



Ultimatum 2012

Annual UK Ultimate Magazine



Daniel Furnell

Sam Kanner



Chevron UK Nationals © Pete Rawlinson 2012 facebook/PeteRawlinsonPhotography



Devon v Chevron © Pete Rawlinson facebook/PeteRawlinsonPhotography

Top 16 compared to 2011

Iceni	↔ =	Clapham Ultimate	↔ =
Nice Bristols 1	↑ 2	Chevron Action Flash	↔ =
LeedsLeedsLeeds	↓ 1	Fire of London 1	↔ =
Brighton 1	↑ 6	Dog Eat Disc	New Entry ↗
SYC	↓ 2	Ranelagh 1	New Entry ↗
Punt	New Entry ↗	Brighton 1	↓ 2
Swift	↓ 1	Cambridge Ultimate	↑ 8
Crown Jewels	↓ 1	Tooting Tigers	↑ 3
Iceni Savage	New Entry ↗	Ka-pow!	New Entry ↗
Nice Bristols 2	↑ 2	Fusion 1	↓ 5
ISO	↔ =	EMO 1	↓ 3
The Brown	↑ 1	Devon 1	↓ 3
Bear Cavalry	↓ 5	Wessex	New Entry ↗
Northern Lights	↑ 7	LeedsLeedsLeeds	↓ 4
Lady Lemmings	New Entry ↗	Fire of London 2	↓ 9
Brighton 2	New Entry ↗	BAF	↑ 6

Editor's note

A confession – I wrote this note back in October. Our goal was to get this year's Ultimatum out in 2012, and I hoped that by making numerous references to Christmas, the magazine would have no choice but to get published in December!

As the year closes, let's think about all the good tidings 2012 has brought us. 2012 was a very exciting year for UK Ultimate, with the GB Open Squad bringing back silver medals from Japan. Perhaps they can hang the medals up next to their stockings. It was also incredibly touching and impressive to see the huge number of people who were awake at 6am and watching the game, chatting on Facebook and supporting the players. Ultimatum has fantastic articles from all teams in Japan and the Juniors at Worlds in Dublin, so I hope you enjoy reading them.

It was also an exciting year for sports in general with the 2012 Olympic Games in London. I know many Ultimate players were involved through volunteering, carrying the torch, attending events or simply watching and cheering GB on. Ultimatum has articles on all this, plus the WFDF response to that favourite question, "Will Ultimate ever make it into the Olympics?" With the public's increasing interest in sport, plus the development of new athletic venues, we hope that UK Ultimate can cash in on this.

2013 promises to be an exciting year, with many of the GB players returning to their club teams for both Mixed and Open Tours, so we are hopefully looking at a greater number of teams and more competition. Outside the domestic scene, 2013 will also see the U23 World Championship in Canada, the European Beach Championship in Spain, plus the World Games in Columbia.



Franzi Nolte

Golden Ants Mixed Tour 1 © Andy Moss 2012

We hope you enjoy this issue! We also hope to have archived issues uploaded onto the website. Keep in touch with our plans on the website: www.ukultimate.com/ultimatum.

A huge thank you to everyone who has helped out with Ultimatum this year! To the copy-editors: Hayden Cole, Scott Anthony Martin, Felicity Perry, David Salisbury, Thom Saunders and Ben Wolfson. Please buy them a glass of mulled wine, or perhaps some eggnog, if you see them. A huge thanks to the fantastic Ultimatum team: Craig Berry, Dan Berry, Sean Colfer, Si Hill and Rich Hims. They deserve lots of presents under their tree. And finally thank you to Jack Goolden, for a fantastic layout design. I hope Santa brings each and every one of them something special.

Have a great Christmas, and enjoy Ultimatum!

Cheers!

Mara Alperin, Ultimatum 2012 Editor



Antoinette Wilson

Jabba the Huck v ABH © Simon Crisp 2012 photoboxgallery.com/ultimate

Towards a strategic plan



So what is the UKU?

