



Ultimatum 2011

Annual UK Ultimate Magazine



Elliot Elmo

Taylor Martin



[front cover] GB v Canada , World Championships Beach Ultimate. Photo © Alexandr Tikhomirov 2011 - atihomirov.ru

Editor's Note

So firstly – I'm not the Editor, but I am part of a team of people that have been struggling to gather articles and edit them all into some sort of coherent shape for Ultimatum!2011. So in the absence of a single editor that looked after this year's edition, I said I would write something to introduce this year's magazine.

I used to love Ultimatum! Of course, I still do, but in the last couple of years it has assumed a more painful place in my life as we struggle with missed deadlines and late delivery. And this year we're later than ever! ☹ We have a bigger editing team, and a new plan to get Ultimatum!2012 out at the end of the right year. If you think you can help please email ultimatum@ukultimate.com.

I'd like to start by thanking everyone that has helped to get us here: Mara Alperin, Sean Colfer, Dan Berry, Chris Baker, and of course Jack Goolden. Thanks also to everyone that wrote an article, or shared their photos.

I hope you enjoy this year's magazine. I feel we have a great mix of reports, stories and ideas that give a good flavour of what Ultimate in the UK is all about right now, as well as some articles from further afield. I love the contrast in the opening photos. World Beach was unbelievably hot. The London Winter League is generally exceedingly cold. It's great to hear from Josh Wardle – an ex-Clapham teammate who has continued to play fanatically since moving to the US and who is a key member of the NexGen team. Ollie Gordon – who played in the NexGen tour – also gives us his take on what that was like. There are stories of the struggle to build Women's Ultimate. But if the biggest ever Uni Women's Outdoor Nationals in April 2012 (25 teams) is anything to go by there is good evidence that things are still going in the right

direction. 2011 was a GB-year (as is 2012). We won a hat-full of medals – including World Beach gold in the mixed masters division. Will 2012 be the year when Open, Women or perhaps most likely Mixed, break into the medals at WUGC? Finally, the American Ultimate Disc League started in April 2012 and our lateness allowed us the chance to include news of that initiative. No doubt many of us will have mixed feelings about where that project may lead given that they have included refs.

Looking beyond Ultimatum, I recently submitted our annual census numbers to WFDF – and UKU just went over 3,500 members. We receive emails every week from schools that play ultimate in PE lessons or after school but are completely outside our "playing community". So we are kicking off a new National Schools championship. No doubt it will take a few years to get going, but I'm convinced we've crossed a tipping point where the growth in schools' Ultimate is set to accelerate quickly for several years.

As a final point I thought I'd take this chance to say that in 2012 we are doing some planning for the period 2013-16. We wanted some simple ideas that we could use to communicate the main goals for our organisation in the coming years. This is still work-in-progress at the moment, but I rather like these two: "Ultimate in every school" and "A coach in every club".

People often tell me that my full-time job in Ultimate means I'm living the dream. With so many exciting things happening, I would have to say they are right!

Si Hill



Canada, WCBU © Graham Bailey 2011 - grahambaileyphotography.com

Fire starters



There was only one second team in A Tour in 2011 – Fire of London 2. We produced some impressive displays this year, challenging and beating some of the UK's strongest teams. However, being a second team brings with it a range of both positives and negatives that other teams don't have to face, and it offers a very different experience when compared to other top squads.

After a successful recruitment drive, Fire found itself with an abundance of talent. First team spots had to be fought for, which was reflected throughout the season in the intensity of our training. With this in mind, the club set itself some ambitious targets.

The first team wanted to win a Tour

event and Nationals, whilst the second team were told they weren't just aiming for top eight, they were aiming for Euros qualification. I'll be the first to say that I thought at the beginning of the year it was unrealistic – but as the season went on, we started to genuinely believe that Euros was a possibility.

A couple of pre-season European tournaments and a training weekend on the south coast ensured a good vibe was building both on and off the pitch. This proved particularly important for the second team; with a large intake of players, it was crucial to start building our plays and understanding how each other played early on. All of this helped us feel much better prepared than previous

years, and so we entered Tour 1 with plenty of confidence.

We started slowly, opening with losses to Chevron and to EMO. However, we managed to win our remaining games, recording impressive victories over Tooting Tigers and LLeeds, finishing 9th. It was a good result, but we felt we could achieve even more.

As the Tour season progressed, our results continued to improve, and we took a number of first team scalps, including EMO, Fusion, Brighton and the Irish national team. Perhaps more impressive than our victories alone was our resolve to overturn late deficits and close out tight games. We certainly played more sudden death games than I care to remember. This helped us to record an 8th place finish at Tour 2 and 5th at Tour 3. Overall, we finished the Tour season in 6th place – not a bad performance for a second team.

Some of the benefits we experienced this year were obvious. We were part of a larger squad, with around 40 members, and so were able to guarantee good numbers at almost every training session, something single team squads often struggle with. With initial teams not selected until the week before Tour, intensity remained high as players fought for their spots. This intensity continued throughout the season as players moved up and down depending upon attendance and performance. The continual reassessment helped drive improvement and minimise complacency. Dangling the carrot of first team – and thus a Euros – spots can be a powerful incentive in driving players to bring out their A-game.

As well as this, we had the opportunity to match up against the likes of Lewis Glover, Stu Greer and Rob Schumacher on a weekly basis. Being able to train and play against this

calibre of player on a regular basis ensures that you continually work and push yourself. Every drill, every game, every week at training was tough, but that's why we were there. Plus, having an angry Stu on the sideline or Lewis in a time-out is not a fun experience!

We also had an abundance of experienced players to call upon if we were having difficulties with parts of our game. Had we been a team in our own right, the improvements wouldn't have happened at such a rate. Drawing on the experiences and knowledge of these players gave us confidence going into big games. Veterans like Ed Russell, Luke Hartley and Wayne Retter were able to draw on their combined 40(ish!) years of experience and provide valuable knowledge and guidance to the younger players – some of whom had not previously played in the A Tour.

However, there is an obvious downside to being a second team. Everyone in the club would agree that producing the best possible first team is the primary goal, which can thus have negative consequences on the seconds. Unfortunately, there's little that you can do about it. Accepting this fact is part and parcel of being on a second team.

As our results improved, it wasn't going to be long before the first team promoted some of our players. The likes of Harry Geller and Steve 'Baldrick' Walton put in strong performances to earn call-ups. Whilst fantastic for those guys – and much deserved – it took some of the strength away from the seconds. Losing your best players, whether that's through their success or the loss of first team players, is tough. There is a constant need to adapt to the players you have available. Whilst I'm sure many teams face a similar problem, second teams suffer this more acutely. We often lost



Callum Smith

Harry Geller

Fire v Brighton Tour 3. © Sapphira van Assema 2011

our most in-form players and as with the nature of second teams, when the firsts lost greater numbers, they took more players. Despite this ongoing challenge, it only became a problem at Nationals. With a number of players unable to attend, the second team, especially the O-line, was left weakened which subsequently shattered our European dream.

Unlike many first teams, we do not have the so-called 'superstars' to turn to for a last-minute rescue. However, without these players, every individual had to step up and take on more responsibility. This gave us all the opportunity to play in extremely tight games. Most of us wouldn't have had that experience had we been part of a

first team. In retrospect, it improved people's games massively, such as the second team players' MVP and MIP Alex Cragg, who went on to play with the firsts at Euros. Pitch time was evenly distributed within the O and D lines, too. I can count the amount of power lines called during the season on one hand. This approach differentiates us from most A Tour teams. We've thrived on the lack of pressure placed upon us. Going into big games, the team was relaxed, and that allowed some of our best Ultimate to shine through.

The fundamental question when you're a part of a second team is this: do you join a competitive first team where you may not get much pitch

time especially during the big games? Or do you join a lower-level second team and play a more important role but rarely get exposed to the very top level?

Currently, I believe Fire 2 is able to offer the best of both worlds. We have been able to experience some massive games against the top teams, with our younger players playing huge roles. As well as that experience, we've been able to test ourselves against some of the best players in the UK every week at training. Who knows – with a score on Lewis or a block on Stu, you could make the first team!

Martyn Brown, Fire of London 2

Top 16 compared to 2010

Clapham Ultimate	↔ =
Chevron Action Flash	↔ =
Fire of London 1	↔ =
Brighton Ultimate 1	↔ =
Fusion 1	↔ =
Fire of London 2	↑ 2
GB Open	New Entry ↺
EMO 1	↓ 1
Devon 1	↑ 3
LeedsLeedsLeeds	↓ 4
Tooting Tigers	↔ =
Ireland Open	New Entry ↺
TeamShark 1	↓ 4
Burro Electrico	↓ 3
Strange Blue 1	↑ 1
The Brown 1	↑ 2

The United States! A



American Ultimate Phraseology

Here are some American terms and their British counterparts. You should avoid using the British version in intense game situations.

Cleats = Boots

Field = Pitch

Blow up = Play well

Blow up huge = Play even better

Baller = Talented Individual

He/She balls = He/She plays exceptional ultimate with vim and gusto.

Scorebox/The House = Endzone

Boost = Huck

Uniform = Kit

In 2008 I enrolled at the University of Oregon for a three year Master's in Digital Art. Well that's what my visa said. In reality I was taking a course in Ultimate. Unbeknownst to my parents, every graduate school I had applied to in the US was home to a top 20 Ultimate team. Oregon's team, Ego, is known for its oddball vibe and exciting play style. A perennial powerhouse, Ego has produced several of the sport's best players including Ben and Seth Wiggins and more recently NexGen-er Dylan Freechild.

Rather than treat you all to an epic yarn of the ups (crushing in 2010 and earning the #1 seed at nationals) and downs (finishing that same nationals in 13th place, getting disqualified at sectionals after playing shirts only)

of a my collegiate ultimate career, I thought I might rather address some of questions you might have about American Ultimate.

[Aren't Americans all god-fearing, obese imbeciles?](#)

Sadly, this isn't true. Despite what we are told in the UK, it turns out (rather unsurprisingly in retrospect) that most Americans are similar to anyone you'd meet in the UK. Just swap our crushing cynicism for an unbridled optimism, and you're pretty much there.

[Isn't American Ultimate more physical than European Ultimate?](#)

This one isn't true either. When I played with Clapham ('06-'08),

our sights were always set on the American teams. We had heard that they were more physical, and so we pushed one another during practice by ramping up our physicality. The idea being we'd be prepared for it when it came to game time. Though upon playing in the US, I found that the standard of physicality wasn't that much different from that of the elite teams in the UK. In fact I often found that I was one of the more physical players on the field ('pitch', I've been told many times by sniggering yanks, is something you do to a tent).

[Are American Ultimate players more athletic?](#)

I'd say yes to this one. Generally the level of athleticism is leaps and bounds

America! Yanksville!



ahead of the UK. Kids of both genders play multiple sports in elementary school. Soccer, basketball, baseball, softball, handball, football, etc. It just seems expected that you play sport at a young age. As such, it is unsurprising that individuals are much more comfortable with using their bodies physically.

For example, you'll bump into players at local pick-up who play on teams that never make it to regionals, but have a raw athleticism that would make them top tier players in the UK. Guys are getting bigger, faster and more explosive. The gangletron, long-distance runner mold (of which I am a devout member) is slowly on the way out in competitive ultimate. In is the body type of guys like Beau

Kittredge, Brodie Smith and Dylan Tunnell: 6 foot plus and jacked. Speed and power are the words of the day. Rumour has it that this year reigning world champions Revolver made their squad selection based largely from 40 yard (i.e. approximately 37 metre) sprint times.

Could the best US College teams compete with the top UK club teams?

I've thought about this one a lot, and I think that in its best year (2010), Ego could have easily finished in the top four in the UK club scene. The general standard of athleticism, coupled with the fact that many of these players have been playing since high-school, would give them a huge advantage. The one area things would come unstuck

would definitely be experience. I always felt that Clapham's consistent success hinged on the depth of its veterans experience. Ego had talent, but didn't always have the knowledge to use that talent to its best advantage.

Summary

Three years later and a just semi-pointless degree to show for it, would I do it again?

Definitely.

Playing elite collegiate Ultimate is the most fun I have had in my Ultimate career. I ended up living and breathing my team. Everything was about Ultimate. We practised three times a week. We ran track or lifted at least twice a week, and hung out together

on the off days. We travelled to Vegas, Texas, North Carolina and California. We blew up huge, both on and off the field. We came away with some great results, and I got to match up against some incredibly talented players.

In short, I have come away from my time at Oregon with some of the best stories, best on field experience and best friends I could ever hope to have.

Josh Wardle

Female students



Miranda Cole

Sarah Jean-Baptiste

Nice Bristol v Brighton Tour 3. © Andy Moss 2011

I caught the Ultimate bug watching from the sideline, and often from behind a desk. After helping run two mixed tours and London Calling (ferrying water, taking scores and looking stressed) I knew that the next time I was at a game I needed to be playing rather than watching. One of the best things I'd noticed was that it was a sport without any obvious sexism; where Mixed and Women's teams as are highly skilled and respected as Open and where, as far as I could see, equally as many women were keen to take part as men.

As soon as I joined Manchester University I was sure I was going to love being part of Halcyon, the team was instantly friendly and vibrant, and I was literally sucked in by the family atmosphere and the enthusiasm of the experienced players. It was such a fast paced first few weeks too. An entire army of beginners flooded Halcyon's training sessions and jostled for places at beginners' tournaments in Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool - our numbers helping us to make an impression at every early tournament. During play in these tournaments I frequently found myself opposite a male beginner but it didn't particularly worry me, it's part and parcel of playing mixed, and equally we lined up against teams with girls that easily outnumbered ours.

As the weeks stretched on however, and the weather got substantially worse, the number of women attending training sessions started depleting. Exam pressure must be a factor for a lot of players and outside commitments like work and other societies are always going to compromise the time you can give to the team, but it seemed to be affecting the women's side more than the men's - to the point where we stopped being able to have separate women's games

at training. I was quite relieved to know that it wasn't just Manchester. At the women's beginners' tournament in Nottingham we talked with some teams who had only managed to get three Freshers girls to join this year and played plenty of teams without substitutes available. Ladies, where have you all gone? It might be more of a problem for northern teams; it gets so cold that it's like training with a bunch of Smurfs, but outside of university Ultimate I've seen some very formidable female players and they can't all have come from the south.

This is one thing I didn't expect from Ultimate, especially at university level where most of us would rather train in sub-zero than revise or attend lectures. I even had ideas that in some teams the girls might outnumber the guys and for some universities this might be true, just not the ones I've come across. My worry is that university Ultimate could just turn into another male dominated sport where people can justify not taking the women's side as seriously as the men's, and based on the level of play I've seen from women in my limited experience, that would be a huge shame. I don't think we've started to slip just yet, maybe it depends on the year's intake whether you get enough girls to put forward a decent women's team, or maybe it really is the time of year; but it's so important to keep the profile of Women's Ultimate equal to that of Open, it's part of what made the so attractive to me in the first place. If we lose our status it will be much harder to get it back, as if Ultimate hasn't had enough trouble getting to its current standing in this country. So here's my plea to all the girls: let's get it moving again, excuse the pun, but let's man-up!

Jessica Benson

Campus chieftains

In the 2010-2011 University Ultimate season, Sussex Mohawks achieved an incredible unbeaten outdoor season. We won Open, Women's and Mixed University Outdoor Nationals, an unprecedented triple, and completed an Open double by winning Open Indoor Nationals.

We knew that we had the potential for a very successful year from the beginning. The club had retained a lot of first team players from the previous year, so the basis for a strong team was already established. All that was needed was for a few extra players to step up, to prove that they had what it took to help us succeed in every division.

