice a day over the course of a week would be much better than the same amount of time in a single mammoth session.

This also applies to team drills, so as a coach you’ll get better results (and keep your players more interested) if you split drills into short segments, perhaps interspersed with mini-games, fitness work, or individual throwing time. Even if this isn’t practical every session, consider introducing a quick recap of your main ‘drill of the day’ at the end of the session to reinforce learning.

## Predictable unpredictability

Theoreticians make a distinction between closed and open skills, the difference being whether the performer has control over most aspects of the activity, or, equivalently, whether the skill is performed in a predictable environment. Consider tennis, for example: the serve is a closed skill, as the server chooses when, where, and how to serve,



and can thus plan their movements in advance; a mid-rally forehand, however, would be an open skill, as the timing and placement of the shot must be adapted to the particular circumstances of court location, ball spin, foot position and balance, and opponent's position on the fly. The qualities that make Tiger Woods so good at golf (a closed skill), aren't necessarily the same ones that would be required for, say, a quarterback in American football (primarily an open skill, despite the level of planning that goes into each play).

One of my pet coaching peeves is that too many Ultimate players spend too much time practising throwing as though it was a closed skill (feet not moving, no force, receiver not moving, free choice of timing), whereas in a game situation it's very much an open skill (pivoting, being marked, timing dependent on moving cutters). Admittedly, in the early stages of learning to throw there are too many things for a beginner to control, so it makes sense to keep things as simple as possible until a level of mechanical repeatability has been achieved. Once basic throwing competency is obtained, however, I'd strongly advocate incorporating pivots, markers, moving receivers et cetera to make the skill as 'open' as possible.

For more advanced players, the aim should be to exceed the level of difficulty found in game situations, to make match performance seem easier. (An example of this is the way fighter pilots practice dog fighting in simulators that are accelerated to greater than real life speed, so that reality seems to slow down in comparison.) There are many ways of making skills tougher in Ultimate:

- using shortened stall counts (e.g. starting at 5, stalling to 10) to increase pressure on the thrower;
- limiting players to a subset of possibilities, e.g. no overheads, or left-handed catches only;
- trying to catch on a specific part of the rim of the disc, marked by a piece of coloured tape, to improve focus;
- running shuttles immediately before a throwing drill to practice fatigued performance;
- improving awareness of potential poaches by playing against an extra

defender (or two);

- adding distractions, e.g. loud background noise (Tiger Woods' father would intentionally cough or drop a club when his son was about to play a shot, to improve his ability to ignore distractions).

I'm sure you can think of many others. The point in all cases is that the skill is placed under enough extra stress to stimulate improved performance in game situations, but not so much extra that it breaks down completely (i.e. don't run before you can walk!).

## Tired and tested

Should you practice when you're tired? If you're working on a skill, the perceived wisdom is that light to moderate levels of fatigue don't impair learning (although instantaneous performance may be affected), but that high levels of fatigue do.

It's important to distinguish here between what I'll call local and general fatigue. If you're a beginner learning the sidearm, you'll undoubtedly find that local muscle endurance in your hand or arm will make it hard to keep practising after a certain amount of time. General fatigue, on the other hand, is the result of hard, prolonged exertion, and all Ultimate players have to cope with this and still execute their individual skills accurately. A high-level player should be conditioned to cope with even severe levels of general fatigue, without a significant degradation of skill performance.

Let's delve into the realms of psychology for a while, and consider an aspect of skill performance that will be of particular interest to coaches. Consider, for example, a single throw in a game that results in a turnover; it's important for a coach to be able to distinguish between:

- mechanical errors due to poor technique;
- mechanical errors due to local fatigue (e.g. after hard drilling);
- mechanical errors due to general fatigue (e.g. after several cuts);
- decision-making errors due to lack of awareness (either internal or external);
- decision-making errors due to lack of concentration (possibly induced by general fatigue).

Just because a throw has gone to ground it doesn't necessarily mean there's a physical fault involved, and working on the mechanics of the specific throwing action may not be the appropriate approach. You need to analyse the underlying cause(s), and work out an appropriate coaching response: it may be that an individual's throwing action always breaks down when tired (or in the rain, or into the wind), or that an entire team is consistently less accurate when levels of distraction or pressure go up. Good analysis is key to good coaching, and replicating the circumstances of an error may be essential in eradicating it.

On an individual level the same principle applies: good, honest self-assessment is necessary if you want to improve your overall game. To improve your skill set you need to know where your weaknesses are, and what you should be aiming for. A practice diary will help here, to record what you're working on, note down problem areas, and ideas for future practice. It may help to talk to team-mates too; you could ask them to help spot mechanical issues, or particular circumstances that cause you problems. You can't fix it if you don't know it's broken!

## Getting it together

Every throw-around, no matter how short, is a potential skill development opportunity. Here's how you could approach a quick ten minute session between games at a tournament (with bracketed comments to highlight the application of the principles I've introduced so far):

- 1) OK, I'm a little sore after the last game; I'll spend the first couple of minutes loosening up and getting the blood flowing. Sidearms and backhands (random, not blocked!), medium range, and taking a couple of steps towards each pancake catch to get the feet moving.
- 2) Feeling warm now; I missed a low left-handed catch in the first game, so I'll look to catch any low ones with one hand (increased difficulty) to work on that. Also, I fluffed an upwind backhand break force (self analysis), so I'll throw into the wind

and work on my sidearm fake and pivot to backhand (replicating circumstances to eliminate an error).

- 3) OK, feeling confident on both of those now; time for a quick bit of maintenance work; let's rotate round to get some wind variations (throwing is an open skill, not a closed one), and make sure all my stock throws are feeling sound.
- 4) Good, I've gone through the basic repertoire; time for a bit of fun – let's work in a few 'not-ready-for-match-play' throws (developmental work) to mix it up.
- 5) Lastly, I'll grab a colleague and do a little break force drill, making sure I squeeze in a few more break force backhands (recap, increased difficulty, replicating circumstances). Job done, bring on the next game...

The simple application of some basic learning theory will allow you to make the most of every practice session, and supercharge your skill development. Training time is precious – make the most of it!

Jeff Jackson

\* Schmidt and Wrisberg's Motor Learning and Performance (Human Kinetics, 2004).