UK Ultimate Ltd is the UK's National Governing Body (NGB) for Ultimate. It was set up – and is owned by – its members. If you're reading Ultimatum, there is a good chance that includes you. The goals and purposes of a sport's NGB can vary, but the basic idea is that the community of players creates an organisation for the rules, policies and ideas required to 'look after' the sport.

UKU Ltd is a not-for-profit limited-by-guarantee company. The members are its owners, rather like shareholders, except that the company cannot distribute any profits. Without getting too far into the details, the reason for this structure is that if an organisation finds itself with unexpectedly large liabilities, these liabilities are limited to the company and cannot be transferred onto the board, committees or general members.

Anyways, what does the UKU actually do? What does 'look after' the sport mean?

•**Sports Administration** – Organising and hosting competitions, defining competition structures and regulations. We all just love to play

Ultimate – so this is arguably the most important area.

•**GB teams** – the community requires a structure under which to organise our national teams.

•**Management and Governance** – ensuring the organisation is well-run and financially stable.

•**Partnerships** – we work with UK-wide organisations like the Youth Sports Trust and BUCS; international flying-disc related organisations like WFDF, EUF, etc; schools and County Sports Partnerships; and commercial organisations like Lookfly and more recently Discraft and Matel.

•**Development** – encouraging growth in the number of players, developing a coaching structure, supporting elite athletes and promoting the sport.

Goals, Priorities and Planning

Approximately four years ago, the board spent some time establishing a set of priorities that we would use to help guide our decision-making and resource-allocation. These were:



1. **Supporting growth.** Our membership has now exceeded 3,000 and we believe the number of people who play Ultimate regularly around the UK is over 10,000. Whilst that shows a 100% increase of players from five years ago, we should have the confidence to push for much greater numbers and work to ensure we have the infrastructure to cope.

2. **Creating regional competition.** The demand for more regular local, competitive Ultimate might not be high amongst current, active players. However, for many would-be Ultimate players, weekend tournaments on the other side of the country aren't feasible. UK Regionals as a qualifier for Nationals is a step, but there is much more to do.

3. **Coaching and Developing Coaching Schemes.** More than 1,000 PE teachers and sports coaches have done the "UKU Leader Award" and over 300 people have done the UKU Level 1 Course. Level 2 is finally complete and we are running a trial session in November 2012.

4. **Supporting Elite teams.** The GB programme in particular has grown

enormously in the last few years. In 2011-12 we had 14 GB teams with a total of approximately 300 players. With the World Games, the World Under-23 Ultimate Championships, the European Youth Ultimate Championships (EYUC) and the European Championships of Beach Ultimate (ECBU) all in 2013, that will reach 15 teams, and we expect to have 19 GB teams in 2015! The programme needs more central administration than any of us foresaw eight years ago and the load is increasing as we seek higher standards and better results. Another success, though perhaps less visible, is that following the recognition of Ultimate in 2008, international players became eligible for a scheme that gives free access to local government sports facilities – although the scheme is not uniformly available across the whole UK.

5. **Promoting Spirit of the Game (SOTG).** We endeavour to put SOTG in the middle of our thinking. In particular, we created a new committee to create a set of policies that we hope will enable the community to better understand and promote self-officiated Ultimate and the SOTG.



6. Running the business and supporting the community.

Some notable successes of the last few years include: transferring to a Ltd company, improving our financial position, safeguarding policies for clubs, and most recently, creating a club affiliation scheme that will help clarify the relationship between the UKU and clubs, and provide some additional support for clubs in terms of their own organisation and governance (which is particularly necessary for clubs that want to grow and open up Ultimate to younger players).

We set those priorities for the period until the end of 2012, on the basis that the end of a WUGC-year would be a good time to take stock. And so the current board has been doing some work over the past few months to update these ideas and make a statement about our priorities for 2013-16 and beyond. We expect to publish this statement in a more formal and structured form in the first quarter of 2013. This is the Ultimatum Version:

We are going to split our activities into three simple but significant

areas – and one of our goals is to create something that is really easy to understand and get behind.