As well as being founded on experience and existing talent, the club benefits from all of our players being good friends. The majority of us live with fellow Mohawks, and we spend a lot of time together outside of trainings. We hang out as a team often, and so we get to know each other that little bit better.

Furthermore, we were, and still are, very fortunate to have such an experienced coach in Felix Shardlow, and the support of everyone involved in Brighton Ultimate. They turned up every Monday to play us in outdoor practice games throughout the winter, and came to indoor sessions we organised. We couldn't have asked for more. Come rain (or snow!) they were there, eager to beat us and prove that we still had a lot to learn. These games gave us a great opportunity to experiment with different zones and offences, many of which we went on to use with great effect.

The first major tournament of the year was Indoor Open Nationals. We put in a lot of extra hours practising our indoor plays and throws. However, we had not expected such big pitches (or

such a cold hall!). After a messy first game, we altered our tactics to make use of the wider pitches, which paid off for the most part. A loss in our pool meant a more difficult crossover, but by then we had started playing our best Ultimate.

By the end of Sunday, we felt like a team that could win Nationals. We took that confidence into a hard fought final, taking an early lead that Edinburgh Ro Sham Bo were never able to recover from, finishing 12-7 victors. The win was incredible, and made us hungry for more success.

Next up was Mixed Indoor Nationals. Despite an early injury to one of our key female receivers, we played well and progressed to the final, only to be beaten (scoreline) by Warwick Bears. Being so close to winning another Nationals only to lose left us all disappointed. We remembered that feeling, and we used it to drive our outdoor season.

At Women's Indoor Nationals, our squad struggled to compete with the top tier, despite having challenged defending champions Exeter Urielle at Regionals. Low on handling experience, players who were more used to catching scores were suddenly being asked to throw them, and drawing a zone-heavy pool didn't help. No one was particularly thrilled with the 14th place finish, but the team was still optimistic enough to quip, "It's ok, we'll win Outdoors".

In preparing for Outdoor Nationals, the Open squad constantly trained as a team. We did hours of fitness and hill sprints. We went through drills covering all aspects of Ultimate – reading discs, bringing down swill, working the disc through zones. These skills would prove vital at Nationals.

The run-up to the tournament was tough (and included the usual

squabbles). And yet even the disagreements brought us closer as a team. We saw each game at Nationals as a new challenge. This collective mental strength was important, as we went behind in 5 of our 6 matches. That included the final against Cambridge Strange Blue, a tight 12-9 victory. Often inspirational speeches from ex-Mohawks who had travelled with us up to Sheffield provided the motivation we needed, especially in our semi-final against Uriel. In every game we played, we learned how teams adapted to our style – in effect, every team we played against helped us to beat the next.

The next chapter involved a minibus full of women and two male cheerleaders – in varying states of distress and delight over missing the Royal wedding – journeying to Durham for Women's Outdoor Nationals. We faced a lot of arrow-head zone in pool play, which we worked through relentlessly. Sometimes that was with patience, and sometimes with throws that would at best be described as 'unorthodox'. A gruelling semi-final against St Andrew's Flatball left the small rotation of stronger players tired for the final against Strange Blue – a repeat of the Open match-up some months before. Aware that the Open team would never let us live it down otherwise, we pulled through to clinch the victory 7-5, and take the title for the third time in five years.

Just getting to the final tournament of the year (Mixed Nationals) was eventful. The short story is that the Cricket team had somehow broken the University's minibus – the roof wouldn't stay on when driving over 40 mph! Although the Uni were happy for the wreck to make the 1000 mile round trip, we managed to get hold of some hire cars instead. We eventually got on the over four hours later

than planned. Just making it to the tournament felt like a victory, so we saw no reason why we shouldn't take another.

We came out strong and took an early lead in all of our games which we were able to build on. The final was a rematch of the indoors final against Bears. Our desire was obvious – a win would avenge our defeat earlier in the year and complete an unbeaten outdoor season. You already know the end result.

It was a great season, not only for those who played, but for everyone who has been involved with the club over the last 25 years. This anniversary year will always have a special resonance to those for whom being a Mohawk means an enormous amount – whether it's the reason behind an 11-year-old hair cut or a tattoo on the back of your leg.

'Once a Mohawk, always a Mohawk' – and always with the new legacy of the 2010-11 season.

Robbie Haines



Disc-y business

Are we ready for professional Ultimate Frisbee?

Get ready, America. At 3 p.m. this Saturday, pro sports in this country will change forever when the Rhode Island Rampage take on the Connecticut Constitution. Yes, we are just a few days away from the dawn of professional Ultimate Frisbee.

When the formation of the American Ultimate Disc League was first announced, I thought it was a joke. Everything from the X in the name of the Detroit Mechanix to the location of the championship game—Pontiac, Mich.'s 80,000-seat Silverdome—felt wrong. But the league's press releases, announcing the locations of the eight teams and the 15-week regular season, made it clear that the AUDL wasn't joking around. "Louisville looks legit," wrote one poster on the rec.sport.disc newsgroup, noting that "you can become an unpaid intern if you work long hours and weekends to support the team."

It's not totally crazy for Ultimate to go pro. In 2010, 4.7 million Americans played the sport at least once—almost triple the number who played a game of lacrosse, a sport with three professional leagues. More than 1.5 million people play Ultimate at least 13 times a year, and those devotees tend to spend money on the sport. There are at least eight companies that specialize in Ultimate apparel, mainly sweat-wicking jerseys and trucker hats. Like most Ultimate players, I consider it a serious sport filled with serious athletes. The trouble is, no one else does.

Despite 40 years of history, and more participants in America than fast-pitch softball and ice hockey combined, it's impossible to find a news story that treats Ultimate as anything but a curiosity. Every piece of Ultimate journalism must include both a detailed explanation of how the game is played and a testimonial

from either the writer or the subject that it's not just for shoeless hippies anymore.

There is some evidence that Ultimate's image is changing. Brodie Smith, a two-time college champion at the University of Florida, makes the Frisbee look kind of cool. His popular YouTube channel features instructional videos and clips of trick shots. In one video, he flings a disc from a bridge and his friend leaps out of a speedboat to catch it. It has more than 5 million views. Most remarkably, Smith has managed to make a living by being really awesome at Ultimate. You can hire Smith for about \$20 a head (plus expenses) to instruct your Ultimate squad. He's been flown to Australia, Ireland, and Italy.

Smith could be the AUDL's salvation. Not only is he one of the few big names in Ultimate to sign on with the league—he moved from Florida to Indiana to play for the Indianapolis AlleyCats—Smith has also taken the new league's side in the sport's oldest debate: Should top-level Ultimate use referees, or should players continue to make their own calls?

Traditionally, Ultimate has been governed by a concept known as "Spirit of the Game." Spirit dictates that the players make all the calls and that only legitimate calls are made. If there's an irresolvable dispute, teams resort to the classic playground solution, the do-over. These on-field debates can be painful to watch, and they leave non-playing spectators confused about what the hell is going on. The AUDL's solution: Ditch spirit in favor of dudes with whistles.

The league's founder and president, Josh Moore, believes the lack of refs is keeping the sport from being taken seriously. He compares watching Ultimate to standing courtside for

a game of pick-up basketball. In a refereed game, he says, the action will move faster and players will be able to focus on playing. Brodie Smith agrees: "I love the idea of refs because I no longer have to focus on making calls. I can play as hard as I can and when the whistle blows the whistle blows."

These views are far from universal. In recreational play, where the stakes are low and teams assign each other "spirit scores" as a means of shaming jerks, spirit is an unquestioned pillar of the sport. But even at the elite club level some players believe refs are not the answer. They started playing precisely because the sport was self-governed, and they don't want the game to change now.

In Ultimate, an intentional foul—say, grabbing a player's arm to thwart a scoring throw—is considered an egregious offense. With refs on the field, some predict a win-at-all-costs future filled with basketball-style fouling and penalty-drawing, soccer-esque dives. They might be right. In 2006, four all-star teams participated in a weekend experiment in refereed Ultimate at a popular West Coast tournament. In a long post on rec.sport.disc, Ben Wiggins, a veteran competitive Ultimate player, wrote that he found himself actively encouraging his teammates to foul, something he hoped he'd never do in a real game of Ultimate.

But even if referees don't throw the game into an existential crisis, the AUDL still might not get off the ground. With the exception of Brodie Smith, the league has mostly failed to attract the world's best Ultimate players. That's because, for most of the sport's elite, the amateur game is still more alluring.

Since 1979, the sport's American

governing body USA Ultimate has held a yearly tournament called the Club Championships. Qualifying for this tournament—and, for the best of the best, winning it—is widely regarded as the pinnacle of the sport, not only in North America but in the world. Jack Marsh, co-captain of the club team Pride of New York, decided against playing in the AUDL because he worried it would cut down on preparation for his club team. Another elite-level player, Brandon Malecek, told me the captains of his Boston-based club team Ironside, were actively discouraging players from putting time into the new league, lest they be distracted from their goal of winning the Club Championships.

Even so, Malecek isn't expecting too much from the AUDL in its first season—he told me the level of play would be "similar to a second- or third-tier club team." Part of the reason is geography. Columbus, Buffalo, and Indianapolis, to name three more cities with AUDL teams, are not Ultimate hotbeds like San Francisco, Boston, and Vancouver. Another potential pitfall is money: Players aren't necessarily going to be getting any. According to Moore, many of the team's owners plan to set up a profit-sharing scheme in the event of, well, profits. In the meantime, going "pro" in Ultimate will get you a ride to the game, accommodation when required, and some free equipment—which, as an Ultimate player, I must admit doesn't sound bad.

Moore seems remarkably confident in the league's success. He has plans to double the AUDL's size next year, and franchises in more Ultimate-friendly territory, like Chicago and New York, have already been sold. (You can buy a pro Ultimate team for about \$2,500, he says.) In the next three years, he would like the league to go nationwide

with a total of 48 teams. That would make the AUDL 1.5 times the size of the NFL.

If these plans sound wildly optimistic, that's because they probably are. Greg Heltzer, a D.C.-based Ultimate player, was curious about how many fans the AUDL expected to show up for each game. He emailed Moore and was sent a pitch outlining, among other things, hypothetical per-game attendance of 1,000 fans paying \$5 each. Moore suggested (via the emailed pitch) that owners could hit this target by, for instance, giving away a free car. Concessions sales would add to their profits.

Heltzer wasn't buying it. Even when the best teams play, Ultimate games rarely draw hundreds of spectators. Last summer, a team of college all-stars toured the United States and Canada battling top club teams. At \$5 a ticket (nearly one-third of the games were free) the tour drew about 400 fans per stop—and this was to see the best of the best, in Ultimate country. By comparison, catching an AUDL game will run you anywhere from \$6 in Buffalo to \$20 if you live in Detroit—\$14 more than the cheapest Pistons-Timberwolves ticket to be had on StubHub. Given these numbers, the league may have trouble attracting a couple hundred fans per game, never mind filling the Silverdome.

If the AUDL survives its inaugural season, it will face even greater competition in 2013 from a retooled club series. Competitive Ultimate is traditionally played on weekends, tournament-style. USA Ultimate plans to increase the volume of such tournaments, creating a PGA Tour-style season of summer and fall events featuring the nation's top teams.

USA Ultimate also has a credible answer to the sport's refereeing conundrum. To make the game more spectator-friendly, the organization has created a system in which trained and certified observers communicate on-field decisions to fans and step in to make calls when the players' discussions drag on. Observers can also eject players who repeatedly break the rules. Spiking a disc at an opponent upon scoring—this happens, albeit infrequently—will get you kicked out of an observed Ultimate game. (Thankfully, regular celebration spiking is still allowed.)

The organization's changes have already helped the game inch into the mainstream. The men's and women's final of the sport's college championships are now broadcast on the CBS Sports Network, accompanied by professional commentary. For its part, the AUDL plans to stream commentated games pay-per-view style from the league's website. You can watch Brodie Smith and the Indianapolis AlleyCats take on the Columbus Cranes this weekend for \$9.95. (With four 12-minute quarters and a 15-minute halftime—the exact same timing as NBA basketball—a game of pro Ultimate, memorable or not, will probably last about two hours.)

Despite Josh Moore's predictions of an Ultimate empire that stretches from coast to coast, it's only fair to set the bar low for the AUDL. This is, after all, the first season of a new league featuring an oft-mocked sport. For Smith, expansion is less important than avoiding extinction. "The goal is to just complete the season," says Ultimate's best-known player. "If that occurs, I think it's a success."

Daniel Lametti



GB Open v Clapham. The final, Tour 2. © Graham Bailey, 2011

Don't be good, be



Ali Smith

Jenna Thomson

Nice Bristol v SYC Tour 3. © Graham Bailey 2011 - grahambaileyphotography.com

Sprint Your Cuts, Stretch Your Calves and Say Yes, Constantly. The question "What does SYC mean?" was one we heard often in our debut season and the variety of suggestions offered up along the way kept us all entertained. But why set up a new team in the first place? And how did we get from nothing to 6th place at EUCF 2011 in less than a year? I'm not sure I know all the answers, but here is our story.

The idea

SYC was originally a working title for an idea that quickly moved from a casual suggestion to an exciting reality. Over the past few seasons, a general feeling was emerging that the women's tour had somewhat stagnated with the top two teams regularly battling it out for the title following a relatively unchallenged route to the final. After playing the 2010 season with LLL Leeds, a few of us were relocating and contemplating what to do next – wouldn't it be great if there was another team out there that could mix it up a bit? Interest in a new team began to grow and it became evident that there was a definite demand for more opportunities to play high level women's ultimate in the UK.

And so it began. We wanted to create a competitive team that would push for finals spots and at the same time provide development opportunities for talented players who had not previously had the chance. To achieve this we needed to strike a good balance between experience and potential, and create an environment in which these two elements could work together successfully. One key ingredient was essential in making this possible – attitude.

SYC

The ethos

Regardless of experience, something all the SYC girls share is a positive, driven attitude and a genuine desire to improve both as individuals and as a team. From the beginning, each player knew she was part of building something from scratch – the responsibility for how it panned out lay on everyone's shoulders. Training was built on a supportive ethos where equality ruled. All errors were team errors, and all successes were team successes. There was an energy about the group that brought stories, jokes and general shenanigans that were vital in creating SYC's strong and unique sense of identity. As we approached Tour, the excitement and the nerves grew. We'd had a lot of fun so far, but how would we compete? We were about to find out.

The Tour

Tour 1, game 1: Yaka from France. We pulled on our new kit and warmed up for an international match-up that would reveal whether or not all our hard work had paid off. If I'm honest, the offence was a little rough around the edges, but what we did have was grit and determination, in bucket loads, and with it we secured a victory in our very first competitive match.

It was our first tour and we had nothing to lose – no pressure, no expectations – and it showed in some confident and aggressive play. We finished 3rd and proved to ourselves that we had what it takes to challenge the top teams. But with that belief came the inevitable extra pressure. Tour 2 and 3 brought mixed form culminating in Cardiff where we were beaten into 4th place by a formidable Bristol side. And while an overall result of 3rd in the tour was an extremely respectable position for a team in its first season, we wanted more. We wanted a place in that Nationals final.



Camille Chanaud

Sophie Edmondson

Yaka v Leeds Tour 2. © Dave Sanders 2011 ultimatephotos.org

Nationals

In Southampton we found a return to form. The tension that had troubled us in the last two tours seemed to disappear from our game, and the team was noticeably more relaxed. In the semi-final against Leeds, a now or never approach saw us take the half and we were looking strong. However, a clever change of tactics by Leeds in the second half exposed our inexperience and pushed us into 3rd place once again. The final remained elusive, but we had played our best ultimate of the season, and we went out feeling satisfied and optimistic about 2012.