Tour 2, Fire Vs Leeds. Gareth Shaw.  
Photo © Graham Bailey 2007

# Ireland makes marginal improvement on previous showing

**Four years ago in Fontenay, the Ireland teams entered a tough EUC. The nations we would have traditionally competed against were scared/broke and stayed away. Both Irish teams were seeded last, both out of our depth, and both teams finished last without winning a game. Not so great, but my how things change.**

In no time at all 2007 rolled around and it was off to Europe again. Since then the Open team had culled its old men entirely and started afresh (I exaggerate. A few managed to dodge the draft and made it for 2007. The proper old ones were aptly dispatched to various retirement homes in deepest darkest rural Ireland). The ladies weren't quite in the same situation. They were/are still a young team (for example, they retained their long serving STM over the years, Fiona McDonald, who is now a whopping 24 years old). Anyway, we had spent the intervening years building effectively two new teams. We played Tour year after year as Paddy Murphy, the girls as MAC and later Biddy Murphy. The reliable quality of games saw "those feckin' Paddies in their scabby cotton t-shirts" <sup>(1)</sup> improve steadily. At the turn of 2007, we had the best pool of talent we've ever had to play with, but much more importantly, we knew exactly what we wanted to do with it. Delicious.



Now, for the Open team, nobody was selected. Instead 22 guys were offered a place on the team. Our intentions were clearly laid out to each player, as were their commitments should they choose to take up the opportunity of playing for Ireland. They were asked for a pretty big commitment in terms of time, effort, fitness, attendance at practice/tournaments etc. It was nothing revolutionary, but we were asking them to empty the tank completely. Nobody said no. From then on, they were asked to do no more than what they had agreed to do, but by God, were they held to the commitment they made to each other and the team.

The next few months flew by as we hammered away at the simple structures and skills that we were intent on beating teams over the head with<sup>(2)</sup>. We got some great game experience along the way at Tom's Tourney and Tour. We won some close games, lost some close games, and even found time to bottle one or two (thus learning useful lessons on how to and how not to bottle games). All the while we knew that we really wanted to scalp somebody. The majority of results go as expected in our sport, and we really wanted to upset the apple cart and beat some crowd who everyone would expect to dismiss us with ease. At home we continued to run our pasty little legs off at practice and on the track.

By the time EUC came the team was ready. We had genuinely put in an enormous effort together and that would turn out to be the strongest card in our hand. For that reason we were very confident that we could make an impact. As it happened the week unfolded wonderfully for us, despite a somewhat bumpy start. We had GB in our first game and were looking for a repeat of the result from 2003 when, if memory serves me correctly, Ireland won 17-13 (I might



have that score line slightly wrong but nevertheless, I do recall that game going quite well for us). Anyway your boys had very different ideas and promptly set about throttling us. This time, they might have won the game 17-2. Ahem. The Czech Rep felt the backlash and were beaten 17-0, the only bagel of the Open Division. Our first scalp came in the 'winner goes top 8' clash with Italy. We had never beaten them before but knew we had what we needed. Our Tour experience stood us in good stead when at 10-10 the hooter went and we ran the game out 13-10. Ireland in the top eight was a big enough surprise for the tournament, but the best was yet to come. The poor Danes weren't expecting what happened next. A truly epic game saw both teams slogging it out for nearly 2 hours. All the while they were hoping we'd fade away, but as soon as we were in the game we steadily became more and more rabid (but a kind of very focused

rabid, you see). They couldn't believe what was happening as we went toe to toe, especially when we took the lead for the first time at 17-16. More trading lead us to sudden death on offence. Three simple passes later and we had taken them down 19-18. Delirious Paddies, heartbroken Danes, enthralled sidelines. Scalp #2 for Ireland. Glee. The hunt continued the next day with the French. A win would send us straight into the quarter finals, which by itself would be a fantastic achievement. In the end, it came down to who was the stronger unit. Eighty minutes later, 17-12 Ireland. Eat that Frenchies! Scalp #3. We played to win against Sweden but they kept us at arm's length and beat us 17-13 to retain their 1st seeding. We would have to settle for entering the quarter finals as 3rd seeds. Simply not good enough.

Switzerland were our opponents in the quarter final and it would take





something special to beat them, but we'd already produced the special several times that week, so we weren't scared. It didn't happen for us, and the roller coaster came to a tooth-chipping halt as they beat us out of sight 17-4. Ireland Open ended up finishing 6th. There weren't too many bets placed on that at the start, Ireland finishing 6th ahead of France, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Austria etc. A job well done we felt, and 22 proud Irishmen promptly set about re-acquainting themselves with the booze.

In the Women's Division the Irish team had been seeded 9th and had two goals for the week – 1) to beat their seeding and 2) to win more games than the Open team. Similarly to the Open team, the women had trained hard all year and played Tour together, and came into EUC quietly confident of causing an upset or two.

Despite recording a huge 5 victories over the course of the week (it should be noted that coming into EUC '07, the Irish Women had not won a single international fixture at either EUC '03, or WUGC '04), beating seeding was not to happen. Unfortunately international seedings saw the ladies in a 'Pool of Death' with GB (finished 2nd), the Swiss (3rd) and Germany (4th), and no crossovers meant that by end of the pool games there was no chance of coming higher than 9th. This, along with the ever-present 6.30am starts, left the Women's team frustrated at what might've been (especially after beating the Dutch at Brugges). There were high points – beating the French well (after losing heavily at Brugges) and gaining revenge on teams like Latvia and Russia for losses at WUGC '04. And there were lows – losing two tough, close, games to Sweden and Switzerland who both went on to finish top 7, not to mention finishing 10th despite winning the bottom pool.

All in all, the week went very well but was to finish on a down note as the French team pipped the Irish to 9th in the last game play-off. That said the Ladies got the 5 victories that the Open team got and had a riot of a weekend to follow! All bodes well as the victories that eluded the team until this year finally arrived and the player base got the vital experience to keep the growth of Women's Ultimate in Ireland going strong.

Personally EUC itself was the best such tournament I've ever been to. Our lives were made very easy that week with great accommodation, transport, food and fields. It left us free to concentrate fully on the task at hand. It's also worth saying that a lot of people commented that we looked like battle hardened Tour teams. That's something we took pride in. The Tour is a fantastically reliable, intense and competitive event. It's by far and away the best competition of its type in Europe, and we're very, very grateful to have participated in it for the last 4 years. We would even hope that we might have contributed in some small way over the years.

*BB Mac JC & Marko*

#### References:

- (1) Former Minister for Sport Katie Hoey commenting on 2006 tour season.
- (2) Hello Discuits!

#### **EUC, Italy Vs Ireland.**

Enda 'the hag' Naughton, our best receiver by a country mile...

Photo © Si Williams 2007

#### **Tour 2, Paddy Murphy Vs Fusion.**

Chris Stokes catches under pressure.