1. **“Play Ultimate”**. This is all about ‘taking care of day-to-day activity’. We need to keep running the business well, including managing and developing our competition structures for everyone, caring for our international teams, administering the membership, answering the phones, working with partners such as BUCS, and so on.

2. **“Ultimate in every school”**. It will be our stated goal to see Ultimate in every secondary school in the UK, and disc-based games in every primary school. Hundreds of schools across the UK already play Ultimate, but most are disconnected from the community that you and I know. We’re going to find them, bring them together, and get them to encourage their neighbours that don’t play to join in. The Matalan Sporting Promise has been a great jump start here. Don’t mistake the goal though. We don’t expect every school to have a club like Air Badgers; three or four weeks of Ultimate in the summer term will do just fine because that will completely explode the level

of recognition that the general public has for Ultimate. And that, in turn, will change everything.

3. **“A coach in every club”**. This is all about building structured Ultimate clubs where new players (especially from schools) can come along and have fun learning and playing Ultimate. It’s very much NOT about the idea that all clubs should be run the same way, nor that all clubs should run drills and set up strength and conditioning programmes! We are building a coaching structure and culture that will be crucial to capitalising on the growth in interest in Ultimate that we are going to see in the next 10 years.

Alongside these big plans, we’re going to need new and better ways for communicating about local opportunities – because that is where so much of the action should be. Our tentative plans for this are about creating something we’re calling the Regional Development Network. The idea is to help groups of people get together informally to support Ultimate in their area. We would just love to see Ultimate players coming together and asking the following three questions:

1. Do players in our area have any opportunities to play Ultimate – just for fun – without travelling far, and without committing to a weekend away?
2. If someone near us hears about Ultimate and wants to join a game or club, can they find somewhere welcoming to play?
3. If schools near us want to join the UKU Schools Championship Series – can we help by finding one or two people that could attend their local festival/event to help the teachers and players get to grips with the rules, self-officiating and the Spirit of the Game?

People often talk to me about the UKU as if it’s someone else doing things to or for them. But really, at least while the sport is so small, the UKU is “we” or “us”. All thoughts and feedback are always welcome: www.ukultimate.com/contact.

Si Hill, CEO UK Ultimate

Will Ultimate ever be an

Ultimate was invented in 1968 and is now played by millions in over 75 countries around the world. As the sport has grown in participation and recognition, and with this year's 2012 Olympic Games being hosted by London, the question has been raised again of it being played in the Olympics. Despite the fact that getting onto the Olympics programme is especially tough for team sports in the age where Olympic villages have sprawled out of control. So why should Ultimate deserve consideration? Here are five reasons:

1. Spirit of the Game

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) website outlines seven "Fundamental Principles of Olympism". Among them, it states: "Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles ... Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play."

Ultimate is played, even at the highest levels of the sport, without referees, under a concept called Spirit of the Game. We believe that Ultimate embraces the Olympic ideal. Athletes are challenged to play within the spirit of the rules and, surprising to some, this self-governing principle works remarkably well.



GB pre final, WUGC © Neil Gardner 2012 nzsnap.com

2. Participation

The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) estimates that Ultimate is currently played by 7 million people worldwide, of which 2.2 million athletes play actively (more than 12 times per year). In the most scientific survey, per the results provided in the 2011 Sports and Fitness Participation Report conducted annually by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), there were 4.7 million people who played Ultimate in the USA alone in 2010. Core participants, defined as those playing 13 or more times per year, were estimated to be 1.52 million. This is similar to participation in gymnastics with 4.8 million total participants and 1.89 million core participants, and compares favorably to more

established team sports in the USA such as field hockey (1.3 million/0.64 million, respectively), lacrosse (1.6 million/0.90 million), or rugby (1.1 million/0.37 million).