EUCF

About three weeks before EUCF we got an email – Leeds had pulled out and a spot was ours if we wanted it. I wasn't sure we were ready for that level of competition, but some persuasive words from co-captain Sophie Watson convinced me this was an opportunity we couldn't miss. And she was right.

In Bruges, something clicked. Smooth patient offence and ferocious determined defence resulted in four consecutive wins against some of the top teams in Europe: Hot Beaches, Heidees, Eyecatchers and Primavera. We only narrowly lost out on a shot at the semi-finals on the wrong end of a three way tie, and we finished 6th overall. EUCF was an unexpected and invaluable end to our season showing that you never know what you are capable of unless you give it a shot.

Thanks

Setting up a new team is a risk with no guarantees but that's what makes it exciting. We achieved a lot in 10 months and sometimes I think, "How did we do that?" Training style, drills and tactics all have their role, but without a doubt it's the players on SYC that transformed us from an unknown collection of strangers into a determined and tenacious unit. I want to thank all the girls for taking a risk on the unknown and buying into the vision with 100% conviction. Particular thanks to Jenna Thomson and Sophie Watson for all their support through the whole process.

And after all that, one question still remains – what does SYC mean? Well, we're happy to leave that one to speculation.

Linda Gilmour, SYC Captain

A pizza the action

The World Championships of Beach Ultimate took place in Lignano Sabbiadoro in August 2011. I attended as a member of the BlockStack team: Steve Giguere, Tom Styles and I were tasked with providing media coverage of the tournament. This involved filming and commentating on games for tape and for live broadcasts, writing reports for the daily newsletters and creating daily BlockStack TV shows.

Due to work I had to depart for Italy later than most. I travelled to Stansted from Birmingham late on Saturday night and attempted to sleep on the floor of the departure lounge, the seats all long since claimed by much more experienced travellers. After disembarking the absurdly early flight, the first thing I noticed about Italy was the glorious sunshine.

The Adriatic beaches in Lignano looked amazing, and there was hardly a cloud in the sky. The unfortunate thing about that was that with the sunshine came intense, unrelenting heat. It was almost unbearable for players during the week – those who didn't wear sand socks for their first games were soon persuaded to do so by the painful blisters that folly earned them. It was even more uncomfortable for some particularly intrepid cameramen and commentators who were positioned on a metal grandstand at 1pm every day.

The event officially kicked off with a parade down the beachside path at the heart of the town. It culminated at the stadium erected on the beach, surrounded by umbrellas and curious sun-bathers. All of the teams from the participating countries took part, and caused quite a commotion in the resort. The hustle, bustle and outpouring of national pride generated quite a crowd by the end of the parade. Particularly active were the pick-up team Currier Island, who made their



way into the stadium clad in grass skirts, proudly waving the flag of their alleged nation.

Following some speeches from BULA President Patrick Van Der Valk, tournament director Max Vitali and, somewhat curiously, the vice-Mayor of Lignano, the competition got down to business. Host nation Italy faced perennial beach masters the Philippines. It was an intensely contested game with a very split crowd – the Ultimate community on the far side of the field clearly favoured the free-flowing style of the Philippines, whereas the obviously partisan townspeople were cheering for their countrymen. Italy rode some

strong play from their stars to emerge closer-than-the-score-indicates 12-9 victors.

That was the appetiser before the tournament proper got going. It was to be an appropriate preview, with a great deal of tight, exciting games. Teams were struggling to cope with the conditions – impossibly hot but often with a slight side-wind coming off the sea, and a very dusty top layer of sand. It was difficult to pinpoint favourites in each division due to the broken nature of the play, but it soon became obvious that the USA were strong in every division. The challenge was locating their closest competitor in each.

The Tournament

The big story in the Open division was the Ukraine. After defeating Austria, it emerged that a player from the Russian Mixed team had played for Ukraine Open. This was obviously against the rules, and the Ukrainians were given 13-0 losses in every pool game. The player in question was disqualified from the rest of the tournament. This soured a week of excellent play, and was the only thing anyone was talking about for a couple of days. It also meant that GB lost out on a quarter-final place, as they lost a tie-breaker to the Austrians. The tournament moved apace, though, eventually matching the USA and the Philippines, both of whom had lost to Italy earlier in the tournament. The strong Americans overcame the Phillipino style to win 12-9.

The USA Mixed team seemed to be an all-conquering buzzsaw. In the other side of the draw, Germany were equally as dominant. Neither team had a game closer than three points all week. The final was one that observers could see coming for a while, and it was a truly brilliant game. The lead changed hands several times, before Germany scored to make it a one-point game for the World title. The USA managed to pull it out after some intense play, winning the game 8-7.

The Women had a very tight division. There were three standout teams – the USA, GB and Canada. Each won 9 pool games, losing one – GB lost Canada, who lost to the USA, who lost to GB. The USA managed to avoid both in the semi, letting their two rivals tear into each other. In another incredibly tight game, the GB women lost out in sudden death to the Canadians. Despite that effort, Canada rode the play of their star player, Mal Lundgren, to yet another

WCBU



sudden death game in the final. This was a bridge too far for them, though, and the USA claimed the title 10-9.

The Masters division, in truth, just wasn't competitive. The USA came with an exceptionally experienced squad, both in terms of international competitions and with guys from Paganello-winning teams. They also came armed with Kelly Swiryn, who came to competitive Ultimate late in the day but was outrageously athletic compared to his opponents. While the team suffered a blip in the pools, they steam-rolled the rest of the competition and spoiled the spectacle of the final, defeating Austria 12-5.

The Grand Masters division was a first for the beach, and proved to be a worthy addition. After some tight games, the USA managed to defeat Austria 12-7 in the final.

The final division to be discussed, the Mixed Masters division, is far more comprehensively covered elsewhere in this edition of Ultimatum.

The Challenges

There were some challenges in the coverage of the tournament. The live streaming required a computer and some seemingly complicated software to be attached to the camera. That required a tech geek. At this tournament, that was Canadian Open

player Tushar Singh. The provision of the laptop came with some qualifiers though; there had to be shade so that it wouldn't overheat, there had to be power to keep it going while running some demanding processes and there had to be an internet connection so that my initially shoddy camerawork could be broadcast around the world. Thus, my grandstand was adorned with umbrellas, wires of several colours and someone to monitor the computer – usually Tushar's fiancée, Rose Bendix.

Another challenge was the amount of sand. There was a lot of it, and it was all hot. Not only that, but due to the heat the top layer was so fine that it

got everywhere – in wires, between lenses, in everyone's eyes, hair and other very awkward and inconvenient places.

Running around to get interviews with people, to get coverage of games, to take notes of games for the newsletters and taking notes on GB teams for use in a UK Ultimate column that never materialised was exceptionally challenging. Steve also had to fit in playing for GB Masters, while Tom had a particularly demanding team to tend to – his family, who had also come along to Italy. Chez BlockStack was frequently full of running laptops and a running toddler.

Despite all these challenges, and the fact that I had to be back in Birmingham for 11am on the Saturday of the first finals due to my inconvenient job, I think the tournament was a success for us. We managed to get some live streaming out, managed to tape games for release at a later date and managed to produce a BlockStack show every day. While I didn't achieve everything I wanted to written-wise, considering the scale of the tournament and the fact that we were only a three-man team I believe we did admirably.

As for the actual tournament, it seemed to be an unqualified success. The new divisions for international play, Mixed Masters and Grand Masters, were well attended and competed – not least because of GB's crowning glory in the former. Hopefully in four years the tournament can be as much fun as this was.

Sean Colfer

Old fools' gold



The final catch. GB v USA © Alexandr Tikhomirov 2011 - atihomirov.ru



GB v USA © Alexandr Tikhomirov 2011 - atihomirov.ru

GB Mixed Masters claim Britain's second ever gold in a world championships

Hot. Debilitatingly, maddeningly hot.

We arrived at dusk. Stepping out of the air conditioned car, at Lignano Sabbiadoro's Sport Complex, and we were hit with a wall of heat so intense it felt like you could lean up against it. The simple act of picking up the keys to our accommodation left us feeling drained. It was 7pm. Our two games on day one were scheduled for midday and 3pm...

The tournament, by far the largest yet organised for beach worlds, had 6 divisions (open, womens, mixed, mixed masters, masters, grand masters). It was clear from the start that the involvement of the WDF meant that most ultimate federations were taking it seriously – the USA for example sent a who's who of current Ultimate stars, all of whom had to try out for the team they represented.

We were due to play in the Mixed Masters Division – a new concept for Beach Worlds (and indeed for any WDF international event). Joining us would be Austria, Brazil, Germany, the USA and the international pick up team Currier Island. Initial scouting didn't tell us too much other than the fact that Germany contained a whole host of players who have caused

various GB teams trouble over the years, and the USA contained a fair number of familiar faces too. Tall and quick, they were likely to be the favourites in our division.

Our team was assembled from a bunch of grizzled beach specialists. Most of our women had played on the world championship winning women's squad of the last WCBU in Brazil. The men were all veterans of many a Paganello, with regulars from Mr Twister, Catch 22 and Poughkeepsie.. There was a strong South West flavour to the team, with a core of players from Bristol – and this familiarity would pay dividends as the week wore on.

Mad dogs and Englishmen. And Ultimate players.

The first three of days of pool play saw us match up against everyone in the division. Game one versus Austria taught us they were a solid team with a couple of stand-out players and although we won with a reasonably comfortable score line, it never felt easy. Game two saw us match up against the Germans. We had predicted that this would be a tough game, and conversations around the tournament suggested that all the German teams were stacked with

talent. The 3pm game slot caused us a few issues. The heat made most of us feel at least 25% slower in both mind and body. Many of us were foolish enough to mistake sand socks for a fashion faux pas too far – the blisters on the feet from the baking hot sand quickly taught us otherwise. Anyway, for whatever reason the Germans dealt us a lesson, 12-5. It seemed we had a mountain to climb to make the final – let alone think any further than that.

Day two and again we had to deal with the heat – with temperatures topping 37 degrees and barely any shade around the pitches, and players from all teams collapsing under sun umbrellas between points. We played the USA for the first time. Starting slowly, we were broken by their quick defence. Down 7-1 within 20 minutes, it looked like we were done. A timeout and a re-evaluation of attitude and the fight back began. Although we were to go on to lose 11-9, we learned a bunch of stuff that would come in useful later in the week.

Currier Island proved to be a fun team, struggling a little for having never played together before but putting some great play together nonetheless.

Brazil were easily dealt with, and before we knew it, we were on to the second half of the round-robin.

Through the lunchtime heat haze, the showgames continued. Live coverage was provided by the Blockstack crew; looking Lawrence-of-Arabia-esque in all manner of white garments, desperately trying to protect themselves against the sun, they delivered live footage and commentary throughout. Try doing this with a shoestring budget, and on a beach. Great work.

By the middle of the week, it was fairly certain that we would be playing Germany in the semi final – all we had to do was to beat Austria. The Austrians were in the same situation however; desperate to avoid the USA in the semi, they needed to win too, so the game was played in a fairly tense, but fair, atmosphere. Luckily we prevailed.

When we played the Germans a second time we were careful to take stock of where their points were coming from, and the type of play that led to them. In particular, we noted that a lot of points were scored from relatively deep in the field with handlers running through for long

WCBU



Steve Balls

David Goldemberg

GB v USA © Alexandr Tikhomirov 2011 - atihomirov.ru



Katie Goolden

GB v USA © Alexandr Tikhomirov 2011 - atihomirov.ru

lead pass scores. We also pin-pointed the women who were central to their offence and exactly where and how they seemed to get the disc. Although we again lost to them, we did enough to make them think we were no longer the push over from the first round. Catching up with them in the bar, we also effectively sowed some seeds of doubt that we were holding it all back for the semi.

Likewise with the USA. We used the second game to try out a number of different offensive and defensive sets and went out with one goal – learn what works and what doesn't. The score is irrelevant.

So, at the end of pool play, we had gone 6-4, but had won the games we needed to and through our tactical socialising had hopefully caused enough unease amongst the Germans and USA to give us a fighting chance. One challenge remained before finals – stop beach legend Jaison DeCicco from drinking on his birthday. For those that know him, you will appreciate the Herculean effort he made to stay sober before finals day.

"This is my last ever day of top level Ultimate" – Wayne Davey

It all came down to Friday. Win two games and be World Champions. Lucy Byrne, our coach and captain who had managed the team so well throughout the tournament, had banned all talk of results, preferring that we focussed on playing well and enjoying the experience. Despite that, the nerves were evident at our breakfast meeting.

The semi against Germany was played at 10am, our earliest start of the week, and without a doubt, the earlier start and lower temperature helped us out. We won the toss – something we hadn't managed against them previously. We picked offence – unsurprisingly. We scored easily and the first few points were so fluid we grew in confidence. Our focussed sideline didn't stop working throughout the game. With each point, we stormed the field and visibly shook the confidence of the previously bullet-proof Germans. The women on our team put so much pressure on the German ladies that they had to change their previously successful game plan and play much more through the men on their team. But we were ready. Having rested players specifically for this game, we rotated our squad well to ensure we had the fresh legs at the right moments.

As the game wore on, the temperature began to rise, Germany began to creep back in and close the gap. With the sidelines now packed with Germans and GB players from the surrounding pitches, the tension was ratcheting up. Germany closed the gap to two but we managed to hold on. The game winner came off a play we had road tested against the USA and Germany in pool play, and consisted of crossfield cut from Si Weeks who then sent the forehand huck to Rob McGowan, who, cutting deep up the closed sideline, pulled down the disc under pressure.

After the semi, we headed to the beach bar and met the USA team, who it is fair to say were surprised we had beaten the Germans, and as a result were starting to assume their worry that we had been holding something back was proving to be the case. It's all about the mental game...

The final was played at 7pm in the beach stadium. Our team talks were focussed without being stressful (though we did roll out the fabled kitchen sink speech) and the warm ups kept simple – a few throwing and cutting drills and we were left to get ready in our own time.

We came out on offence. Two passes

and Jason DeCicco had the disc in the endzone – it was the perfect start. The USA fought back though, scoring a patient first point before breaking us to take a 2-1 lead. We turned it on the next offence, but a miscommunication between the US handlers gave us the disc back. It was the last time the USA would be in front. Our D line took control – Jack Goolden firing us up with a layout block to stop the US in our endzone, cutting for the swing pass from Mike Palmer he then sent a long huck to Beth Rougier who scored the first of her points in the final, leaving her mark for dust. Taking the lead got us revved up for more and the seeds of doubt in the minds of the USA began to germinate – plan A didn't seem to be working for them, and relatively untested in their pool games, they didn't seem to have a plan B.

The next point was possibly the longest of the whole game. GB benefited from having four Bristol players on the field – Jaimie Rogers, Wayne Davey, Fran Pioli and Jo Drury kept the disc alive and worked the disc into the endzone with quick break mark throws that kept the USA off balance.

The standout woman on the US team



As far as I know, this is the largest collection of international medals won by any GB player!

I have also been on GB team that won SOTG at three international championships: Mixed (2000), Masters (2003) and Mixed Masters (2011).

Some people say that Masters doesn't really count. They are losers.

Jack 'smug git' Gooldeen

was Kimberley Beach, but despite her great play, she found her match when trying to get in to the head of Jo Drury – who in characteristic style, let all the chat wash over her and moved the disc up the pitch as reliably as she had done all week.

Over the next few points, GB played fast, safe offence and fast, hard defence. With Steve Balls, Sarah Gibbons and Jess Thomas taking on much of the handling responsibilities Katie Gooldeen, Lucy Byrne and Kay Matthews were able to use their speed to stretch the US defence ensuring the middle of the field was open for all to take advantage.