Photos © Graham Bailey 2007

[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)



» Something I have learnt that improves my game is knowing my role on the team. When playing with people who are better handlers than me I will try to be as safe as possible. If I am one of the stronger throwers on the pitch, I have been working on taking more risks with putting discs long-ish. It doesn't always look pretty but my long game has got better.

~ Knott Shore



# European Ultimate Championships 2007

**During the lead up to the tournament the weather looked bad: with terrible flooding across the country and rain still falling, the EUC management must have felt a sense of impending doom. But then a miracle occurred - the sun came out! We played the whole week under sunny skies on nice, soft pitches.**

Andy Kayley and his team did a superb job of organising this event, the most practical of their innovations being putting a map of the pitches on the player pass - so simple but so useful.

There were 7 divisions, and after an excellent week of Ultimate, the British squad had a team competing in every single final.

After the tournament, this report was sent anonymously to britdisc. I have removed some bits, but I felt that the knowledge of the GB players and tactics across the board made this an excellent record of events.

➡ The first final to be played was in the **Junior Women's** division, between GB and Sweden. A notable mention has to go to #4 Johanna Szczygłowska, who was a pivotal player both in this team as well as the Under17 GB Open squad. Maybe in three years she'll be ripping up the Uni Ultimate scene. GB had beaten Sweden twice already, but the Swedish team had in turn beaten GB2 to 1 or 2 points, so they knew how to win games, and stepped it up for the final, on the show pitch, to make it a thrilling sudden death battle. #20 Abbie Dutton stood out as GB's main scorer, with captain #12 Amie Channon using the experience she's gained from Chichester Uni and Brighton to lead the team to GB's first Gold - despite her final disc into the endzone being a bit shaky, Abbie pulled out an awesome grab over two defenders and then got completely bundled by the entire jubilant GBJW squad. Lots of promising play and great work by the coaches, but definitely a division which can improve dramatically over the next few years.

➡ Next was the **Under 17** division, and leading up to it GB appeared to be on their way to their second gold. #8 Josh Kyme, had been leading the offensive charge of this team all weekend, pulling out anything and everything that was needed to score the points - commanding the homeboy, solid hucking, or lateral swinging of the disc where he appeared to be on the end of every third pass - he truly had an awesome tournament and will be a player to look out for in coming years, with his technique already characteristic of top level Tour handlers. #10 Sam Green also had a great tournament with dozens of money discs to the endzone and working well with Josh on the nippy handler moves. #3 Matthew Codd stood out as the main receiver, bringing down plenty of high discs with solid reads, and once this one learns to layout he'll be a formidable force in any division. Overall the U17 division was the most impressive of the tournament, it would be an insult to the GB U17 squad to use phrases like "they know what they are doing" and "they play real ultimate", though

those are what naturally spring to mind when you start watching. After that you simply enjoy watching the top quality ultimate - the only reminder of their age being the disproportionate size of the disc. Unfortunately things didn't seem to quite click in the final as they had been all tournament, and the Finns took the Gold home, leaving GB with Silver and promises of great things to come. Props to Andy Vaughan for the great work he must have put in to create such a talented and self-sustaining team.

**Junior Women GB Vs Sweden**  
Sarah "Ruby" Rennison.

**Masters, Finland Vs Austria.**

**Masters, GB Vs Finland**  
Merrick Cardew gets a foot block on Timo 'the man who never makes a mistake' Vaskio. He called 'Foul'.  
Photos © Tom Styles 2007  
www.tom-styles.co.uk



➡ **Masters** was next, though I don't feel I can comment too much due to only seeing a few snippets of games throughout the weekend. GB looked very strong in their warm-ups but not flawless on the pitch. Merrick was a big playmaker as expected, everybody was surprised to see Lars in this division, where he nipped around all over the place making a big difference. Also interesting to note Adam Batchelor was the only GB Master not to catch a score all week - draw your own conclusions... [Obviously, the Masters division is the cream of the tournament, GB won Gold against Finland in a spirited and exciting final. The pivotal point of the final was probably when #18 Jack Goolden got a 'D' and then scored the point.

An interesting story in this division was the tactics of the small Austrian team; who realised they could throw several early games and still have a shot at the final. There's no rule against it, but most people felt that it was pretty dubious. In the end they lost a close semi final to Finland. Ed]







→ The GB **Mixed** squad had been a great team throughout the tournament, relaxed and confident, with a great atmosphere surrounding them and some awesome skills as an accompaniment. Issy Burke took a game to get into it, but didn't look back, leaving defender after defender eating her dust as she quickly established herself as the top female scorer. Tara and Wilks showed solid play and perfect layout form to get the team psyched, DJ, Jaimie Cross and ever-calm Rob Whitehouse presented a constant threat with the disc and with Dav, Gash, Kathy Walker, Josh Wardle, Milla, JJ and plenty of others cutting deep, it was simply a matter of working those game-start nerves out of the system before opening up the real depth of the squad and pulling away from almost everybody they faced.

The defeat by the Czech team earlier in the tournament gave them a kick up the arse, so for the final they came out strong and didn't look like they were going to stop, until right near the end, when the points just stopped

coming, and a Czech comeback got everybody a bit worried - especially when their star player pulled off an amazing layout callahan goal off the first pass, taking advantage of JJ's hesitation to catch the pull, and one defender's ability to stop the easy first pass. GB of course regained composure and put it away soon afterwards, earning the third GB Gold of the tournament. The GB Mixed team, with wise words from Beardy O'Kane, showed exemplary spirit throughout the tournament. A great combination of young and old players, and a diverse set of facial hair styles, they were always a pleasure to watch.







➔ First final of the Saturday and it was GB against Germany in the **Junior** division. Germany had shown the tournament what they had during their showgame early in the tournament, where they would work smoothly up the field and then rip out crossfield hammers for scores, point after point. In the group stages, GB had seen this and wisely chosen to force backhand the whole way, making a comeback at the end to win in sudden death, #9 Sion Regan cutting from the front of the stack and plucking a disc from above a German defender for the final point.

However, in the final against Germany, it became apparent that GB were exhausted and deflated from the emotional run-up to the game, and though you could still see their skills shining through occasionally, the formidable German zone shut GB's confidence down, at one point forcing them right to the back of their own endzone for a block along the back line which could've been toed in for a Callahan. Both Germany and GB have great Junior squads, but The Alternative Voice believes GBJ were taught a valuable lesson this week, and hopes they have the tenacity to learn from it and move forward as a stronger team next year.