In addition to our competitive athletes, almost everyone has at some time in their life thrown a flying disc, whether at the beach, in the garden, or in the park. The "Frisbee" is familiar to most potential spectators, and its flight path continues to fascinate.

3. Competition

Since the first World Ultimate Championship, which was held in 1983 in Sweden, Ultimate has moved to a quadrennial competition format between national teams and clubs. The latest World Ultimate Championship was just held in

Osaka, Japan with 23 nations and 1,400 athletes competing in five divisions. The next World Ultimate Club Championship will be held in 2014 with over 160 clubs and 3,500 athletes expected. Our World Juniors Championship was held this August in Dublin, Ireland with nearly 1,000 boys and girls competing.

In addition to competitions held under the auspices of WFDF, Ultimate has also participated in the World Games since 2001. The World Games, first held in 1981, are an international multi-sport event, meant for sports that are not contested in the Olympic Games. The World Games are organised and governed by the International World Games Association (IWGA), under the patronage of the IOC. Some of the other sports that are currently held at

Olympic sport?

the World Games are squash, netball, racquetball and water skiing. Several sports that were on the programme of the World Games eventually made it as Olympic sports (such as triathlon and rugby sevens) or have been Olympic sports in the past (like tug of war).

4. Organisation

Ultimate has been organised on an international basis since the formation of WFDF in 1985. Out of the over 75 countries in which Ultimate is played today, WFDF has 54 Member associations in Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania, and North and South America. Our Member associations reported that they had 97,925 members in our 2012 annual census, comprised of the top competitive athletes. Of the total, 34% are women, and 90% of such members are 35 years of age or younger. The most significant growth today is being seen out of Latin America and Eastern Europe, as well as with juniors in the USA.

WFDF is a member of SportAccord (one of 90 international sports federations) and the IWGA. It is also a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Agency code. WFDF submitted an application to the IOC in April 2012 for official "recognition" under the Olympic guidelines. There are currently 32 international sports federations that comprise the Association of IOC Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF), sports that have official recognition but are not a part of the Olympic event programme yet. We believe we meet all criteria for approval and would hope to receive consideration by the end of the year.

5. Attractive Sport

Ultimate is a fast-paced game that is fun to watch. There are field-length hucks, diving defensive plays, hard man-to-man coverage, and

intricate throws taking advantage of the characteristics of how the disc reacts to the wind. Ultimate is very much a "young" sport, with toned, fit, good-looking athletes. Unlike certain established sports that are much slower-paced and increasingly only appreciated by a greying audience, Ultimate is an up-and-coming sport which is well known by the younger generation and which meets today's spectator expectations.

The sport was featured at the National Stadium in Kaohsiung, Taiwan and the finals drew nearly 50,000 spectators. We also have a beach variant of the sport, with the latest World Championship of Beach Ultimate held last summer in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy, drawing 1,200 athletes.

The road to the Olympics

In order to promote the Olympic Movement, the IOC can recognise any international non-governmental organisation that administers one or more sports at world level and encompassing organisations administering such sports at national level as an International Federation (IF).

How can a sport be recognised?

In order to be recognised, these organisations must apply the Olympic Movement Anti-Doping Code and conduct effective out-of-competition tests in accordance with the established rules. The statutes, practices and activities of the IF must also fit the guidelines established in the Olympic Charter.

WFDF applied for official "recognition" by the IOC earlier this year, with 54 member countries. The minimum number of countries for such recognition is 50. We see this as an important first step in the overall process, and would hope to have some response by the end of the year.

What are the criteria?