Ex-Clapham player Hale Brown kept the US aggressive by taking the long shots – in particular looking to pick out the tall Jeremy Clarke (in fact, given the mismatch in size it was surprising this one pass offence wasn't used more often by the USA).

However, it became ever clearer that this was to be GB's game. Jack's layout block set the scene for what was to follow. Rob McGowan, at full stretch, brought down a speculative hammer from Si Weeks, Sally Quigg sent out a prayer that was caught by Beth Rougier, Si Weeks wrecked havoc on both offence and defence... the whole team out-worked, out-thought, and out-cheered the USA – it was just one of those nights.

And to top it all, just when we thought our evening couldn't get any better, to our delight, we won Spirit of the Game as well.

So, what worked? A few things spring to mind:

- We had a mix of laissez-faire attitude and dogged determination, expertly handled throughout the week by Lucy Byrne – having now captained two GB gold medal winning teams at worlds it wouldn't

be far-fetched to say she was the ace up our sleeve;

- We used the various warm up tournaments effectively – with no concern for results, we tried and tested a number of plays, defences and got to know what works well for each other – team building par excellence;
- As individuals, we knew what we each did well and what we were less effective at – playing to each other's strengths and not worrying about the weaknesses made the whole greater than the sum of the parts;
- We played the schedule – having worked out what games were crucial to win and what games could be used for fact finding;

- We kept other teams guessing – resting different combinations of players in the group games and mixing up our play we didn't settle on the winning formula until it mattered;
- Our 'support' team – with three kids under 2 on our sideline we needed to work together – our non playing team members (including the ever positive Ian "Jazz" Cuddihy who was injured in the first game) and super physio Celia kept the machine running;
- As Lucy would say, "the success is in the detail..."

Overall, an amazing week – the buzz on winning stayed with us for days after the event and will not be

something easily forgotten. And let's not forget – we stopped a clean sweep by the USA!!

Last words go to Si Weeks:

"In all the international tournaments I have ever played I don't think I have known our team's game plan to work so successfully. By the time we played Germany and the USA in those key games we knew exactly what tactics were our best bet. And wow how they worked! Still now, two months after the tournament, I can't help having a very smug feeling as I think of that USA final knowing "that they just never saw it coming!!""

In summary: Not today Hale, not today.

Rob McGowan & Sarah Gibbons



GB Mixed Masters just before the final started. © Celia Wogan 2011

Bear Cavalry: Mixed opinions

Bear Cavalry are almost completely an alumni team from Warwick University; in the last two seasons, we have had no more than two non-Warwick players on the first team at any given tournament. While taking an alumni team to the odd fun Indoor tournament has come up before, entering an alumni team for the entirety of Mixed Tour is a relatively new approach. And with this team, we finished 2nd, 3rd and 4th at the three mixed tours in our first season, and went on to win all three tours (conceding just one game!) in our second season. So what else did we do differently? And how did it work for us?

1. Small squads: My ideal number for a weekend mixed tour (with Cavalry) is eight guys and six girls. With larger squads and less pitch time, you can get the impression that it isn't your fault your team is losing. Not true with small squads. With big squads people come on for a D point in the wind and rain with cold hands, get a block and then turf the next throw. Not true if they're on 1 point in 2. Anecdotal, I've seen that these two factors completely outweigh the fitness benefit of having a larger squad.

2. Play to the team you've got, not the one you want: If you know most of your players turn over trying to break the force, don't ask them to! Your tactics should fit the players you have rather than the ones you want. In our first year we played a lot of offence through deep shots to a couple of big male receivers. Then in our second year when we lost those receivers, we played through the speed of our girls creating deep looks and using our handler core to keep the disc alive.

3. Teach principles not tactics: In three years I have taught three statements:

- Don't play offence on the sideline
- Keep the deep space free
- Get out of the open lane

That's it. We've had nine weekend training sessions and I've spent all of them on those three principals. What that means for the team is that players know very well what they should be doing at any given time on offence. In the huddle before or during a big game, they already know what I'm going to say because they've heard it hundreds of times before. Feeling comfortable with the tactics leads to being confident on field.

4. Athleticism is paramount: I absolutely will not pick someone for the first team unless they are athletic. I don't care if you've got the best throws in the country; if you can't get free against a top quality defender, you're no use to the first team (Note that the important point here is that you have to be able to get free against high quality defenders – anybody can look good against a naive defender).

5. Squad rotation: Players who are just outside the first team will always be given a shot at the first team at Cavalry. You can never be sure how someone will react against tight D until you give them a chance at a tournament. Sometimes people who look amazing on the second team will flop and sometimes they'll stand out, but you don't know unless you give them a full tour to find out.

6. One voice: The vast majority of the club learned to play ultimate from me or from people I have coached. They may have been to other training sessions but only after the basics of Cavalry were instilled so we are all on exactly the same page. Whether what I say is right or not is mostly irrelevant, because everyone is doing the same thing.

7. Get the best throwers to make the hardest throws: A lot of teams talk about making the most of mismatches. This absolutely does not apply to picking up a slow disc



from static (the most difficult throw). The person who does that should be your best thrower and only your best thrower.

8. Dictatorship not democracy: Bear Cavalry is completely non-political for the most part because one person has the final say in all decisions. I appreciate that this sounds pretty bad, but it eliminates internal bickering, and people can always up and leave for another club if they want to anyway!

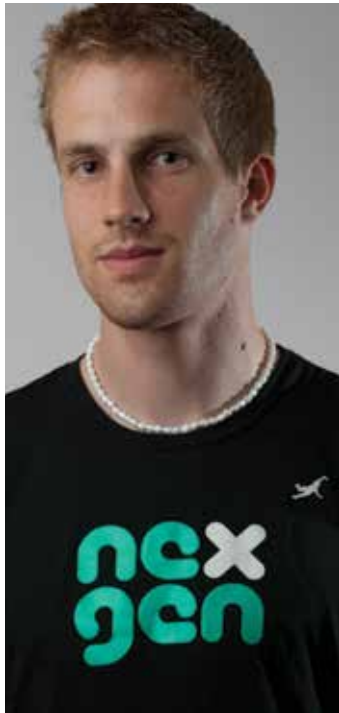
9. Good defence trumps good offence: This is absolutely not true at elite level open where you need your offence to put away almost every point to stand a chance. However, mixed (both in this country and abroad) is nowhere near that level. You can afford to turn over near the other team's endzone (occasionally) if you're confident your defence is good enough.

10. No separate O/D lines: Mixed ultimate is absolutely not at a high enough standard that you can expect zero turnover points, so why separate the lines? Are people on the D line because they're not as good at offence? Well, they're going to have to play offence anyway. Likewise, if you've got someone on the offensive line because they're not quick enough to play D, then that person could be exploited by the opposition if there's a turnover. So we have no separation between lines, just a small athletic squad who all play at any time.

Well, that's everything I can think of. The way we run the club and the way we play goes beyond the CVs and achievements of our individual players (and in fact, in our first year, we had no players in the top four open teams and just one girl who had played women's tour at all).

Dave Tyler

Being a part of the



My journey started on 17th December 2010. I was browsing my spam folder, about to click 'delete all' before I saw the subject 'Ultimate in America' from a 'Kevin Minderhout'. Intrigued, I moved it to my inbox.

"Hi Ollie, You don't know me, but I'm a friend of Josh Wardle and Rob Whitehouse. I'm working on putting together a five-week summer ultimate tour here in the states and your name came up as a top UK college player. The short story is it's going to be a sponsored event with the 12 best college players from 2011. I'm interested in adding an international player to the roster, which is why I'm contacting you."

OK, that got my attention!

Wide-eyed, I continued reading as he went on to explain that games would take place in stadiums against the top club teams around the country in an attempt to showcase the world's best players to local Ultimate communities. Expenses would be covered, and I'd be paid for participating.

I had to re-read it a few times before I could comprehend the enormity of the opportunity. I didn't allow myself to get too excited – Kevin pointed out that it was only an idea, and that if no sponsorship was found by March, it'd have to be shelved until the following year (by which point I would no longer be eligible). Nevertheless, I casually replied that I'd love to be a part of the tour, but I'd have to consult with my GB and club captains, as it would mean missing much of the UK season. Fortunately, Brummie, Britney and Beavan all replied positively, albeit with an understandable hint of jealousy and scepticism. I declared my availability to Kevin and anxiously awaited developments in the plan.

A whole, disconcerting month passed before our next correspondence.

"What's your college? How old are you? How much do you weigh?"

Was that it? Was that a good sign? I replied with the requested details and poke for some more confirmation.

"Just working on filling the schedule and roster"

I remained sceptical. That is, until his next email, which went out to several prospective players with confirmation of venues and interest from Patagonia as the main sponsor.

"Things are looking really great right now. We're on schedule," he concluded.

The ball really started rolling from there, with Kevin regularly updating

us with continued developments with confirmation of the roster and schedule. Then the next thing I knew, I was booking my flights! The initial plan for the tour had been cut back by this stage – there was no longer the promise of payment for playing, and they wouldn't be able to cover my airfare. Fortunately, Exeter University were very supportive of my Ultimate exploits, and after a strong appeal the Athletic Union (in conjunction with the High Performance Programme), they offered to pay for my flights!

Over the next two months, I received a lot of positivity and advice on how to approach the tour from fellow UK players – all tinged with the aforementioned jealousy. This humbled me, and drove me to make the absolute most of the experience with the knowledge that I was the envy of a world of Ultimate players!

July 1st and I was on the flight to Vancouver, Canada. That was followed by a short trip to Seattle, where I'd been invited to play Potlatch, a top mixed tournament. The jetlag meant I didn't fully immerse myself playing-wise, but it was a great opportunity to get a taste of US Ultimate and meet some players. A short match-up against Beau Kittredge ensured it was a lot of fun.

A week later, the NexGen team had its first official gathering in Seattle. We had a training session with Sockeye's Ben Wiggins, who kindly offered to help us out early on in the tour. Wiggins' approach to these sessions was unerring. He soon had the full attention and respect of a whole group of excitable, young and arrogant players; we hung on every word he said. His incredibly personal approach – using people's names and drawing individuals aside for constructive advice – instantly involved everyone. However, the main thing I noticed is

that over three training sessions with Wiggins, not a negative word was said. His deliberate positivity seemed patronising at times, but from a group of talented college players who'd never played together before, he created a real NexGen team ready to take on the best in the world.

The start of the tour represented some of our hardest opposition with games against Furious, Sockeye and Revolver. Three close losses showed that we were up to it, but understandably still yet to fully gel as a team. I felt pretty comfortable in these opening games, and certainly not as intimidated as I might have expected. I had already noticed at this stage that the pace of the game was different in the US. The speed at which the disc is moved meant that defensively I had to be on my toes and continually repositioning with regards to the location of the disc. It also meant that my ability to bait under throws and get fly by blocks was not as effective, as my mark was just a step ahead. Offensively, our handlers moved it just as quickly, meaning my cuts had to be set up and executed as early as possible to continue the disc movement. It took some getting used to, and I was hoping I'd get more involved as the games went on.

In between these three games came our first victory, against Rhino. It gave us the confidence boost we needed to prove we were worthy of playing this level of opposition. Two more solid wins against Johnny Bravo and Ring of Fire were split with a tough loss against Chain Lightning in which we twice had the disc to win. Nevertheless, we remained positive, showing the ability to adapt well to the varying conditions of both Boulder and Raleigh. At over 5,300 feet, the Boulder air meant our throws went a lot further and that 'inside out' throws never really levelled out! It

NexGen



Photos © Kevin Minderhout 2011

was different to any conditions I've played in before, as was the torrential downpour of Raleigh. The rain was so heavy that the game was delayed at half time to allow it to pass!

Then followed the low point of the tour; losses to Truckstop and Southpaw, teams we felt we should've beaten. It might have been the intense 40°C daytime heat of our workshop in Virginia, or the substandard pitch at Philadelphia, or the fact that we'd lost our NexGen bus to its second breakdown and were split up into rental cars, but either way, we needed to improve if we were going to fulfil our potential. A constructive team talk lead by George Stubbs gave us new hope and camaraderie. The creation of Offense and Defense lines

at this point also helped cement our individual roles within the team and we arrived in Boston with new vigour. Subsequently our game against Ironside was probably our best result of the tour as we romped to a 15-11 victory.

Personally, I knew I had more to offer. Up until this stage of the tour, I had adopted a defensive mentality on pitch aiming to shut down my opposition, getting the big blocks I knew I could. But I hadn't got any as yet and it was frustrating knowing that I wasn't demonstrating my potential. A change was needed, and being part of the O-line in the following game offered that.

Even without a W, GOAT was my most

enjoyable and successful game. I decided I wanted to get involved, and scoring a bunch of goals helped. I also had some good match-ups involving a few feisty moments. The observers handed me a Personal Misconduct Foul for some retaliation, but overall, it was a lot of fun. When 800 paying spectators start slow-chanting your number, you know you've got involved!

On that note, I have to say my experience of observers was reasonably positive on the whole. Their involvement certainly didn't negatively impact game play and by improving the flow of games, it increased the spectator appeal. It was occasionally frustrating that observers didn't seem confident in their decisions, potentially due to a lack of playing experience at this level, but I maintain that if experienced and respected players take the position of observers, it could be positive for the game and aid its progression.

We had a few days off before our final stretch, so we found a secluded chalet in a West Virginia forest and put our feet up, and the unexpected return of the bus got everyone's spirits up. We were back on the road together and ready to finish strong!

Our last four games were against beatable opposition, so we fully intended to win them all. And that's exactly what we did with our biggest victory, 15-5, coming in our last game of the tour against Sub Zero. It was a great way to finish and gave us a winning record of 8-7 for the tour, a pretty commendable achievement.

A long bus ride back to Seattle (with a few more breakdowns) ended our adventure. I flew back home knowing I'd had the trip of a lifetime: exploring America with an awesome team of athletes, playing world class Ultimate. You can't beat that.

NexGen was an incredible venture that has changed the landscape of Ultimate for the better. The interest generated was vast, as demonstrated by the presence of paying crowds of up to 800 people and workshops of up to 60 kids. The professional, high-definition coverage of every game also represented a new dawn, and is something that future coverage all over the world will aim to replicate. NexGen's ability to showcase the world's best Ultimate to local communities will undoubtedly have a significant long-term impact on the sport, increasing participation and encouraging the next NexGen to exceed our successes.

This is only the start of NexGen. I fully expect the tour to be repeated and improved upon. It should be the goal of every young Ultimate player to be a part of it. I hope my participation in NexGen this year can inspire the next generation of UK Ultimate stars who are in the position I once was. As a junior I had big ambitions within the sport, and being part of NexGen has only enhanced my ambitions to be one of the best.

NexGen was the creation of Kevin Minderhout, an ambitious Oregon alumnus who decided he wanted to change Ultimate. His efforts in preparation of the tour and throughout were amazing and he deserves every credit and more for his incredible achievements. I would also personally like to thank all those people that offered me advice and support and everyone who followed the tour and my participation within it. It would have meant little to me without your interest and I greatly appreciate it. I play Ultimate for the people and it means a lot!

Here's to the next generation.

Ollie Gordon, NexGen #14

Referees, spirit and the



Everyone knows that 'Ultimate is a young and fast growing sport.' To me, this means two things: 1) there are more and more people playing Ultimate, and 2) Ultimate is still changing and learning what it is, in terms of rules and culture. Those of us who play now have a great influence on the sport at this plastic stage, and our choices, in our votes, behaviour and opinions, will impact not only the rest of our playing careers, but also those of generations to follow. We are in a powerful position, but as those know their Spiderman will tell you, "with great power comes great responsibility".