#### Mixed

Jaromir Koubek, Czech Republic.  
Photo © Graham Bailey 2007  
[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)

Josh Wardle tries to take what is not his.  
Photo © Paul Hurt 2007  
<http://pope.smugmug.com>

Phil Millburn, Mark Fulford, Jaimie Cross  
**Team Federer...** We had been trying to come up with a gimmick for a while, from custom tracksuits to random hats, or maybe arriving in a stretch limo every day.... But then we were all watching Wimbledon and inspiration struck us in the form of Roger Federer and his amazing white suit! So we went for it! Little did we know a couple of actual Swiss guys were sporting the full white suits too, needless to say they became our buddies from then on.

Photo © Graham Bailey 2007  
[photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey](http://photoboxgallery.com/grahambailey)

#### Juniors

Up! GB Vs Austria.  
Mike Regan, GB Vs Austria.  
Photos © Tom Styles 2007  
[www.tom-styles.co.uk](http://www.tom-styles.co.uk)



## GB Women

Ruth Carlton lays out.

Sophie Watson, GB Vs Switzerland.

Sally Fraser winds up a side-arm.

Photos © Tom Styles 2007

[www.tom-styles.co.uk](http://www.tom-styles.co.uk)



➡ The **Women's** final that followed was exhaustively uninspiring. An early injury to Gemma Taylor took out a great GB arm, but the loss was down to more than that. GB Women were unquestionably a pleasure to watch throughout the week, taking advantage of turnovers to quickly work the disc up the pitch and score point after point, regularly looking unstoppable with their dynamic five upfield offence (set up like the 5 on dice), shutting down teams with layout D's, destroying them with hucks, it looked really, really good.

Right up until the final. Maybe more could have been made of the young blood in the last game - there were too many tired handler mistakes and not enough of Jools hucking to Sophie Watson for instance, but Ultimate is never quite that simple.

Something just didn't click, it seemed like the team were somehow being dragged down to a lower level and then some, like they were very tired - I guess it was just unfortunate it happened in the final. At all other points throughout the weekend GBW were on form and firing, well drilled and dynamic, flexible and expansive, striking fear into the opponents by invariably going into the second half stronger than their opponents could imagine and completely taking games away from them. Sally Fraser, Sue, the Gemmas, Francesca, Maria, Aura, Sophie Watson - the list could go on - all seemed to have great tournaments and GBW can be proud of their Silver (Gold going to the quality Finnish team) though with the knowledge that on another day the result could have been very different. I hope they continue to unleash their potential in Vancouver, and with the fantastic coaching of Anja I'm sure the kinks will be ironed out in time to bring their A game to the Americans, Canadians and the Japanese.





➡ So, onto the Final everybody had been looking forward to all week: **GB v Sweden Open**. Right from the start of the tournament, Si Moore's GB Open team were worth getting excited about. Instantly gelling players from six of the top Tour teams, they demolished their opponents, so that when Italy took six points from them it almost felt like a loss. That's when you realised the awesome potential of this squad, the sheer raw power, finesse and ability, and they did not disappoint.

After storming through group stages with strong performances against the Swiss and Russians, they took apart France in their Quarter after a close and heated start, scoring point after point including a Keith Hodgson greatest to Britney, who then made the one yard pass for the score - Keith then pulled to begin the next point, intercepted the second pass and threw for the score, and two points later got a Callahan... all whilst the excellently performing Irish gave Sweden a run for their money on the next pitch over. GB's semi against the Swiss (with Nas) was an amazing spectacle, as when the scores were close GB began yelling "you have to fly!" from the sideline on D - and fly they did, every Swiss pass was caught 30cm in front of a 5ft high GB star layout, until Colonel came up with the big layout block on the sideline in front of the crowd. The momentum shifted to GB and they powered through to the final.

Both teams seemed somewhat muted at first - it felt like taking jabs at each other from behind raised guards, until one GB offence point flowed so smoothly and made it look so easy that the defence line became even more hungry to get on and dominate. The rest is a blur of chanting and cheering, aside from the occasional awesome Wigsy layout, right up until sudden death. The Alternative Voice didn't think it was a particularly badly spirited game - sure, there were calls, but spirit is about more than not calling and not contesting violations.

For sudden death, the final GB line were Beavan, Kieth, Rodders, Danny Hoyle (who later subbed himself for off Stu Mitchell when a Sweden player went off injured), Wigsy, Britney and Brummie. They pulled to Sweden, contained them for a few passes, then Wigsy springs in for a Callahan attempt, the disc hits the floor and there's a discussion about whether the O player had clap-caught Wigsy's hand, or if he'd caught the disc and got Wigsy's hand between his arms before the disc was knocked out... Jen is on the sideline and Si Hill is trying to get Nicklas Tehler to look at the photo but the Swedes are refusing, insisting they know it was a strip. The disc goes back, and as soon as it's checked in a big huck goes up to a deep Swedish player, Beavan and Brummie arrive for the D but Brummie causes contact, the disc hits the floor but within a few seconds it's clear it's an uncontested foul and the Swedes will have the disc just outside the endzone... It's checked in and the GB D sets up before the quick score is possible, forcing Sweden to pass it around and soon the turnover comes. One pass to Brummie and he turns, puts the disc up for Rodders but there's been a miss communication and Rodders is coming under instead... no bid on the disc as it lands in the Swedish endzone and it looks for a minute like GB are flustered, the Swedish offence advances but once again falters outside the GB endzone line (GB pressure forcing a simple throwaway). GB work it up steadily until they are outside the Swedish endzone, an errant pass sees Wigsy sprinting and laying out to catch the disc a couple of metres from the front endzone cone - somebody apparently calls the disc down from the sideline which prompts a brief outburst, but in fact Nicklas ends the debate and persuades his team-mates to accept the catch and play on... It's Wigsy's disc, he can't force it into the zone so dumps back to Stu Mitchell, Rodders makes a cut from the centre of the endzone stack, he's free but is there space for the disc... yes... Stu puts it in and all Rodders needs to do is catch... which of course he does, the crowd goes wild, and GB are crowned champions of Europe, earning 4 Gold and 3 Silver medals.

*The Alternative Voice of UK Ultimate*



#### GB Men

GB captain Danny Hoyle. It's a tough job.  
Photo © Tom Styles 2007

The Swedish supporters start to celebrate prematurely, Si Moore gets the best perspective, Wigsy lays out... Cormac gives him helpful directions.  
Photo © Ruth Crawford 2007

» Reading the player not the play... You will notice that certain players have favourite team mates that they are more likely to pass to than others - if you get to know these combinations, you can use this knowledge! ~ Dave 'sammy' Neilson

veni, vidi, vici

# mattbob

## back from boston

*When and where did you start playing?*  
Leeds Uni '94, early days of Catch22.