Any sport is eligible to become a medal sport as long as it can meet certain criteria:

1. The first step to becoming a recognised sport of the Summer Games requires being organised into an IF who can apply on behalf of the sport. Someone must fill in the application.
2. A sport must also be popular in many countries. Each federation must have male participants in at least 75 countries on four continents and female participants in at least 40 countries on three continents.
3. The potential Olympic sport must support ranked events. Any event which competes as an Olympic sport or competes within one of its disciplines will provide scores, timing or another method of measuring competitors. These measures will result in a ranking at the end of the event and will lead to the award of medals, ribbons, certificates or other non-monetary recognition of the rank earned.
4. The sport must hold competition events on a world level. To be included in the Olympic programme, an event must be recognised internationally in both participant numbers and geographically. An event is required to have featured at least twice in world or continental championships.
5. Physical not mechanical athletic performance is required. Sports, disciplines or events in which performance depends essentially on mechanical propulsion (e.g. Formula 1) are not acceptable.

Once the IOC votes to recognise a federation, the next step becomes a matter of lobbying. Organised and consistent lobbying is needed to help promote selection over other sports. This should be done without bribery, which is banned from Olympic sports promotional activity.

A prospective Olympic sport will sometimes make its first appearance as demonstration or non-medal winning sport before becoming an official Olympic sport. Demonstration sports were originally performed to expose any athletic activities that were unique to the host country at the Games, but now they are a useful part of the process used by new sports that want to become official sports. Since it is easier to get into the Olympics under the umbrella of an existing sport, some federations give up on the quest for solo recognition and allow themselves to become a discipline. This results in a loss of independence with the addition of the economic rewards of Olympic status.

There are three ways an activity can come into the Olympics:

- As a completely new sport and federation as described above
- As a new discipline that is a branch of an existing Olympic sport
- As a new event that is a competition within an existing discipline

Who decides which sports are accepted?

The admission or exclusion of any sport falls within the jurisdiction of the IOC Session of the IOC Executive Board. The IOC process requires seven years for a new sport to be added.

Unfortunately, Ultimate will not likely be in the Olympics for several more decades, at best. It is a matter of the numbers of participating countries (see criterion 3 above) and many other things, as described earlier.

Robert "Nob" Rauch, WFDF President

Olympic experience

Olympic Volunteer

Volunteering at the Olympics was so much fun and a great experience. I spent two days at the road race event up on Box Hill, so I had a chance to see the guys nine times (at least as far as I recall they zoomed by nine times) and women two times. That was followed by six days at the mountain bike track in Essex, where I went inside the athletes' stalls and got a glimpse of some very funky bikes and tools. The spirit was great – even though it was raining during some of the races, it was still great to see everyone so psyched and cheering for all the racers.

I was so lucky! It was the chance of my life, being directly there and meeting so many lovely people, because unless I move to Rio, I don't think I'll get to experience this again.

Kristina Cernusakova

Olympic Volunteer

I was assigned a role within the National Olympic Committee Services and Relations team whose function was to provide customer service and issue resolution to the various national Olympic and Paralympics Committees visiting London during the 2012 Games. I was based in the Olympic Village and assigned to Team Hong Kong, China. I was lucky enough to be around the athletes and officials, soaking up the buzz and Olympic atmosphere.

I did speak to the Hong Kong team about Frisbee and told them all about our national tournaments. I even spoke to the Hong Kong Sports Federation who told me that the Olympic Committee love the fact that Ultimate is a spirited game with our own rulings.

Highlights included escorting the team to the stadium for the opening ceremony; watching Hong Kong win their first medal in eight years in the

Velodrome; seeing Usain Bolt in the village and meeting Jessica Ennis! It was an unforgettable experience, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and it has inspired me to take up some new sports, and I hope to continue being part of the volunteering legacy.

Teri Ho

Olympics Torch Bearer

I was surprised, honoured and humbled to be chosen as one of the 8,000 torchbearers to carry the Olympic Flame. I was nominated by my girlfriend Naomi Brook, and selected for a combination of my charity and local community work, including having started the Leamington Lemmings Ultimate club.