It is no secret or shame, I think, that the US leads the way in the world of Ultimate, in standard of play, numbers of players, resources, coverage and a whole lot else. Where they go, in general, the rest of Ultimate looks

to follow. Which worries me. Whilst I wouldn't want a world where two radically different forms of Ultimate were played, neither do I like the direction in which US Ultimate seems to be heading. For the USAU and a lot of the Ultimate community (around the world) there seems to be an almost mindless drive to 'legitimise' the sport, to get the 'recognition it deserves.' Bigger, basically, is better. People want to see Ultimate on television, in the Olympics, to have the elite players paid to do what they do. People want the respect of their colleagues when they come in battered and bruised on a Monday morning, to not have to answer the dog question any more. I get all that, honestly I do. But I'm not sure people are considering what that will cost.

Professional players means money and money means (non-player)

spectators, either paying to watch or pulling in the advertisers. One of the key sticking points to attracting spectators is that the game is 'too slow.' The game is too slow because foul calls etc take time to resolve. Calls take time to resolve because players discuss them. The conclusion to this train of thought is that Ultimate needs referees who will make quick calls. Referees are also apparently crucial in some eyes to defining a 'legitimate' sport (and certainly the Olympics seem to think so). Referees, it is argued, because of their impartiality, are the only way of ensuring a fair game. The US is already moving in this direction, with observers at all USAU sanctioned tournaments and the new AUDL having fully empowered referees. Whilst I can see the argument for observers, they feel like the thin end of the wedge for full referees. We've had experiments with referees before, here, as well as in the US, and they haven't come out looking particularly pretty (Google 'Rylands: The Aftermath').

Ultimate with referees is something I have a big problem with. At the moment knowing the rules and making the right call in the heat of the moment is a burden on every player on the field. And like any sort of burden, carrying it makes us stronger (apologies, I may have over-stretched that metaphor). We are, I firmly believe, better people because we play Ultimate. Every time a call is made against us and we listen and attempt to see things from our opponent's point of view, we are becoming better people. With that burden of responsibility removed, suddenly it isn't our job to do the right thing any more; it is someone else's. We don't need to think objectively and carefully about the situation any more, that's someone else's job. We don't need to discipline ourselves to rational and

reasonable conversation, somebody else has got that covered for us. Which leaves us all free to go in the opposite direction. And because that someone else is neutral, subjective and human, there is an advantage that can be sought. You can foul and get away with it if nobody sees you. You can watch a wrong call give advantage to your team and not speak up about it. You can use your powers of persuasion to influence a call in the balance. And if fairness isn't your responsibility any more, but winning is, all of these become powerful tactics.

This slide is abetted by a system of punishments that will be needed to prevent exploitation of the rules and referees. Again, we are already seeing some of this in PMFs and TMFs (Personal and Team Misconduct Fouls). When there is a clear punishment for a wrongdoing, however, suddenly that action no longer becomes 'wrong'; it is something that 'costs X amount.' Consider football for example, and the World Cup 2010 quarter-final between Ghana and Uruguay. In the dying minutes of the game, Ghana launch an attack to break the deadlock. A shot flies towards the Uruguayan goal and Suarez puts a hand out to stop it. He gets a red card, Ghana miss the penalty and Uruguay eventually win the game. Do you think Suarez regrets what he did? Do you think he considers that cost too high? I think that was a fairly calculated decision where getting his team into the semi-final was worth not playing for the rest of the tournament. All this could be ours, as well as the deliberate fouling, lying, deception and other forms of cheating are prevalent in every refereed sport. I can think of no good argument that says Ultimate wouldn't end up going down that same road. Maybe not in 10 years, when those playing remember the days making their own calls, but in 30, when the elite players have grown

future of our sport



People are lining up to give Tom Styles a slap. Copa del Sol © Andy Moss 2011

up never having watched or played a game without referees.

Is Ultimate perfect the way it is? Of course not: injustices happen every game and everyone's familiar with the frustration of a slow call resolution. What's more, the rules say that Ultimate is a non-contact sport but that incidental contact can and does occur – and there's a whole other article on the grey area that creates. But rules and referees can never keep up with every possible situation and permutation of play, and trying to make them do so simply creates more injustice, this time with a clear scapegoat to blame (i.e. the referee). The rules of Ultimate aren't perfect, and they probably never will be, but when you have 14 player-referees on pitch who know that it is on them to do the right thing, I think you're going to come far closer to a fair result. Yes it will take time to resolve calls, and

yes maybe that makes the sport less spectator-friendly, but that's Ultimate, and that is a small cost to pay for what makes it so special.

Ultimate the way it is has so much to offer that no other sport can that we would be foolish to throw it away so lightly. The community we have can only come from the self-refereeing aspects of the game, from having to treat your opponent as a person not an enemy, from the post-game huddle, fun tournaments and partying together. Every time I see Si Hill interviewed about youth and school ultimate he mentions how organisations are fascinated by the absence of referees. How teaching kids practical versions of the words fairness and respect is becoming increasingly appealing. And look at charities like Ultimate Peace and the directly applicable aspects of the sport to conflict resolution.

Spirit of the Game has become something of a dirty phrase as players become desperate to move away from our terrible hippy past, but for me it is something we need to hold onto with both hands as something codified into our sport, not just a one-line appendix to the rules. Of course I want Ultimate to grow, of course I want to see it on television and have the best athletes getting paid to make amazing plays. But changing what Ultimate fundamentally is to achieve those goals seems kind of self-defeating. It's not the sight of a disc in flight, or a perfectly executed play that makes me love this sport; it's the people who play it, the way we play it and the community that brings. For me, that isn't worth selling out at any price.

I leave you with a piece of text that should be familiar, but is always worth a re-read:

"All players are responsible for administering and adhering to the rules. Ultimate relies upon a Spirit of the Game that places the responsibility for fair play on every player. It is trusted that no player will intentionally break the rules; thus there are no harsh penalties for breaches, but rather a method for resuming play in a manner which simulates what would most likely have occurred had there been no breach. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but should never sacrifice the mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules of the game, or the basic joy of play."

All mistakes and gross generalisations in this article are my own, and in no way represent those of this fine publication, my teams or anyone else.

James Burbidge

All fudged up

a bloke called Fudge who gets injured a lot

Dear Ultimatum Reader,

I felt compelled to write this article following a shandy-fuelled Sunday afternoon dreaming of what might have been. I, like every other player, feel as though I could have been a contender. I'm of the school of thought that declares if you're not trying to be the best, why bother. I place 100% of the blame for my failure to reach the top on a series of injuries and my subsequent stupidity at dealing with them.

At this point I should declare my HUGE caveat: this article is not based

on any qualifications, so don't expect anything technical; it's based purely on my experiences. My aim is to stop others with the potential, which I was obviously convinced I had, failing to realise it due to stupidity. Those who know me may not believe this; but I haven't had that many injuries; unfortunately, those I have had have lingered much longer than they should have.

My Injuries in Chronological Order (Note: minor injuries of less than 2 months have been omitted)

Hip Flexor

Towards the end of a tournament in Edinburgh, I felt a mild pain at the top of my leg, but as it was cold and pouring down with rain I wanted to keep playing, plus there wasn't long to go, so with the help of adrenalin I carried on. Following an eight-hour minibus journey home, I hopped out and realised I couldn't actually lift my knee up. I was walking around for the next few days dragging my leg behind me like Quasimodo. A trip to the physio led to the diagnosis of a hip flexor tear, so I was ordered to rest, stretch and undergo ultrasound treatment, which would have probably fixed me up in no time... had I not just wanted to go to this training and just play that friendly game at 50%. However, now I've had this injury, I make extra effort to ensure it doesn't come back by keeping my hip flexor loose.

Supraspinatus

Somewhere, somehow I damaged my supraspinatus tendon, which prevented me from raising my arm sharply. I could raise it slowly, just not sharply. Needless to say I rested it for a few weeks, and then tried to play and made it worse. So the physio gave me more ultrasound treatment, I rested it for a bit longer, then Paga came round, so I tried to play again...and made it worse. Eventually, after behaving like Homer Simpson with the electrified doughnut, I decided to rest it and get treatment until I was confident it was fixed, then underwent some rehab exercises for a few weeks until I was finally able to ease my way back into Ultimate. However, now I've had this injury, I make extra effort to ensure it doesn't come back by keeping my rotator cuff strong and loose.

Adhered hamstrings

It's not unusual to feel tight hamstrings after a tournament;

however, my left leg maintained this feeling for a couple of weeks. I was able to train, but my hamstrings never felt at ease. I visited a physio for several months who was convinced it was a tear and that I needed to rest, before doing some gradual strengthening exercises. I tried this but I just didn't see any progress, as I could still sprint without any serious pain. After about 9 months of grief, I sought a second opinion from a sports masseuse who diagnosed a hamstring adhesion and proceeded to separate it with painful massage. Subsequently, I was given another series of exercises and stretches to add to the list in order to stop it happening again. However, now I've had this injury, I make extra effort to ensure it doesn't come back by keeping my hamstrings loose.

Knee/Bursitis

I woke up one morning following a basketball match and had an excruciating, aching pain just below my knee. It just didn't feel stable and I wasn't confident of putting a load through it. I decided to rest it for a few days and then start training again. But it didn't go away. I went to one physio who suggested ultrasound and a course of Ibuprofen. After this I tried to get back into training but it quickly went back to the original pain and then just got worse, so I completed increasingly long periods of rest followed by an attempt at training until I saw a different physio, who diagnosed bursitis and gave me some acupuncture as well as a few suggestions regarding rehab exercises. I was also given a strap to wear under my knee, which is now part of my training kit, and the exercises associated with the knee have been added to my increasing list of daily injury prevention exercises. However, now I've had this injury, I make extra effort to ensure it doesn't come back by keeping the muscles





Goats of Destiny v **Flaming Galahs** Mixed Tour. © Sapphira van Assema 2011



Flaming Galahs, Mixed Tour. © Sapphira van Assema 2011

around my knee strong and loose.

So what have I learned from all this is that:

- I shouldn't have had to go and get an injury in order to train my body to not get it again
- Each physio/doctor/sports masseuse has strong areas of knowledge and weak areas of knowledge
- One physio helped me fix two of my injuries but failed to diagnose two others resulting in unnecessary months of frustration
- An extra month or so resting and rehabbing an injury is better than trying to play too soon and causing further damage. Imagine you're almost over the hangover from hell and you jump on a rollercoaster.

Fudge Fact 1*:

You are a long time retired

Therefore, assuming you enjoy Ultimate, you should look to play it for as long as possible. This is made possible by doing everything you can to ensure your body will cope with the demands of our sport into your mature years. Having said that, Ultimate is not the be all and end all, so simply being able to walk and lift your children

should be enough to get you thinking. The crux of this is injury prevention and accurate injury treatment. I have regularly failed in both.

Fudge Fact 2*: Warming up AND warming down time is NOT better spent elsewhere

Bruce Lee once said, "The athlete of more advanced years tends to warm up more slowly and for a longer time. This fact may be due to greater need for a longer warm-up period, or it may be because an athlete tends to get "smarter" as he gets older." Warming up and warming down is essential to getting through a hard weekend or week-long tournament. Our sport involves a lot of very explosive movements and our bodies do not like to do these from cold. If you're familiar with Refresher bars (yellow with sherbet inside), buy two, put one in the fridge and the other in your jacket pocket, the following day, open them up and smack them on a table, see what happens. That is your body.

Fudge Fact 3*: Flexibility cannot be achieved just before a game

Flexibility is another weapon to prevent injury. Now, contrary to popular opinion, flexibility is not achieved by touching your toes a few times

before a game. I found stretching a highly personal thing; personally I prefer static stretching, but I know a lot of people have gone the way of dynamic stretching recently. In any case, in order to increase flexibility, I feel one should be warmed up and perform stretching regularly. A professional basketball player I once knew performed a series of stretches three times a day, every day. For me, this may be slightly extreme, but not too far from what I should have done.

Fudge Fact 4*: Muscle strength needs to have balance

Another pitfall I have fallen into is muscle imbalance. In my younger days I found the leg extension machine in the gym easy; however, when I used the leg curl machine, I found that if I lifted any decent weight my hamstrings cramped up... so I didn't. The result was strong quads and weak hamstring – add to this my lame attempts at stretching, and I was on course for future problems. I have since learned that in an ideal world, muscles such as these (antagonistic) should have strengths within a certain ratio of each other. Also I am now of the opinion that free weights and "compound exercises" are more

beneficial as they work several muscles at once. My view is that this reduces the opportunity to abnormally build up a specific muscle at the expense of a neighbouring muscle that struggles to continue to work properly with this new bully that sits the other side of the bone.

Fudge Fact 5*: Core gives you more

The final aspect I want to mention is core strength and stability. The core is often neglected in order to ensure your tickets to the gun show are valid. Achieving a strong and stable core will, in my opinion, help prevent injuries. This is how I like to think of it: when you're tired, you'll begin to lose form and when you lose form, your limbs are subjected to strains they are not used to as they try to take shortcuts to achieve what you're asking of them. Consequently, you may think you're asking something of your body that it is capable of, but in reality it is doing something subtly different and could break down.

*A Fudge Fact is not necessarily a real fact but I think it must have some scientific basis... somewhere

Fudge

EUC mixed



GB Mixed v Slovenia © Jocelyn Trottet 2011 - lookgoodplaygood.org

As we were driven from Graz airport across the border, the tournament representative – our temporary cultural attaché – boasted that Slovenia was one of the most crime-free countries in Europe. Seven days later, when we heard who our opposition would be in the final, it's fair to say their previous opponents felt robbed by what had been done to them.

Arriving at the tournament with GB teams seeded first in all divisions brought a welcome pressure, and the honour of playing the opening game (returning champs GB Mixed vs our Slovenian hosts) provided an opportunity to put down a marker for future opponents, even as they perceived a chance to check out our personnel and plays. The Management thus decided to limit us to just our vertical offence. As a squad, it appears we took a collective decision to hide even the details of that from the closely watching Belgians as we played without any sense of

nerves, without much structure, and still without conceding a single point in the first half. Despite the weather, a number of the GB Women and Open squads stayed the course and were vocal throughout, a favour we'd look to repay as the week went on.

Playing the opening game conferred the advantage of having only one game on Monday, against the the Finns. 8 years ago, Finland had 12 points off GB in the round robin stage, but in Southampton they'd folded to a 17-4 scoreline. Not knowing which team was more likely this time around, we went out with all offensive options available, scoring every point we received. Team spirit was exemplified by Cowie's reaction to a foul call on Ben Weddell's D – the disc was sent back, only for Cowie to get a point block the thrower on their endzone line. The game was convincingly won 17-7, and the squad spread itself around, bantering with the Masters, and supporting the Open and Women's squads before reconvening

for the evening ice bath ritual, just one element of essential preparation and indubitable team bonding amidst the gasps, screams and Phil Collins music (you know who you are).

Our first 9 am game brought two challenges: persuading the hotel staff to serve breakfast at 06:00, and then getting up early enough to eat it! Waiting for the gondola down the mountain brought a minor reward as we took in the view across the valley, but it would be wrong to blame either the early morning, the serene scenes or the misty vista for our slow start against the French. They came out with passion, physicality and a game plan to take a 5-2 lead. Calling a timeout to refocus allowed the offence to stop the rot, and we recovered to take the abbreviated half 7-6. Attacking the second half gave us four breaks in a row to take the decisive lead, and it was a clear sign of the change in mindset that where the French had won the longest point (ten minutes) of the first half, GB had the mettle to win a sixteen minute point in the second. Next up were the Spaniards, led by an American expat who confessed his admiration for our numbered defensive sets as we ran through our full repertoire. As against Finland, the offence scored every point received, with the one negative being that Spain did score more points in the second half than the first (That is, the one negative unless you count a post-game spirit circle that involved a teammate being stripped to the waist & adorned with a brightly coloured apron. Olé indeed...)