*Why did you start playing ultimate?*

I went to University thinking I might play either rugby or football, but once there neither club culture really appealed to me. And then I saw Ultimate on a TV screen at the fresher's recruitment fair; "New York New York vs. Big Brother from Boston." I was impressed by the amount of athleticism required to play the sport and by the array of hippies playing in very short shorts.

*Before becoming an ultimate superstar - what was your best ultimate moment (apart from the Jimi Hendrix timeout in Rimini)?*

That would have to be Catch22 winning UK Nationals, 1998.

*Where did the "Bob" start? And can you remember the other Matts that were at that tournament in Leicester?*

I think there were 5 Matts on the minibus. All were blessed with new names that glorious day in Leicester; they were Gump, Gaffer, Spender, Bob and er .....Moo.

*When you volunteered for World Clubs in 1995 you ended up as an observer in the final didn't you? My recollection is that you ended up in the middle of a really tricky and crucial call - is that right? What happened?*

I think it was a semi actually, but what a joke that was: there was no way I should have been observing that game, I'd been playing less than ten months at that point. I don't think the call was that crucial, but I did have to face the wrath of a certain face-painted veteran New Yorker by the name of Blair O'Conner. Quite scary.

*Did anything embarrassing happen to you in your early years playing for Catch? And do you have a song?*

Yes and yes. The two are not entirely unrelated either.

*Slightly harder and more serious questions: When did you go to the US? When did you start playing with DoG?*

I moved to Boston in April 2002, tried out for DoG that spring and managed to wangle myself a place in the squad going to Hawaii that summer. Really quite nice timing.

*What was it like when you first arrived? What did you learn or change first? (Apart from your name)*

It was amazing, there was so much to learn, I was in frisbee heaven really. I'd say the first thing I had to learn was how to cut again. I was relayed a quote from a team mate back then "That Matt guy is really quick, but he keeps cutting sideways!" Vertical cuts up and down the field, that is the way to open up the space.

*How long did you play for DoG?*

With a little crafty planning I managed to squeeze five seasons into the time I spent in the US: a little over four and a half years.

*What was the highlight of that period?*

Playing in the finals of World Clubs 2002 was pretty amazing. But on a personal level the 2005 UPA tournament was where I had some of my favourite games. I'd learnt how to cut by that point and was far more integrated into the team by then. Although we lost to both Furious George and Sockeye we gave them both a good run for their money.



*Is it true that DoG has finished now? Is that because you left? :-)*

I don't know. I hope not. I am waiting for an announcement. Boston Ultimate goes through these periodic mergers of the old DoG and new guns in town. A merger is currently in progress with a group of players from Twisted Metal. They are playing under the name Boston Ultimate now, but it remains to be seen what name they take to Nationals and beyond. I should check Parinella's blog for news.

*I've seen you playing "back home" a few times since you settled into DoG - notably for GB in 2003, but also since coming home this year. The frustration is written all over your face (at least for those of us that know you). What's the biggest problem? I know you're too nice to answer this really - but try...*

Playing for a new or unfamiliar team is always going to be tricky for anyone and can often be frustrating. You need to learn how your team-mates play and try to find your role in the team, so maybe that was the frustration you saw on my face?

That said, Boston ultimate definitely had a style of play that tried to be more controlled, tried to be smart, and tried to make the right decisions. So I won't deny I'm going to be annoyed by a 50:50 huck, to a covered man, when I am 15 yards open coming back under.

*If you compare ultimate in the UK with ultimate in the US (or at least the East Coast) what do you see as the biggest differences? If you look at the weaknesses here relative to the States where do you think we should concentrate our efforts? Do you think we have any relative strengths that we should work to retain?*

One could probably talk for hours or even days on this subject. One easy comparison is that ultimate is just bigger out there. That has its obvious benefits. The American college (University) scene is thriving and a big deal is made out of it. It's a great recruiting and training ground for young players. I wonder if we could do more with student ultimate in the UK? Maybe more experienced players could get involved in coaching to raise the standard of the top teams and speed up the rate of player development. In fact on the whole I am a big advocate of more coaching.

The US season is also shorter and more intense than in the UK. I think this helps focus players during the season, stops them getting burnt out by the end, and give them a chance to do other things with their lives too. With the splitting of the Mixed from the Open/Women's season, it seems we are heading in that direction.



» "Wrong-handed" throwing is for players who are more interested in looking good than being good (unless you are Gary Jarvis). However, this year I have learnt to catch wrong-handed, and I think this actually has some value. For a start I can jump higher off my right leg, so when I need to catch a high disc being able to gain an few inches extra is useful, particularly playing for a team as short as Leeds, where I often mark taller/ganglier individuals. I have also learnt to 'pancake' with my other hand on top, simply by forcing myself to catch like that when throwing around. I was pretty bad at first, but soon noticed a tangible improvement.

— Jamie Cross

*Harder questions - the people want to know about this stuff you know! You played at Tour 3 for Clapham and then decided not to play at Nationals or EUOCF. Is it true you are switching to Fire? Are you prepared to say why? And is there any truth in the rumour about the other team?*

Clapham seemed the obvious team to play for in terms of the highest quality of play. And I had been impressed with Rob Alpen's coaching and tactical approach to the game. However, with this whole settling back into the UK, finding a job and generally trying to be a grown up, I've not really had the time to commit to playing properly this year. Yes, I've been practising with Fire since T3 and I might be playing with them next year. Part of the truth is that Icení (and therefore Whit, my woman) practice at the same location as Fire. If Icení happened to train at the same venue as Distant Cousins, I'd probably play with them!

As for rumours of another team. It was you that told me the rumour! Do you have any update?

*What's the most exciting game you ever played in?*

Tough one. GB Open's comeback against the Ozzies in 2000? The sudden death semi against the Finns in 2003? Or maybe DoG vs. Furious 2002 UPA semi, only 4 turnovers, only 1 in the second half, but that game may have just been tense rather than exciting. Then there was DoG vs. Sockeye UPA semi 2005, that was pretty interesting too, complete with layout Callahans, big momentum swings, observer calls and even a premature spike.