It was such a fantastic experience! We were all kitted out in our white and gold tracksuits, had gotten our hands on the Torch and were ready to go! The bus dropped me off on Myton Road for my stretch of the relay, where there were hundreds of people already waving and cheering, including my family and several Lemmings.

Then came my moment to shine. Corina Haley from Rugby, who dedicates lots of her time to encouraging people to live and eat healthily, came running down the road with the Olympic Flame. A quick kiss, and a kiss of the torches, and I was off. The roar from the crowd was phenomenal, and their cheering and support was both inspiring and humbling. It was fantastic running down the road, with thousands of people showing such great support. The day will long live in the memory, with the smiles on the faces of the children throughout the highlight.

Lucas Thrillson

Olympics Torch Bearer

I had no idea back in 1997 that a school Ultimate Frisbee club that I started (to help me get a job) would

lead to probably the most bizarre day of my life – me carrying the Olympic Torch.

I was a part-time, newly qualified PE teacher on a one-year contract and needed to impress the boss. I knew that I wanted to get more kids playing sport but didn't quite know how to do it. Then a CBBC show caught my eye one day – a competitive game that involved throwing a disc around... bingo!

I started with about 10 kids. None of us knew what we were doing. It took us a year to realise what a side-arm was – up until then I had been telling them that an acceptable way to beat your opponents was to throw it through their legs while they were marking you. We learnt together and now 15 years on the AirBadgers are bigger than ever.

I have always loved challenges. In 2008 I ran in The Marathon Des Sables (tagged the toughest footrace on earth) and in 2010 I cycled across the USA in 28 days raising money for a local diabetes charity. While starting an Ultimate team wasn't one of my bigger challenges, it is definitely the thing that I am most proud of. The head of Maths at my school and some parents from the Frisbee team nominated me for torchbearing duties and I was lucky enough to be chosen.

The day was quite incredible. I received the Flame from the rock band Muse and ran 350 metres along Shaldon bridge in Teignmouth, in front of thousands of people. It was pretty emotional and an experience that I will never forget. Up until that point I guess I had been a little cynical about the Olympics; I doubted whether people would really engage with it. However, the day I stepped off the torchbearers' bus and saw the excitement in peoples' eyes in catching a glimpse of that magical flame, I truly realized the power of sport.



The tag line of the Olympics was 'inspire a generation'. The pride that I felt on that day is the same pride that I feel every Friday evening at training when I see my older players coaching and inspiring the younger students. Many students who left our school at 16 still come back every week to play and help to encourage the younger kids. They give up their weekends to go to the beginners tournaments as coaches and lots of them still want to come to the Under 17 championships to pass on their knowledge and expertise. The club has more than 70 regular players and yet it still feels like a family. Everyone knows each other's names (or nicknames) and there is a good deal of banter. It's a great way to end the week. We train hard and play hard but never lose sight of the fundamentals of Ultimate: fair play, respect and fun.

I was lucky enough to be recognised and allowed to carry the Torch but our sport is full of volunteers who don't always get noticed. These are people who use Ultimate to make a real difference to other peoples lives. I see loads of them at Junior tournaments: coaches, teachers, parents, drivers. Everyone of them is a hero for giving up their time and energy for the benefit of others.

So next time you find someone who makes a difference, be sure to tell them 'thanks'.

Paul Ruff

Under a bushel

Can Ultimate help you get a job in the real world?

I don't think I've ever satisfactorily explained Ultimate to a colleague – that it's actually a proper, competitive sport involving real exercise – or how much of my time outside of the office I spend playing it or thinking about it in some capacity (a lot!). My current colleagues know that Ultimate involves a Frisbee and that I'm always carrying a giant sports bag around. Due to a slight misfortune with an all-purpose adhesive, they have also seen me spend half the day at the office in very long, and very orange, shorts. But that's about as far as I've got.