Tuesday arrived full of eastern promise: after Russia and Hungary, only Austria would remain of our pool games. As an unknown unit with a number of tall players, we went out hard against the Russians and took the first half 9-1, only for them to presage



Nick Wong

what they were capable of by going on a three point run early in the second. Following the Golden Rule, a timeout was called and – though it took a while – the point was duly scored. Russia's offence did their job the next point, but at the next opportunity our defence re-established itself to finish the game 17-5. Hungary appeared to have written off our pool game as a contest before it even started, resting their two best players and failing to score a point in the first half. Wednesday's play consisted of two major variables: the Austrian team Upsadaisy had been the only European squad to make quarters in Prague, but had then been destroyed by a scratch Codhand team in Budapest earlier this year. With the added incentive that winning the game would put us straight into the quarters, there was some concern when the Austrians scored their first point untroubled by the defence. Six points of trading ensued before our defence could disrupt the cycle, but a run of four breaks gave us a significant lead. Trading out the half to 9-5 appeared to give the defence the legs to attack



Marko Dreu

Nick White

GB Mixed v Slovenia © Jocelyn Trottet 2011 - lookgoodplaygood.org

the second half -or the Austrians had an eye on their afternoon pre-quarter - as they failed to score in the second half. Meanwhile, the Russians pulled off their first heist, recovering from 8-12 down against the Dutch to win 15-13.

Hearing the Irish belt out "Ireland's Call" when you're about to play them is a very different experience to enjoying it as a spectator, and confirmed what we'd been told in the pre-game speech: they really wanted it and were convinced they had a good shot at us. Starting the game with a four point run might have quashed the hopes of lesser teams, but the Irish trusted in their big players and hung in to earn their turnovers, never quite converting as they were limited to three points in the first half. With our offence hitting 100% again, we continued to pull away, winning 17-5. Our pool nearly managed a clean sweep of the quarters, with France drubbing Poland 17-7, Russia dominating the first half against Germany before surviving a scare to close out the game 14-12, and Belgium only progressing past

Austria by outscoring them 10-6 in the second half to become our semi-final opponents .

With the benefit of intelligence from ultiorganizer & the occasional reconnaissance mission to Belgium's games, we knew that a lot of their play went through the men, with three guys comfortably over 6'3" taking the majority of their stats. They came out strong, forcing our offence to give up their first break in three days, but after a gritty second point, our defence put pressure on with some targeted match-ups, going on a run of breaks that was only halted by a ridiculous grab by one of the Belgian stars. An overcooked GB huck and more good use of height gave the Belgians their second break of the game, but our deeper squad, all playing to structure, told over the rest of the first half as every Belgian receiver was put under pressure and we secured another two breaks. Having taken the half 9-5, a call was made to attack the second half, and so we did, with varied defences that forced at least one turn per point in the second half. Not even



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incorrect advice from the sideline - blaming a wind-disrupted scoreboard for the suggestion that we call a non-existent timeout - could turn the tide as some protracted points traded out the game 17-8.

Next door, the pool rematch of France against Russia had see-sawed through the first half as both teams showed plenty of passion but not much composure. As we were closing out the Belgium game and warming down, France appeared to have taken the decisive lead, 13-7 in a game to 15, and so we left to watch the other GB squads.

The medical team really came into their own throughout the rest of Friday, as walkie talkies allowed us to deploy sideline support where it was needed, and later when we gathered under their balconies late in the evening to offer our thanks. As a show of how well the medics had been integrated into the spirit of Team GB, they presented a number of awards both congratulatory and derogatory, with Gainey taking the "hardman" award for requiring the least attention across all divisions, and Merrick being declaimed as the biggest squealer on removal of bandages. Presenting a defence of "It's because I'm so manly & hairy" didn't win him any sympathy.

We'd also learned by this stage that Russia had completed their second great escape, going on two three-break runs to make France surrender even an 11-14 game point lead and secure themselves a spot in Saturday's final.

So, for the third cycle in a row, finals day arrived with three GB teams in pursuit of a medal, and the Masters already decked out in gold. While the Mixed team of 2007 had also been able to relax on Friday night, the 2011 vintage had repeated the ice bath,

team meeting and early night routine that had become so familiar. In the spirit of superstition, we even forced ourselves to eat the now-distinctly-unappealing scrambled egg, rubbery sausage and mustard breakfast for the eighth successive day and prepare for the final as a game like any other.

Sadly for the spectators, the Russian team's heroics clearly caught up with them, and as a gusty wind allowed us to further emphasise specific defensive objectives, a relatively scrappy game ensued where little went right for our opponents. It's rarely said that a heavy defeat is a credit to the vanquished, but there was talk on the sideline of how this Russian team had already come back from apparently unwinnable situations, and there could be no let up. As testament to their spirit, they were the team who gritted out the longest point of the game, with a pinpoint sidearm upwind to score what would be their only goal of the second half.

A hat-trick of European titles then for GB Mixed, finishing the tournament with an average winning margin of 11.7, compared to 8 in Southampton and 5.8 in Fontenay-le-Comte. While this is clearly an upward trend, in those eight years the team has been unable to reach the semi-finals at a world stage (the last time that happened was 2000 in Heilbronn), and that has to be the minimum goal for next year. All GB squads have taken a step up in their professionalism this cycle, and we all eagerly anticipate the challenge of delivering on the efforts put in thus far. As I write, Japan is 5813 miles, 70 weights sessions, 69 conditioning sessions, and 210 sets of daily exercises away. Let's hope it's enough.

Rich Hims

EUC masters

Back in 2000, my mate threw me a forehand on a beach in Brazil. Just to confuse me a bit more, he then threw a hammer. What was this strange new devilry? To me there was only one way to throw a Frisbee, and no one had ever given it a name. In my bewildered state he explained to me that he had been playing in the London Summer League of a sport called "Ultimate Frisbee". You can never just call it Ultimate to someone who doesn't know the game, or they will probably end up thinking you are a cage fighter. Armed with this knowledge I continued travelling the world and throwing Frisbees for general enjoyment, and then in 2004 I mustered up the courage to email Paul Hurt, whose name was on the London Ultimate website. Having been thrown into a pick-up team, I turned up with a mate and played my first ever organised Ultimate. All I knew was that you weren't supposed to run with the Frisbee. I still did it though.

What's not to like about Summer League? There's sunshine and cider... and it's mixed! Having played Sunday league football in the freezing cold for years and being regularly assaulted by overweight men who really didn't enjoy their life, I was suddenly confronted by friendly and courteous people who were just there to run around and enjoy themselves. I was hooked. After a couple of Summer Leagues, I tried Winter League. After a couple of those, I tried Mixed Tour. Then after a couple of years of that, I tried Open. It just crept up on me. Before I knew it I was doing all the Frisbee geek things that had amused me in the past, just because I wanted to improve. Throwing on my own in a park like a complete weirdo, running sprints at track, jumping up and down on a log pretending to be Rocky. All these things that I had sniggered at before just started happening.

Although I obviously never went so far as wearing leggings. There has to be a line.

I'm not a naturally talented player. You see some new players pick up a Frisbee and throw a brilliant forehand and they just get it. Well, that's not me. I am the David Batty of the Frisbee world; but with a lot less money and physical presence. I get by on determination and on the ability of those around me, but that's fine. A team needs all sorts of different players to work. I can run all day long and that's the centre of my game, so my progression has been steady but uninspiring. However I've been lucky to play with some excellent players over the years who have helped me do things better. Sometimes by telling me things direct and other times I just work it out by watching them. None of the things you pick up transform you overnight but after a few years you find that you are a better player than you were before. So when I realised that I could play for GB Masters at Euros, having qualified by a mere 20 days, I saw that this was my only genuine chance to represent a GB grass team.

"Masters you say? Hmmm. Just a load of fat, old handlers right?" Wrong. The first trial was pretty intimidating. More so than the GB Mixed trial I had gone to earlier in the year. It was awash with people who I knew from watching high level games, that I would never myself be invited to join in, and thinking, 'How does he dive like that? How does he then get up?'. The sort of people I have seen for years playing for proper teams, winning medal after medal and, of course, wearing leggings.

The trials were excellent. They were very intense, yet surprisingly relaxed too. And to be honest this was the manner in which the captains ran the squad throughout. I know not every squad can be run like that but they got





Florian Reinhard

Germany v Sweden © Jocelyn Trottet 2011- lookgoodplaygood.org

it just right. One Sunday morning, as the final selections were imminent, we were told by captain Stu Mitchell that the key to getting on the team was to go out and get him some blocks. That was it. If you want to be on the plane then now is the time. I'm not sure I've ever seen people play so hard at training. I'm not sure I've ever played that hard full stop. It was great to see everyone respond and push themselves. From now on I think all D line team talks should be given with a northern edge and an underlying hint of violence.

I was at a Faithless concert in Brixton one Friday night, when Si Hill rang me up. I assumed you only rang people up to tell them they were cut so when I saw his name on my phone I knew the game was up. "Thanks for coming, you played really well but on this occasion..." But that's not what happened. Over the din of the venue I could hear him telling me I had made

it. I couldn't believe it. I was ecstatic! I celebrated as any international elite athlete does by drinking shots, on my own, at the bar.

The tournament was a strange affair for me. I've never done anything like that and I found it quite bizarre to be in Slovenia, representing Great Britain at a major championship. Every now and then I would wonder what the hell was going on. It was like the first time I went to Mixed Tour in York and stood in hail that burnt my eyeballs and thought "Is this real? How do these events exist? Should I really be here?" It was a bit overwhelming. I was aware that I was in a situation I wasn't used to and it took me a while to settle down.

The early games went relatively to plan. Our O line was ridiculous and being a D player was a pleasure. If you failed to get that block you knew full well that the seven players going on

for O would get you another chance very quickly. They were clinical and it gave us the freedom to put teams under pressure on D. Before we knew it, we were in the final and it had all come to a head. We'd beaten Finland twice in the tournament already but in the back of our minds we knew how sweet that would be for them to win the one that mattered and how dejected we would all be if we allowed it.

The final went in a blur and it seemed to be over so quickly. A lot of preparation, nerves and build-up were gone before I could really take it all in. I focussed so hard on trying to do what I had to do correctly that I never really had a chance to savour the rest of the occasion. The only time I really relaxed was when the winning score went in and suddenly we could enjoy it. I wasn't sure what I would feel but the overall emotions were satisfaction and pride. Satisfaction that all those

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years spent in strange fields in Mansfield, Exeter and other ludicrous places had come to something. And I was also proud to represent Great Britain and bring back a gold. It was the only time I had come back from a tournament and when my Mum has asked 'Did you win?' that I could just say 'yes'. This is a better answer than having to explain to her that we lost our important crossover because of a hangover and a wayward hammer in sudden death, before finishing 12th. Even the most supportive of mums can't say much to that.

We walked into the beer tent afterwards with everyone clapping and it was a fantastic feeling to be part of the squad. In true British style we celebrated our success through the manly unity of beer, drinking vodka in a car park and singing karaoke in a gondola. Turns out Hooves and Borders should have been in a Jon Bon Jovi cover band.

I love playing Ultimate. I love the ethos, the people, the combination of playing hard and socialising. It really is a brilliant sport to be involved in. So I'm very pleased that I got the opportunity to play it at a level that I don't normally get to. Some people play at that level from Junior age and it's normal for them but there's lots of us who just stumbled into the sport later than most and who keep coming back because at its core it is great fun and played in a good spirit. To then get the chance to play for GB was something I never expected to do and to win a gold was fantastic. With Japan in sight, it's time to do it all again and I can only hope I enjoy myself nearly as much as I did in Slovenia. Playing hard, playing to win and celebrating afterwards with good friends and a drink. To be fair it's not that far removed from the Summer League after all.

Dan Berry

EUC women

Until September 2009, my only experience of “serious” Ultimate was playing with the GB Juniors at Worlds way back in 2000, and it was hardly serious... I was the only girl – the butt of many a joke and on the team, mostly because I managed to save enough money washing up at the hotel round the corner every Sunday night.

But I could throw – my two big sisters Janey and Lucy put me through my paces so I could just about hold my own amongst the boys. We drank our way through the summer tour and training sessions, which certainly gave us the upper hand for the party heavy tournament in Heilbronn, Germany, where we came 5th (out of eight teams, I think!)

Anyway, since then I spent a lot of years abroad travelling and doing ski seasons, playing the odd tournament here and there, and training with Blue Arse Flies (BAF) whenever I was home. I missed Ultimate greatly when I was away, and always said I’d like to get into it properly one day.

Training with BAF under the solid guidance of Merrick Cardew and Chris Hughes helped me keep the enthusiasm going, but it wasn’t until 2009 when Merrick asked me to play for BAF at XEUCF that the love for Ultimate came alive again. It was there that I had my first glimpse of the women’s game at its best – Icen versus Hot Beaches in the European Women’s Club semi-final. I was blown away by the precision of the throwers, the commitment of the cutters and receivers, and the cohesion of the teams. Having always played Mixed, I’d grown used to relying on the boys to pull down the ropey long stuff that I was slowly building the confidence to put up – no room for that in the women’s game.

But by the start of the 2010 season, I hadn’t managed to get myself together enough to make a commitment to a women’s team, and knowing how much time and money Janey had put into playing Frisbee meant I had to sit tight for a little while longer. However, I did manage to get involved in the London Summer League team of Good Lord! Playing alongside some of the top female players in the country sure made me up my game and gave me a taster of what lay ahead. The women were of equal value to the men (if not more so) and every single player was used to her potential. Often our lines were woman- (and Icen!) strong, so it was the perfect opportunity to learn from the best and to see how the girls played together. Plus, I could still throw the ropey long stuff for the likes of Fran Scarampi to bring it down!

Late on in the summer, talk of GB started to creep into conversations between sips of cider (or Jager, depending on the time of night). So when trials came around, I went for it! I played it safe, kept my options open and trialled for both GB Mixed and GB Women; after all, I’d only ever imagined what playing women’s ultimate was like, the reality could have been quite different. But it wasn’t... it only took one trial at each for me to make my mind up – women all the way! I had flashbacks of watching the women play at XEUCF, but I was part of it now, and part of it with the best Great Britain had to offer.

I now had to get myself onto a good club team, and the creation of the new team SYC seemed like the perfect answer. After being accepted onto the team, I felt the full effects of the club ethos and playing style – a spot-on combination of a high level learning environment and a great bunch of girls with the desire to do their best out on the pitch.



The trial period for GB was long and nerve racking with lots of winter evenings spent trying to get my skills up to scratch by throwing under the stolen flood-lights of the Clapham Common tennis courts. Lunch times were spent throwing and running (and a fair amount of jumping too) at Kennington Park, and night times spent geeking up on my knowledge of the game. But it all came to fruition when the final team for 2011 was put out. It was now fully real, and I was officially a player of the women’s game!

So training with women is awesome – you compete against your teammates in every aspect from fitness and strength, to mental composure, good decision making and good execution. Many women love training with men as they feel it pushes them further and harder than when training with women – I used to think this too. But in all honesty, when training with guys, there is always something in the back of my mind that submits to the fact that most high-level male players are stronger, faster and can jump higher than me and this physiological fact cannot be changed. I can run, jump and lift weights ‘til my heart’s content, but I will never truly be able to compete one-on-one with guys that play at this level. However, training with women takes this away. Knowing that my fellow teammates are stronger and faster than me only makes me try harder and want to

be better. Equalling their skills and fitness is within my reach, and it is something that, with their help, I can train myself to achieve.