*What's your dream 7 (well, you plus 6).*

Off the top of my head... Christian Nistri, Fortunat Mueller, Joshua Ziperstein, Damien Scott, Mike Grant, Jeff Cruikshank ... strewth, I don't deserve to be on that line. An honorary mention goes to Steve Mooney. I never actually got to play ultimate with him, but I did play co-ed indoor soccer with him, and I got a little taste of his legendary leadership... the man high fives with the best of them.

*If you could take back one throw, which one would it be? I can remind you if you need any help.*

UK Nationals 2000, final, Catch22 vs. UTI, sudden death, 5 yards out. Doh! You're getting married on the day of World Championship Finals in 2008. Congratulations in advance!

*Is it true that as a result you have confirmed that you do not plan to play GB Open?*

*Is it also true that Whitbob is still considering playing at the tournament?*

I am categorically out. Whitbob however may still be entertaining the idea, if only to pay me back for abandoning her in rainy London for a month while I finished the UPA season in Florida. Sorry (again) Whit.

*Mattbob Hims interviewed by Si Hill*

**UPA Nationals 2004**, DoG vs Goat.  
Mattbob on D against Peter Knowles.  
Photo © David Knowles 2007

**Tour 1**, Paddy Murphy Vs Discuits.  
Niall 'the energiser bunny' Harbourne meets Jon 'maverick' Butt.  
Photo © Mark Early 2007  
[picasaweb.google.com/earley.mark](http://picasaweb.google.com/earley.mark)



» Something I have learnt that has improved my game is honesty with your own calls and a broad smile when people make bad calls. It is a reality that people believe what they want to believe depending on their standpoint. It is hard to remove yourself from the heat of a tight game and look at a play and resultant call objectively. This ideal called 'Spirit' is putting aside your aggressively competitive nature and coming to a rational and fair conclusion when each and every call is made. Honesty and good humour is the breeding ground of fair play and great Ultimate.

— Marc 'Sparky' Richard

# euro club finals

**For every top flight British team, EUCF is fast becoming the most important event of the season. This year the event was held in Basel, right on the Swiss-German-French border. Thankfully everyone spoke English and those who attempted their Franglais were stared at blankly before having their 'Guten tag' countered with 'Hello, may I help you?'**

Going to any tournament abroad requires a fair amount of planning, diligence and a spirit of endeavour. You need flights, transport from airport, and you need to know where you're going. I was meeting three team-mates in Geneva airport then driving to Basel. The only real hitch we snagged was that my travelling companions missed their flight from Bristol, leaving me stranded for three hours while they 'hauled ass' to Luton. Geneva Airport is a wonderful place to pass an evening. Not only does it possess an arrivals hall and a departure lounge, but it is built right on top of a train station and has at least two places where one can buy something that could pass as dinner to a hungry anglais. Ten past nine arrived in a flash.

We spent the majority of the two hundred kilometre journey to Basel trying to track down some food on the motorway for my hungry friends. After being turned down by something called Autogrill and a more familiar restaurant called MacDonalds we eventually found solace in a petrol station and just after midnight tucked into a delicious meal of 'things on bread' (baked that day, perhaps) and ice cream. We arrived in Basel at about half past one in the morning. Now it was my turn to extend our amazing road-trip. I had left the instructions to the bunkers where we were staying right next to my computer in Jersey. Eventually we found the location thanks entirely to the Sat Nav in our hire car, and we were tucked up in

bed by three a.m. I say bed, I mean bunker bunk bed - one that had ten boys and one girl already sleeping in it, and was the same size as the car we had just gotten out of. But a bed's a bed and after four glorious hours of sleep we awoke to start the tournament proper.

In daylight the playing fields were majestic. All eight pitches were contained on one enormous field lined with trees on all sides and a mountain range to the west. There was an exceptional amount of space between the pitches too: had this been England I'm sure the Tournament Organiser would have tried to fit double the number of pitches into the same space. It almost made up for the bizarre request from the Organisers that we not leave our bags on the ground, but on the benches provided. Err, OK then.

Missing our most senior players, in part due to the imminent addition to the Mitchell family, Chevron fielded a squad where our average age was 22 years old. Leeds were missing Wigsy and Steve Vaughan while Fire went without their Sublime quartet of Lewis, Gaz, Steve Wood and Matt Parsley. Only the contenders, the Clapham Harriers, appeared near full strength and I was told that the likes of Colonel and Randy were arriving on Saturday.

Friday evening presented us with a show game in which the infamous Skogs took on Fire of London. With the floodlights on everyone appeared to be lightning quick, even those Fire players who rely on their experience looked to have Bravestar's Speed of the Puma. The game was played at a frenetic pace. Sporrang #8 for Skogs made a few good plays as expected and Fire were fuelled on by an exceptional display from Rob Whitehouse. Early in the day Rodders had asked us to cheer 'Come on Fire, you can still do it.' The first clause of



that sentence, personally, was asking a lot but as the Swedish pull came down at 13-14 to Skogs I began to put faith in the second part. My optimism turned sour as Skogs got one of the few defensive breaks in the game to beat Fire 15-13. Serves me right for believing.

The first game of Saturday was crossover time for both Chevron and Fire. The boys from the capital seemed to be hung-over as Ragnarok tore them apart but Chevron fared better by recording our second win of the tournament - over Helsinki Ultimate - to sneak into the top eight and set up a quarter final with a team we'd never played before...Clapham. And bizarrely, somewhere else Fire and Leeds were fighting each other in their bottom eight round robin. You come all this way to Europe... But these games didn't take place before I watched Feldrenner of Germany almost spring the surprise of the decade by leading the Skogs for most of the game; it seemed the show game hang-over might strike

again. Feldrenner's #6 made a few incredible catches for scores to give the Germans their lead. Maybe he had stolen his team-mates' talent for the morning because one Feldrenner D player dropped a miraculously easy goal to give his team an a four point lead. The Borg promptly went down the other end with the disc to make it only a two point difference. Everyone watching knew that was Feldrenner's chance gone. What a loser\*.

The Battles of Britain were won by the South; a reinforced Clapham easily progressed to a semi against Karhukopla (I can't pronounce it either), a Finnish team who Chevron had nearly beaten in our group stage while Fire gave themselves a better chance of finishing ninth. For the last game of Saturday and the penultimate game of the weekend Chevron played Ragnarok, the team who earlier had pounced on a sluggish Fire to knock them out of the top eight. They repeated their trick of crushing the puny Englishers and, slightly dejected, we returned to our hot and





now extremely smelly bunker to get ready for the Saturday night party.