Job interviews have been even trickier. When the question of, "What do you do in your spare time?" would come up, I haven't done justice to the sport itself or to the fact that several aspects of playing a competitive sport in general could make me a desirable employee. Traits such as enthusiasm, mental toughness, endurance, competitiveness, dedication and the ability to be part of a team, are all things a potential employer will value.

Plus there are skills gained from playing and coaching Ultimate, such as people management, delegation and giving feedback, which I can actually demonstrate better through my Ultimate career than through any experience in the workplace. So I wanted to look at whether or not to mention Ultimate on a CV, and, if so, how to do it so as to make you look amazing and not too obscure or unprofessional.

For the first question – "Should I mention Ultimate on my CV?" – the quick answer is yes. Regardless of your level of involvement or level at which you compete, adding "Ultimate Frisbee" at the bottom of your CV indicates that you are in fact human, and that you have a life beyond the workplace. It can also be an easy icebreaker for your interviewer and give them a point of interest that helps your application stand out. While nine

out of ten employers might not have heard of Ultimate, "a healthy work/life balance and interesting hobbies are certainly a plus", according to Nick Vincent, an Ultimate player who has done quite a bit of recruitment for his e-commerce consultancy company. He added that he would be surprised if a sport an employer hadn't heard of would count negatively against a candidate.

Several Ultimate players in various careers have had positive experiences putting Ultimate on their CVs. Neb Weddell, who teaches history, said, "In my experience people are interested in it and I've been asked about it in most of the interviews I've had. Schools sometimes like it as an extra curricular opportunity so I sell it as that to make my application stand out and offer something different." Cat Vaughan, who works at a research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare company, said, "I've always put it on my CV and have talked about it in every interview I've had.

"I think the only way to introduce it is in a 'matter of fact' way. I am always serious when I talk about Frisbee and use a tone of voice that suggests I play competitively. This makes them automatically intrigued instead of thinking that it is a joke sport involving a dog! They seem genuinely interested and always ask me what the rules are and how you play from there."

In the lucky instance where the employer is familiar with Ultimate, or even better, has played it, having it on your CV can really work in your favour. Ken Ferguson, who works for an engineering company that has its own corporate team, and has conducted interviews for the company, said, "Obviously at our firm virtually everyone has heard of the game and a fair proportion of interviewers have played it. It'd be naive to say we'd give you a job because of it [we can't all be Buzz Bullets [from Japan]], but

there's plenty about it that's useful for an interview... that you can be a part of a team, have the discipline to train and learn particular plays, and that you have interests outside of work/study.

"Where Ultimate can get you ahead is that you have to explain what the game is. That gives you a chance to show you can communicate clearly and be passionate about something. Beyond that, it's up to you what you choose to emphasise: whether it's your ability to resolve disputes calmly in the heat of the moment without referees, organising the team or spotting a gap (such as recruitment) in your team's organisation and doing something about it."

Some employers go even further. For example, numerous employers use resources such as the LinkedIn Professional Ultimate Players Network group to recruit. I got in touch with Sam Haing, who has posted job vacancies there, and his advice was to include Ultimate in your interests, especially, "if you list prior leadership experience and you were a captain or important administrator, then followed with specific responsibilities or tournaments you organized, that couldn't hurt either. Employers look for people who actually demonstrate leadership in their outside life too." Mike Hawkins, another Ultimate player who has been involved in a fair bit of recruiting, said he's always happy to consider Ultimate players for positions, because they are, "on the whole hard working, passionate, self-motivated and energetic people."

Do the activities of Ultimate highlight important skills that you possess but have not had the opportunity to use or demonstrate in a professional setting? Then you can use Ultimate to demonstrate that not only do you have these skills, but that you have used them successfully. A good CV, after all, is a statement selling you in the best way.



Here are some tips when using Ultimate to show skills that will translate into the workplace:

Add "Ultimate Frisbee" at the bottom of your CV under Interests or Activities; something like: "Ultimate Frisbee (President – Club Team, competed in National and International Tournaments)". While the technical name of the sport is "Ultimate", referring to it as "Ultimate Frisbee" emphasizes more of the actual gameplay of the sport, and will help avoid question such as "You play Ultimate? As in Ultimate Fighting?"