Playing against women only intensifies my desire to try harder and do better. Plus there’s the amazing feeling of competition at its peak! The most fired up and driven I’ve ever been playing Frisbee was with SYC against Icen at Nationals 2011 – us beating them was within our reach, me as an individual beating anyone I marked up against was within my reach, and that was what made the difference for me between playing women’s and mixed, something I don’t think I had fully appreciated until that point... (we didn’t beat them!).

Playing for the GB Women’s team at the European Ultimate Championship in Slovenia last year was a massive learning curve for me in so many ways. But more than anything, I think my belief that the opposition’s players are all within my reach hadn’t yet materialised at that point, and I am more excited than ever to be going into the 2012 season with this at the forefront of my mental game. My training is spurred on by the fact that I now believe I have at least one element of my game that can match or outshine any member of the opposing team. It is with this in mind that I hope to play the best I have ever played at WUGC in Japan this summer.

Joey Holmes

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The European Ultimate Championships come around every four years. Any Ultimate player who wants to compete at the highest level will want to represent their nation at Europeans. Some are lucky enough to get this opportunity; others are not. Having unsuccessfully tried out, we found ourselves in the position of supporting our girlfriends in the GB Women's Squad. This is our account of experiencing Euros – originally from the stands, and eventually from the sidelines.

Originally, we were unsure how exactly we would feel watching the squads compete, after being so desperate to be a part of it. Instead we were there to provide support, have a good time and watch some great Ultimate. However, we quickly realised that not playing would bring all sorts of benefits – an epiphany prompted by the ice cream and beer we tucked into at Ljubljana Airport! Arranging a lift with Whippet and company at the end of their epic road trip from Kent proved to be a stroke of genius, allowing us to have a relaxing start to our week.

One of the features of the week was social media – between the constant updates for people back at home and the banter with other squads, Facebook and Twitter got plenty of use. During the wait for our lift, Wigsy advised us to bring some TLC for the girls, as they'd had a less than perfect start.

We arrived at the venue equipped with sweets and smiles. We caught up with the women after their opening defeat to the Irish team, where one of the things that was mentioned was that they 'could do with some more noise from the sideline'. At that point, we realised how useful we could actually be during the week.

Team GB were staying in tournament accommodation up the mountain, at the end of a cable car journey. We decided to stay away from the teams in the heart of Maribor and took over a hostel run by an ex-pat. This allowed us the 'odd' late night, sampling plenty of local food and beer.

Maribor really is lovely and welcoming of tourists. Our hostess did warn us of one idiosyncrasy: heavy fines are regularly dished out to tourists who jaywalk. Fastidiously waiting for the green man before crossing the abandoned roads late at night to avoid €40 fines became commonplace.

Being outside the squads also meant we weren't confined to that familiar tournament cycle: meet, warm up, play, warm down and repeat. We were able to pick and choose what we watched, or didn't watch, and spend some time in the town itself. An extra bonus was that this flexibility allowed us to meet up with old friends now playing for other countries.

As the week went on, GB Women were involved in some titanic games that proved that it's not winning all your games, but winning the important ones that counts! We'd like to believe it had something to do with us becoming more involved on the sidelines as the week progressed.

The game against the Czechs was particularly memorable for a fine example of the other GB squads supporting each other. The GB Ladies needed the win to stay in the top eight. They were playing on a pitch that allowed the GB Masters to lend support from the hill side. Significant numbers from the Open and Mixed squads joined us by the sideline, too. When GB took the game 13-10, all four squads were ecstatic.

A regular feature of any week long tournament is the parties. With no games to warm up for, we were more than happy to sample what EUC had to offer. We would soon discover that the GB Masters were on the same wavelength!

A night-time game took place on the Tuesday, with lanterns to mark out the pitch and a light-up disc in play. It turned out to be quite amusing – as we couldn't be convinced to play, we settled for heckling.

After watching the GB Masters pick up gold medals against the Finns, our attention on Friday night moved onto the tournament closing party that was held at a big club in the centre of town. With all the locals safely tucked up for the 10pm curfew, it was full of Ultimate players letting their hair down – and they did it in style! Plenty of euro-pop ensured that there was many a sore head in the stands for the Finals the next day...

GB had squads in each of the remaining finals, meaning it was sure to be an exciting, nervous day. The Mixed final came and went with a dominating display of O and D from GB. The Russians seemed happy just to have made the final. The main event for us was the Women's final. After becoming more and more involved during the week, we tried to be as loud and encouraging as possible for the final – job done! Unfortunately, on this occasion Germany had too much for GB and took the Gold. After the initial disappointment, a feeling of achievement took over. The whole team decided to take that and to use it to train hard for WUGC in Japan next year.

The girls had some catching up to do off pitch now that their games were over, and everyone enjoyed a beer or two watching the Open Final.



Unfortunately, the boys came up short. I bet they'll be back with more for Worlds, too.

On Saturday night, the GB Squads celebrated what had been a fantastic week. While Whippet and the others departed for 24 hours of driving in 27 hours, we were invited up with the team to celebrate. First, we had to join them in the mountain cable car. For those of us without a head for heights, that was a challenge in itself!

Some closed eyes and clenched fists later, we arrived at 'GB Village' (well, the Swiss were there too, but were not as well decorated or vocal as GB). Players and captains reflected on a job well done and began the plans to improve for 2012.

Reflecting on how EUC was for us off the fields, we agreed it was much better experience than we expected. While on paper Team GB's results weren't as good as four years ago – two Golds and two Silvers compared to three Golds and one Silver – the standard of play has improved immensely.

Having been involved in trials and selection both four years ago and in 2011, I think it's fair to say the UKU has embraced a certain level of professionalism as well. The exemplary medical team in support was just one example of that. Hopefully, we'll see the fruits of that work in 2012 at WUGC in Japan.

Dave Povey

The incident took place in the Open Finals of the 2011 European Ultimate Championships in Maribor. The game can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBzm1BTaidY, and the incident takes place at 13:45.

Essentially, the video shows the Swedish #18 player catch the disc in the endzone, but he then falls over and drops the disc as he hits the ground. As everybody knows, the moment you have control of the disc in the endzone, that's a score. However what many people don't know (and at this point I'll confess that I didn't fully understand) is that if you then immediately lose the disc due to contact with the ground, the catch is deemed not to have happened and it's a turn-over. It seems that the Swedish #18 didn't know this rule either, as he instantly scoops up the disc, and celebrates the score. Sweden go on to win the final 15-13.

There are several interesting parts to this story: None of the players seem to be aware anything happened and there is no discussion during the game, even though the crowd did notice, and were very vocal. The incident was caught on film, which lead to a lot of on-line discussion. A lot of the discussion was ill informed and ill mannered – many people think it's a simple drop and then an attempt to cheat. The video did appear to back this up – unless you see the freeze frames.

Some people suggested that this incident is a good reason to start using observers in big games, although I personally doubt an observer would have seen this event.

It is true, however, that this is an example of self refereeing not working perfectly, if only because the player didn't know the rules. The lesson here is that you should know the rules, and if you're not sure, ask. Don't be afraid that you're letting your team down – or you may find yourself in this situation.

Jack Goolden

Ground strip

Here are some of the more interesting comments that appeared Eurodisc and the EUCC FaceBook page.

Conor Hogan: If his first point of contact was his feet in bounds then surely that's a goal, it shouldn't matter what happens after that, as he was in control of the disc with a foot or two in bounds. The point has instantly ended.

Brian David Henderson: That's a drop, but what is more annoying is that he covered it up : Trying to hide it proves he knew he was doing something wrong.

Tomas Eriksson [Sweden #18]: I am 100% sure that I catch the disc with both hands and that I am inside of the end zone, Then I hit the ground the disc plops out when I am hit the ground. It all happens very fast.

In the heat of the moment, I firmly believed that I had the disc and had control over it, so it was a goal. Now after viewing the film many times I can agree that it looks quite bad, regarding to the rule 12:2 (everybody refers to) it maybe should have been a turnover I don't know.

I have always respected the "spirit of the game". Sometimes I play to tough, sometimes I make bad calls, and I am certain that I have done things on the field that I regret afterwards, but I have never ever intentionally cheated.

Richard Buggy: Thank you for your comment Tomas. It is very helpful to hear your side of the story.

I think there are two parts to this:

1. Was it a score or not?
2. Did you try and cover the fact that the disc was dropped?

Part 1 is a tough call. Some people say yes, others say no. Even Tomas has said that on reviewing the video he isn't 100% but at the time he was sure it was a score. However this isn't the main argument, scores are wrongly called all the time.

Part 2 is more pressing. Was there a cover up of the drop?

I think the fact that the camera zooms in so close makes this look worse that it was. But did any of the GB players notice the disc hitting the ground? Score or not, surely if they had seen the drop they would have questioned what happened.

So maybe it was a score, maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was a cover up, maybe it wasn't but the disc should have been left on the ground to allow the GB team give their view on it.

Ștêpân Materna: Some points as a reaction to Tomas and others:

- 1) No GB player was looking so no GB player could see it and call a turnover. This was solely up to Tomas to judge his acts. Some Swedish players were close and may have seen it. Then part of the shame goes upon their heads too.
- 2) I was sitting in the stands with direct view of the situation. The whole crowd started booing as one man (listen to the sound of the video). It looked nasty.
- 3) It is hard, but remotely I can understand that the pressure of the moment overcame your common sense. I hope this whole uproar will teach you a lesson.
- 4) Thanks for posting your view and not hiding in the dark

Tomas Eriksson: I think that it's good that many people are involved and try to come with constructive criticism on what happened. That is a good sign that you care about the sport and want to make sure that next time a scenario like this happens you can sort it out in a much better way than I did.

I am man enough to stand for what I did in that moment in the game, but I am also man enough to admit that it was a mistake from my side.

Now I know after reading the rules in detail, that it was not a catch. If I had known it back then I am 100% sure that I would have acted in a different

way. Yes I also know that I that have played a long time at high level should know ALL the rules big and small, but I didn't. And believe it or not, this was the first time I was in this scenario. It was never my intent to 'cheat' or 'cover something up' and I apologize if some of you think that I tried to do so.

I learn from the mistake, gain a lot of experience from it and hopefully all this will make me a better player in the future.

Faissoil M'baé: Tomas let it go. We are all humans and we all have committed errors.

Sjoerd Druiven: It is my opinion that by assuming that some players are cheats, spirit is lost.

Lukas Kahwe Smith: After having watched the video a couple of times, I cannot imagine anyone not realizing that this was a fumble unless they have been trained to not self-referee. Therefore either the player cheated or was trained to not even think about rules if it isn't to their advantage in the given situation. In either case I think it's a major issue.

Andrea Furlan, EUF Chairperson On Behalf of the EUF Committee (in consultation with the WFDF SOTG committee)

Dear Ultimate Community,

Due to the widespread nature of this video the European Ultimate Federation (EUF) has been compelled to take two actions.

- 1) We contacted the Swedish Frisbeesport Federation (SFF) to offer guidance that rule 1.7 is enacted, as this was a case of a SOTG infraction:
 - 1.7. Teams are guardians of the Spirit of the Game, and must:
 - 1.7.1. take responsibility for teaching their players the rules and good spirit;
 - 1.7.2. discipline players who display poor spirit; and



1.7.3 provide constructive feedback to other teams about how to improve their adherence to the Spirit of the Game.

They [The SFF] will determine what spirit infraction occurred based off of their follow-on dialogue with the player in question. As the tournament is over, let's all remember that in this instance, it is solely the responsibility of the SFF and the team in question to determine what happened and how to follow-up with the situation. As per the rules, other teams can provide constructive feedback to the team in question, but nothing beyond that is acceptable.

2) The EUF is also strongly compelled to remind Ultimate players that, when discussing a play that has either happened on field, or in discussing it afterwards in a forum, where other teams can interact with each other, that rule 1.3 is still very much in effect. This means that, as outlined in the rule, one must allow an opponent a reasonable chance to speak, and respectful language must be used.

1.3. Players should be mindful of the fact that they are acting as referees in any arbitration between teams. In such situations, players must:

- 1.3.1. know the rules;
- 1.3.2. be fair-minded and objective;
- 1.3.3. be truthful;
- 1.3.4. explain their viewpoint clearly and briefly;
- 1.3.5. allow opponents a reasonable chance to speak;
- 1.3.6. resolve disputes as quickly as possible; and
- 1.3.7. use respectful language.

There have been some disappointing displays of poor spirit where the rules above were not adhered to by individuals discussing this particular incident on public online spaces.

With the increased connectivity

through social networking we need to increase guidelines to players and keep an even more mindful eye on how we are conducting ourselves both on and off the field when representing our sport.

We do hope everybody will be able to learn something important out of these discussions.

Especially that **Spirit can be and must be trained**. That knowing and teaching the rules is the critical backbone of our self-refereed sport. And that when infractions occur that it is important to discuss these together with mutual respect.

Heiko Kissling: What should be kept in mind when judging a video sequence is that it is two **completely different** worlds to do a decision in the heat of the game versus on your screen watching the same situation multiple times and perhaps even in slow motion.

Films in general, also a simple recording of a game, make you think that it shows the "real" situation. But this is wrong.

Every kind of filming is just a copy and the real situation is over. Don't fall into the media trap where single actions are way overrated.

There is a very good general rule: If you have something to say, talk **to** the respective person, never talk **about** him/her (if you don't have the guts to talk/email with the respective person, keep silent).

Benji Heywood: "Rule 1.2. It is trusted that no player will intentionally break the rules; thus there are no harsh penalties for breaches"

It's worth a lot of people remembering this at this time. We have very good video evidence that either:

- a) This guy didn't know the rules, or
- b) He cheated

Anyone can see that this does not present unarguable evidence of cheating. He says himself he didn't know the rule, so what right do we have to assume he cheated? When a guy calls a foul or a travel or anything else that you don't agree with, you can discuss the facts with him and you can believe he's wrong - but you can never assume he's cheating. Mutual respect MEANS that you must assume your opponent is playing fairly.

When you have incontrovertible evidence of cheating (e.g. if GB had questioned this incident and he'd said, 'I didn't drop it,') then we should punish severely; I'm all over that. But in every other case, we must assume the best motives.

The Swedish player was seriously in breach of the SOTG by NOT KNOWING THE RULES, and ONLY (provably) that. But I can tell you now, as an old experienced player who gets asked a lot of rule questions, there are plenty of people on the GB team, and on every team, who don't know all the rules.

If you can go here (http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=162) and answer all 70 questions on that rules quiz correctly, maybe you can start to think about criticising the Swedish guy.

Most of us get by in games because someone on our team knows the rules, and whenever something arises they can be relied on to sort it out. This incident shows the dangers of thinking like this, and emphasises why we all need to know the rules. Otherwise, next time it might be you on the receiving end of all this flak.

Peter Korsten: When I saw the video, my *perception* (and I emphasise that word, 'perception') is that he knew very well that he dropped it, and that

he did his utmost to grab it as quickly as possible, before anybody saw what had happened.

Is there hard evidence for that? No. Does it matter that there's no such evidence? Neither.

Whether he did it on purpose or not, whether he knew the rule or not, it's all irrelevant: from now on, nobody is going to trust him. That's a much bigger loss than one game, if you ask me.

Benji: That's a little simplified. He dropped it on contact with the ground. He definitely caught it first.

There's a rule which says as soon as he catches it and touches the ground in, it's a score (but see rule 12.1, 12.2). If someone doesn't look at 12.1 & 12.2, then they'll get this situation wrong.

I agree completely that it's outrageous someone shouldn't know the full rule, but my point is a) he's not alone in that, and b) it's not completely beyond possibility that such a misunderstanding could happen.