The clear highlight of the evening was watching Matt MacLoughlin attempt to change tram carriages halfway through the journey, only to have the doors not open for him as he tried to climb back onto the tram as it 'sped' off into the Swiss night. The rest of us arrived at the party, where paprika crisps and shot glasses of champagne (classic combination for a Frisbee tournament) were available in the building's stunning courtyard before being transported by tram to a park where we walked for five minutes to a non-descript building where there was enough pasta for all. The fold up tables were then cleared away and the DJ worked his magic: the 'disappearing punters' act. Nothing tells you to scram like heavy drum and bass pumped into an empty canteen.

Sunday featured a single game for Chevron but two for Fire and Leeds. I watched Fire experience the loss

that would limit their finishing position to 11th and saw Leeds battle hard against CUS Bologna to win in the last point. Chevron played Feldrenner for 7th, the boys who had nearly knocked Skogs down a peg or four. We ended up losing by a few points in a game that turned a bit grumpy at the end; we felt the Germans were being typically truculent as our defence started to gather momentum towards the end of the game. Eventually we lost 13-16 and gathered our things in preparation for the impending finals.

\*It was in this last game against Feldrenner that yours truly dropped not one but two catches in the endzone, which, if caught would have reversed the result...

The finals, I felt, were thrilling. First of all was Icení against Woodchicas. Icení were looking to retain their European crown (Twiceni) and at times played some good Ultimate (Niceni). Woodchicas took an early lead which Icení claimed back, then lost before claiming back. At 6-7 to Woodchicas

- I've been playing for a few years now and admit to not being the fittest of people. Over the last few years I keep hearing fitness is what is making the top teams the best (as well as their obvious ability). But I never really understood how, so I tried it. After a few weeks of extra fitness I began to notice differences. It wasn't just that I was a little faster I felt so much more confident on the field and I liked that extra confidence quite a lot!

~ Liz Gilbert

something absolutely extra-ordinary happened. Icení scored seven on the trot to make it 13-7 only to throw it all away and eventually lose 14-15 in sudden death. Why this happened I can only guess. Woodchicas had a compliment of ten players (as in only three subs) while Icení seemed to have a complete tribe. But as the game got tighter the Londoners shortened their lines only to have mistakes appear in the least expected players. As scant consolation to the defeated finalists the crowd was thoroughly entertained.

Clapham vs Skogshyddan is a pretty exciting prospect. Two teams laden with top quality players, fluid offence, snarling defence and unfaltering discipline. And, to make this an acceptable feast for the crowd, both teams were quite keen on a good old fashioned huck. As ever in a match of this grade, the first half was like a round of shadow boxing with no decisive blows landed. Clapham got a couple of turns but their defence couldn't seem to get the disc moving fluidly. And so the second half began, Clapham coming out on D with what looked like a loaded line. And it paid off: they got the turn and punched it in. And that was it, from there Clapham looked ruthlessly efficient when in possession and their defence hounded the Skogs right to the final point. The game ended 15-10, not a close contest for a European final but the array of hucks and skies kept the audience in the stadium. A special mention must go to LeedsLeedsLeeds, not to just their Open or Women's teams but to both for making a clean sweep in Spirit. Such a coup at this level is highly commendable.

Sunday evening ended with most of the UK players in a pub either watching the Rugby or playing a dice game with very complex rules but very simple forfeits. The final image of EUCF 2007 was Si Hill walking to catch the tram

back to his hotel while thirty Frisbee players sang Happy Birthday to him: as the song came to a crescendo, a local man walking past stopped to shake young Simon's hand.

This tournament was created to help European teams play each other more often and attempt to close the gap between the continent and North America. It will be hard to tell how successful this objective is until World Clubs 2010. However, the standard is very close for most European teams. Barely a team finished according to seeding and it was interesting to see some top seeds slump into obscurity and some barely-qualifieds finishing in the top four. Everyone was beating everyone, all pools turned out to be 'pools of death'. From a UK point of view what is most interesting to notice is that excluding Clapham's success, European teams evidently do something that British teams don't like. Something different, something unencountered and something unsettling. German teams play at a lower intensity, slowing games down in an attempt to rush their opponents. Swiss teams do the opposite, they love to run lots and punt it. It is clear that most UK based teams need greater access to these varying styles if we want to have universal success. Clapham have benefited from their trips to the US but with other UK teams finishing 8th, 11th and 14th it doesn't demonstrate the great strength of club teams that we like to claim. However World Clubs is still three years away so we have plenty of time to adapt and create playing philosophies of our own, one thing I'm very confident our Tour season is capable of allowing our teams to do.

*David Pichler - Chevron Aktion Blitz*

**Chevron vs Flying Angels**

Dave Pichler lays out.

Dave Sealy leaping like a salmon.

Photos © Ruth Crawford 2007

# life after ultimate

**One of the worst things about being a full-time writer is that your words always come back to haunt you. Exactly a year ago, cleats buried under a pile of camping gear and other junk, I penned a piece for this very same publication, extolling the virtues of not playing ultimate. Boasting somewhat proudly how, after seven or so years of devoting most of my weekends and evenings to chasing plastic, I had re-invented myself.**

If anyone had told me that less than six months after I pressed send, I'd be running round Clissold park after a Frisbee, and playing seven tournaments in a row over the summer, I'd have probably said, a la Steve Redgrave: "If you see me near a disc, please just shoot me." Fortunately I didn't, which means you lucky people get to hear me wax lyrical about what it's like coming back after a four year break. Enjoy it while it lasts, because heaven knows where I'll be or what I'll be writing about next year.

So, how did it happen? Well, when I moved to north London, I discovered that a) I was bored with running round parks on my own and b) I was living ten minutes' walk from where the weird, wonderful and fantastically welcoming Curve (aka Lurve, Swerve, Premature Huckulation) trained. One practice later, and I was on a slippery slope that I can't imagine extricating myself from any time soon. Anyway, here's a quick rundown on things I've observed during my come-back season.

## the body

Let's talk about what it's like physically. It's tough. For those of you who know anything about fitness training, it should come as no surprise that running round a park at the same speed prepares your body for nothing, other than running round a

park at the same speed. After my first practice, I couldn't walk. No, actually, it was worse than that. I could only adopt that kind of legs-wide-apart, crab-walk that you have to do when you've been having really, really great sex all weekend. The good news is that the muscle tone you lose comes back pretty quickly, so after the initial pain, things improved rapidly. The bad news is I'm slower. Where as in my previous incarnation as a player, people would occasionally say: "Watch her, she's quick," now, occasionally people say: "Watch her, she's sneaky." I was out-of-date too. I started leading a warm-up for my team and I was quickly informed that no one does loads of static stretches before a game any more. It's all about dynamics. For a moment, I felt like a PE teacher from the 70s.

## the kit

It seems that every team at every level has professional, dare I say flashy, matching shorts, and dry-wick tops that claim to keep you both cool, warm, dry, breathing and fragrant all weekend long. Four years ago, I'd have found this appealing. The flashier, and more colourful, the better. I played in the loudest-coloured socks and headscarves I could find and I always wore a skirt. Now, a little older and more restrained (I hope), preferable as all these hi-tech fabric are to their heavy-weight cotton predecessors, I can't help but hanker after a bit of old-fashioned, DIY. There's nothing that depresses me more than looking at a player self-consciously dressed head-to-toe in Gaia, who, let's face it, are pretty much the Nike of Ultimate. It's a high-risk strategy too. Play like a dick dressed like that and you look twice the idiot. No, my style has changed. Whereas before, it was dress to kill, now, it's more a case of "dress to under-estimate." The more people overlook me on the pitch (though not my team), the better, quite frankly.

When you're over thirty and getting a bit slow, it's wise to take any breaks you can get.

## eating

I remember writing last year that one of the reasons it took me a lot longer to take the decision to stop playing than it should have was my worry that I'd get fat, however I put on very little weight. As soon as I started playing again, I realised why... for four years, unconsciously, I've been dieting. I frequently refused second helpings, puddings, chips, carbs – usually telling myself that I was full. Now I realise I was actually hungry – for four long years. Since I started playing, I've dropped at least a dress size. I'm actually having to train myself to eat more to keep my energy levels up. Oh, and by the way, food at most UK tournaments is one of the things that hasn't changed that much – still pretty rubbish, when you compare it with what you get at tournaments on the continent.

## the game

It's faster, more competitive, better organised, bigger and generally better. It's particularly heart-warming to see the transformation that's happened in the women's game. Four years ago, the women's tour was a pretty pitiful affair. At most, you'd get seven or eight teams, with many women still opting to play open. It's absolutely fantastic to see so many geo women's teams, all with loads of players, and all playing really competitive ultimate, often with their equivalent open teams cheering from the sideline.

As for the spirit of the game, I don't think it's by any means got worse as Ultimate has got more competitive and professional. People are probably more aware of the rules than they were, and more assertive with them, but that's a good thing, not a bad thing,

in terms of spirit of the game. And yes, it's still inevitable that the teams who enter tournaments claiming to be really fun and wacky make the shittiest calls and the clumsiest fouls.

## where are they now?

What I didn't realise last year is that I was not the only player who had moved on. Four years is actually a pretty long time in ultimate. Long enough to pop out a couple of sprogs, build a house, emigrate to New Zealand then change your mind and come back. And what really came home to me is that many of these people had managed to move on without sacrificing their careers as players. So my self-styling as a brave pioneer in some kind of non-Ultimate, second life, was little bit out of whack. A stroll round at mixed tour in Birmingham, where I saw players (both male and female) towing their kids around and still playing top-level ultimate put my little foray into perspective. Of course, there are hundreds more new faces than old faces, which is tribute to the sheer number of successful clubs there are out there.

## where next?

The truth is, I dare not speculate. What I can say is that coming back has been great. I'm in many ways a more relaxed, happier player, perhaps in part, because I'm a more relaxed, happier person. And I'm lucky enough to play with a really great bunch of people, who are quite frankly, the most welcoming club to women players I've ever come across. I don't know how many playing years I've got left (or, perhaps more importantly, how many I want to play for), but until I reach that point, like the rest of you, I guess I'll just keep going...

*Sarah Gibbons - Curve*



# for the love of... durham hat

When Jack put up a request on Brit disc for any tournaments this year that deserved a mention in **Ultimatum**, one that immediately came to my mind was this year's **Durham Hat**. I mentioned this to him in an email, but had no idea that his response would be "so you'll write about it then?" and I'd be sitting here wondering where to start.

One of the things I love about DUF is their infallible spirit and love of the game. Being one of the finest (Northern) University teams around, finishing first at Regionals for the last 3 years and winning numerous spirit awards, this certainly seems to carry over into their tournaments. As soon as I arrived I was handed a black t-shirt emblazoned with the DUF Hat logo on the front and was pointed in the direction of other black shirt-wearing people. General merriment and introductions ensued as I got to know the rest of my team. There were players from all over the country, from teams I'd played with and against and players I'd cheered and envied. It was looking to be a great weekend.

Glorious sunshine greeted us Saturday morning but the bad weather on Friday meant that alternative pitches had to be found. However, this was all in the plan (a good Northern team always anticipates bad weather!) and games started with almost no delay. There was even a count-down timer to end the games and a sound system featuring the booming voice of Beej 'Come buy your DUF HAT hats, only eight pounds... bargain?!' The sun nudged a few customers his way and I soon found myself in the possession of a DUF Hat too. The sun also brought out water games. Each pitch had a bucket of water and sponge, the rules were simple: sponge the person with the disc. Come midday, our free (well, inclusive) lunch was organised at intervals so that teams didn't flood the TD's tent. The rains held off till the

end of the last game at which point it rained a little – and then just as we were putting the BBQ together, it rained a lot. Again, it seemed like nothing could stop the Duffers, as the BBQ moved to the clubhouse kitchen. Everyone was all dressed up in their "children's story characters" outfits. Some clever person even thought of inviting face-painters and all kinds of characters and animals were drawn (special mention to Si Robertson: "Hi, I'm an elephant, would you like to see my trunk?"). The remainder of the night is a bit of blur with a few characters sticking in my mind, "Bill and Ben the flowerpot men" and the "Cat in the Hat".

Sunday came bringing yet more sunshine and the Duffers even dragged themselves down to the camp site to set up breakfast at some shocking hour on a Sunday morning, as we were all rolling out of our tents. We moved to the original pitches for Sunday's games, giving us the curious feeling that we were at a brand new tournament. The schedule worked really well too (something that can always go pear-shaped without proper attention), I didn't even have to play against my brother! It was great to be able to play alongside and against some top ultimate players and my highlight of the weekend has to be scoring off Beej's Worlds Greatest. I want to thank the TD's: Ben Fullbrook, Em Woodwork, James Burbidge and Dan Goalen and the hosts for all their efforts. I can't wait till next year!

*Cat Gale*  
*Lancaster Fish/ Newcastle Brown*

**Glastonbury Tournament:**  
Millie all dressed up.  
Photo © Michael Peberdy 2006

Tents!  
Photo © Jon Brookes 2007  
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