Twice in the past couple of years, in reasonably serious competition, I've dealt with exactly this situation, where someone had read that rule and not understood the bit about how a ground strip would negate the previous catch. You can see how - the rule is very clear that the point is scored at the very moment the disc stops spinning, and the additional rule (that they haven't read) effectively goes back in time and says 'the catch never happened'.

The high level nature of this match makes it more upsetting that the guy didn't know the rule, but I don't see that it makes it impossible. And given that, my responsibility as a fellow player is to give him the benefit of the doubt.

My views, not anyone else's.

Towards better SOT

The Level 1 UKU Coaching Handbook states: "Most spirit of the game infractions occur between players who either don't know the rules or have interpreted them (either accidentally or otherwise!) incorrectly".

As such, the UKU Spirit of the Game (SOTG) committee has come up with some simple guidelines that will help you to reduce the number of infractions that take place while you're playing, leading to better and more fun games! The numbers in [brackets] indicate the relevant rules or links that apply

Golden Rules – these always apply:

- 1) Respect: treat others as you would like to be treated.
- 2) Know the rules, particularly the section on SOTG [1.3.1.]
- 3) Be consistent; your team, the

opposition, and the importance of the game are all irrelevant. Apply SOTG the same regardless.

Examples of poor spirit:

- raising your voice; make your call calmly (link to BE CALM)
- unwillingness to discuss the call, no matter how "right" you think you are. Ignoring the opinions of your opponents, team mates and anyone with good perspective is equally poor. [1.3.5.]
- deliberately causing an infraction, and saying "if you think it's a foul, just call a foul". [1.2, 1.6.2.]
- making a call personal: tit-for-tat calls, etc. [1.3.2, 1.6.5.]
- instantly assuming that your opponent is trying to cheat. Often when people foul it is accidental and they won't contest [1.3.2.]

- making different calls in a tight game than you would if you're winning easily; this shows that you are trying to bend the rules to your advantage [1.3.2.]

- making a travel call on a tiny slip in thick mud... the infraction has to be meaningful [Principles]

Things you might think were bad spirit, but aren't:

- playing really hard in a one-sided game [1.4.]
- making a call that you then realise is wrong, and giving it up; in the heat of the moment people can often be mistaken. If they make a call then quickly realise that they were wrong, they will give up their call. This is perfectly acceptable [1.5.2, 15.9.]
- celebrating goals; if a team

celebrates respectfully when they score against you, they obviously rate you as a tough opponent. Plus they are enjoying themselves! [1.4, 1.6.4.]

- sometimes two players won't be able to agree; this is acceptable [Principles]

Frequently misinterpreted rules:

- calling a receiving foul on a hanging disc when there is a crowd gathered underneath if players have established positions and are attempting to avoid contact, or where two or more players are both entitled to one spot on field and are both equally responsible for the contact, and as such no foul can be called [12.6, 12.7, 12.8 on positioning]
- calling a receiving foul if all players misread the disc, for example if it has been bobbled by the wind, the



How NOT to discuss a call. [Italy v Philippines](#) WCBU.
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contact is incidental to the lack of catch [12.9 & 12.10 on incidental contact]

- contact when one player is unable to avoid a collision is not grounds for a foul; in fact, the foul may be the other way around ("if you step in my way and I can't avoid you, then you have fouled me") [12.9 and Interpretations Section 12, 17.8.1]
- no contact is required to call 'Dangerous Play'; if you feel someone's movement could cause you an injury and you are forced to give up position, you are entitled to make this call [17.1.1]
- a player can catch and throw in one movement if they maintain a single pivot point during the throwing motion, so think carefully before making that travel call! [18.2.3.1]

Examples of good spirit (that are often ignored and easy to remedy):

- resolving calls quickly: bring only additional information to a discussion and come to a fast resolution [1.3.6.]
- congratulating your opponent on good play; a nice catch or throw, for example, or a display of good Spirit [1.5.3]
- checking that your opponent is ok after a bid or collision
- clearly and effectively communicating any calls to all players; this will help to resolve the call quickly and ensure that everyone adopts the correct field position so that play can continue with as little delay as possible
- being an example of good Spirit to younger or less experienced players, encouraging them to play with good spirit, and helping them to understand what it means

Ways to get more from SOTG:

- introduce yourself to your opponent. Later, if a call happens, you have already established a friendly nature and you are more likely to BE CALM [1.5.4]
- encourage your team to step in and offer advice; get used to bowing to this perspective even if you think it disagrees with your own [1.5.1.]
- learn the rules well. There are many resources online, including how to resolve different situations and even example scenarios. If you're confident in your ability, why not take the WFDF Rules Quiz?

Thanks for reading!

*UKU SOTG Committee
Wayne Davey & Sion Scone*

WFDF Rules: http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1535

Principles: http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1161

Rules Quiz: http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1130

Resolving your call correctly:
http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1317

Rules Interpretation:
http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1300

Scenarios: http://ultimaterules.co.cc/?page_id=1170

Be Calm: http://wfdf.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=77:be-calm-strategy&catid=31:spirit-of-the-game&Itemid=67

be calm...

After a call, instead of contesting straight away, you should **BE CALM**:

Breathe don't react straight away

Explain what you think happened

Consider what they think happened

Ask for advice on perspective and rules

Listen to what everyone has to say

Make a call loudly and clearly, use hand signals



Who is Liam Kelly?



Going into the interview with Liam Kelly, I had heard a lot of vague summaries and explanations of what he did. Something to do with getting kids to play Ultimate, getting Ultimate into schools and teaching coaches the basics seemed to be the general consensus. What was striking, though, was that despite this job sounding so interesting and important to the future progression of Ultimate, almost every description of Liam's role was as vague as the last. That uncertainty has led to this article, which I hope will create a bit more transparency and appreciation of the work that Liam – and everyone else involved – has been doing.

So Liam, what exactly is your job title at UK Ultimate?

Coaching and Development Manager. Primarily, my role is to coordinate and deliver UKU Coaching courses. In particular, to help schools to run Leader Awards, because that's the best thing we can do to support the ongoing growth of Ultimate in schools.

What does that involve?

The Leader Award is a three-hour workshop for people who don't play Ultimate but want to teach it. Most of the people who take part are teachers or youth workers.

I've heard a lot about some schemes recently that have helped Ultimate – what are they?

Well the Youth Sport Trust (YST) is an independent charity established in 1994 to build a brighter future for young people through PE and sport. With the current economic climate, the Government announced plans to cut the funding for school sports. In the end, the funding was cut by 50% instead of completely, which had been discussed.

Against a backdrop of severely reduced Government funding, Matalan decided that they want to support school sport. They created the Matalan Sporting Promise (MSP), which in partnership with the YST is committed to getting more young people taking part in more PE and school sport. They are trying to do a lot for school sports, but the part that concerns Ultimate is called 'Matalan yoUR Activity', which they hope will re-engage young people at secondary level by giving them the opportunity to take part in non-traditional sporting activities, such as Ultimate, along with several other sports such as Dodgeball, Softball, Parkour and Tchoukball.

So Matalan replaced some of the funding that had been cut? Is that an advertising strategy?

Well the government cuts are really a different order of magnitude. The people at the MSP seem to be primarily concerned with helping out sport. It seems more like corporate responsibility than advertising. Of course any business funding a programme like this will hope that people see them in a more positive light as a result.

So how has that money helped Ultimate?

Well more money from the YST and MSP enables schools to pay for coach education and to buy Frisbees – and that helps us (the existing Ultimate community) to influence the uptake of Ultimate in schools. Without that money it would be a much slower process. It means we can reach more people. Technically with the Leader Awards, both so far this year and last, there has been no growth in the number that we are delivering. However, with school budgets being squeezed, the YST has helped avoid shrinkage – without that money we would be seeing negative growth instead of maintaining our current level, because there is just less money available.

You mentioned non-traditional sports were chosen for the Matalan yoUR Activity program. How were those sports chosen?

The sports were already known to the YST on some level and they suggested that the projects takes on an 'alternative' feel. The logic behind non-traditional sports was that a lot of well-established sports already have good take up numbers in schools. Originally, the project wasn't going to include sports like ours, but the YST were keen to push the conventions. Matalan had to be persuaded, but now they're a champion of 'alternative' sport. We've been really lucky: we've been involved since the conception of

the project over 18 months ago. The project has come such a long way; it's changed completely since the pilot schemes, but the core principles have stayed the same. It's been a huge learning curve for all of us.

How have they championed sports?

They've involved some really knowledgeable and experienced people. Their consultant on sport is Jim Quigley, who was one of the people responsible for bringing the Commonwealth Games to Manchester in 2002, and the Ambassador of the MSP is Sir Steve Redgrave. He came to a workshop with us in the North East, and took part in the session with some kids. That day we taught 28 coaches in the morning, who then went on to teach around 200 kids later in the day. His involvement was mainly for the media, but it helped so much. Having someone like that associated has been absolutely amazing. It's really helping the UKU, getting us more established. People involved with the YST have an effect on policy in Government, and can help the UKU get recognition as a National Governing Body. If there is a way to get Ultimate into the social lexicon, this is it. These people are big hitters, and these contacts can only help us.

What plans are there to move this forward?

There are plans to have a big launch event, involving national media and TV companies, so that will be great for the whole project. The project has also drawn interest from more investment partners and has recently received more investment from the People Health Trust: The Health Lottery to work in their targeted areas too. Originally the plan has been for the project to last three years. With more and continued investment, the legacy and relationships we've made can last for a lot longer than that.

How big can this be for Ultimate?

We want to continue with our development objective – Ultimate in every school! That's the long-term plan. It might be a local club or coach, or a club within the school. Obviously we're some way away from that. The first thing we have to do is make everyone aware that Ultimate exists and give them an opportunity to try it. In the short term, this project has brought us closer to that. It's been an invaluable networking tool, and it's really helped us establish ourselves, getting our foot in the door, so to speak, so we can achieve our long term aims.

What effect could this have on Ultimate in the UK?

In terms of people playing, I would say that the biggest effect will be that the length of time people are beginners will shrink pretty quickly. You get

people now who have played a little bit when they go to university and they're not beginners for more than a couple of months. If everyone has had the opportunity and can at least do the basics – sidearm and backhand properly – then people will pick things up a lot quicker. That will save a lot of time that is currently spent teaching people to throw, which can be used making them better players. Having people playing Ultimate and being coached from an early age will allow for skill development to happen sooner.

How do the people involved in the initiative view Ultimate?

We've been doing really well. There was a school in Staffordshire that had previously been switched off from sport. They became involved with Ultimate, and it re-energised the sport culture at the school to the

point where they started going to local clubs. The people from the YST and Matalan were really keen on this, as it was exactly what they wanted from the project: a sporting basis for people who want to re-engage with sport in a non-exclusive way. All the sports involved in the project are unique or different, but Spirit of the Game and the self-refereeing aspect of Ultimate are catching the attentions of teachers and the YST as a really positive tool. We just need to make sure we push this in the right way to ensure we protect it.

How optimistic are you that the long-term aims of both the YST and the UKU are within reach?

This isn't an easy thing to do. It's not as simple as saying 'there's money there; here are some enthusiastic people, now go do it'. It is expensive for someone to spend a whole day

teaching Ultimate – they're working and giving up their time and that has to be recognised. Then there's the admin that's required for working with kids and insurance and that kind of thing. Then you have the time committed to meetings with the YST and Matalan and whoever else – all of these things require dedicated time as well. That's not even accounting for the time spent networking with people and maintaining the important relationships we have now, because of the project. The YST makes some contribution for admin costs, but most of it is for the actual coaching. There will certainly be growing pains with such an ambitious aim, but that's the end point. Until that long term aim is realised, we'll continue pushing forward.

Interview by Sean Colfer.



Mugs' gallery



Copa Del Sol © Andy Moss 2011



Windfest © Andy Moss 2011



Canada lose quarterfinals to Philippines, WCBU. © Graham Bailey 2011



Nationals © Andy Moss 2011



Quicksand © Mike Powell 2011



Tour 2. © Graham Bailey 2011



MWL 2 © Simon Crisp 2011



Regionals © Simon Crisp 2011

Why we love Glastonbury: the Team Flange story

Firstly dear reader, we must apologise in advance if what you are about to cast your eyes over appears at times to be drenched in misty eyed-nostalgia, if the words on the page before you appear to be the remembrances of a man poring over scattered photos of the last ten years, self-indulgently reflecting on what ultimately resembles the 'prime' of our lives. Indeed dear reader we apologise but must also confess – this is exactly the case.

Ten years ago now, thirteen very silly 17- and 18-year-old boys were on a plane back from Latvia. Junior Ultimate was very different back then, and though the records of matches lost and won tell a different story, the truth was that the previous week had been a very successful one for GB.

Quite where the unfortunate name came from is difficult to recall, but what we do know is that we boarded the plane as an embarrassingly disorganised yet over-confident group of young men and exited it... well, exactly the same but with a collective name: Team Flange.

Now all we needed was a place to go, a place where we could continue to indulge in the nonsense we had made together. A place where we could have a little fun and perhaps even play a game of Ultimate or two. Luckily for us, and for many other teams that have had exactly the same idea over the last ten years or so, such a place existed. It was called Glastonbury, and the mayor even showed up to give out the prizes.

That first year we're sure we bothered a lot of people. No one likes cocky teenagers, particularly when they have the word 'Flange' on their chests. Still, we had fallen head over heels in love. Perhaps it was the majestic Tor that hung over the playing fields;



perhaps it was the club house with its warming breakfast, cheap beer and plentiful supply of Cheese Moments (if you've not tried them, these are a wonder-snack); or perhaps it was the wonderfully shambolic nature of the event itself. Perhaps the town's abundance of mystical ley lines played a part. We may never know. But we've been back every year since.

Coming at the end of the season, Glastonbury isn't like other tournaments. Domestic and international duties are done for the year. No one is abstaining or going to bed early; it's a reward. As such, everyone is in the same boat and everyone makes the most of it.

The unfussy and charmingly disordered nature of the tournament is a huge part of the appeal. I'm sure those in charge know exactly what they're doing but it always feels as though things may fall apart at any moment. The music at the party is always played stop and start through some guy's iPod, the games overrun or you turn up to find the teams have swapped because they fancied

playing someone else. There are no gimmicks, just good people and poor-to-average Ultimate.

Every year sees a reassuring mix of new faces and old, reflecting the full spectrum of UK Ultimate. Teams like The Makings, MMJ, Catch 22 and Supermanschaft, as well as the equally appallingly named Women's team Sopp, are committed regulars. And alongside them, new teams always emerge to add their own flavour to the humble but delicious melting pot.

For us, like other teams, it has become a pilgrimage. The routine is part of the fun; the walk into Glastonbury for fish 'n' chips, the inevitable debate as to whether or not we'll climb the Tor (never have) and the crippling hangovers are experiences everyone who has attended the event will share. Like you, we also have our own rituals: the buckets of green drink, the games of skittles in town (we'll take on all comers) and the nonsensical chanting are all part of what keeps us coming back. It's where we initiate new players and meet up with old ones.

It's where we all want to be when September finally comes around.

There's little to match the experience of a big week-long Ultimate event. Major international and club tournaments and events like Paganello are a spectacle to behold, and we're in no way suggesting that the experience of playing Glastonbury is anything like these tournaments. This is a good thing, though, because it doesn't want to be. It's a simple formula: special town, end of the season, laid back atmosphere, good people, your friends and the odd Frisbee or two. It doesn't get more perfect than that.

So thanks to the organisers and everyone who's come down and played and enjoyed the tournament over the past ten years. To say we've had a good time would be a gross understatement. And oh, if we've offended anyone, we're really sorry...

Now where did that name come from again? Foreign Ladies something something something...

Team Flange



Dave Sealy

David Pichler

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