Use active language: Don't say, "I was punctual to practices", say "excellent time management skills – balanced practice, training, competition, and travel schedule". Don't just say, "I was captain", say "effectively managed communications between 24 team members", "served as a liaison between teams and coaching staff" or "effectively resolved intra-team conflicts".

If you have the qualifier of playing at a national or even international tournament, this is a good way to indicate that it's not just playing in the park with a dog and/or Aerobie ®.

Mention Ultimate in moderation (be an employee who happens to be an athlete rather than the other way around). Avoid giving the employer any reason to be concerned that it might lead to travel/long hours/not being able to commit to work.

Finally, always stay within professional lines, and be genuine about it.

Mara Alperin

When will Ultimate be a real sport?

If you're reading this article in Ultimatum, chances are you're already thinking, "What a ridiculous question! Ultimate IS a real sport!" Of course it is. It's obvious. You could probably even, with a little thought and well-oiled eloquence, persuade a stranger in a pub that it's a real sport. But if you just went up to that stranger and asked about Ultimate, there's still a solid (if slowly reducing) chance of a blank look. Things are getting better, but we could be years and years away from universal recognition.

That's certainly the timeframe for things like the Olympics – 'several decades', according to WFDF elsewhere in this issue. Weekly final scores on the BBC? A £100 million National Ultimate Centre? Lovely thoughts, but we all know it'll probably never happen.

But you might be surprised at where Ultimate in the UK has already got to. Up in the dark recesses of Scotland, away from main roads and, frankly, much of the real world, sits the ancient and venerable University of St Andrews. 600 years old in 2013, and as traditional as traditional could be, it employs a Director of Sport in just a handful of tried and tested serious sports – sports like Golf, Football, Rugby, Tennis... and Ultimate. How on earth did that happen?

Ultimate became recognised by BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport – www.bucs.org.uk) back in 2006/7 – thanks to hard work from the then University Coordinator Ed Blockley amongst others. Universities receive BUCS points for their performance across hundreds of sporting events, and these points translate to an enormous amount of prestige. BUCS points matter to Universities, and when their Ultimate teams started bringing back points, sports administrators took note.

Across the university sector, Ultimate

is increasingly treated like any other sport these days. The majority of players at Uni Open Nationals are settled comfortably in paid-for hotels, eating their pleasant complimentary breakfasts, and feeling like real athletes. They are real athletes, and this is a real sport. It's a far cry from my first Nationals – we borrowed the minibus at midnight on the Friday (we were somewhat less important than the ABBA society, who had taken it to a Bjorn Again concert in Kirkcaldy that evening...) and we drove through the night to get to Keele just as the McDonalds opened and we could all sit with a McMuffin and Pro-Plus tablets.

BUCS tell us that Ultimate is a significant sport in terms of participation – not quite up there with Football and Rugby, but way ahead of many other long-established sports.

In Scotland this year, Ultimate became affiliated with SSS (Scottish Student Sport – www.scottishstudentsport.com), which is the local equivalent of BUCS. Every Regionals – Open, Women's and Mixed; indoors and out – will be recognised at the same level as any other university sporting competition in Scotland. Just last weekend, Stirling stepped out of their comfy hotel beds and straight into Division 1 Nationals. Ultimate a real sport? It's already there...

More and more Unis are taking the sport seriously. Sussex University (Mohawks) are comfortably the most successful university team over the past few years, and were rewarded by the University spending £7,000 on making their pitch flat. Their pitch, not one in the local park marked out by a few cones and only available when Sunday league isn't being played. Ultimate is prominent enough there that incoming students who have never played find out about the successful Ultimate team before arriving, and then make the effort to play over the



St Albans v Abstract © Andy Moss 2012

summer before trying to get on the team. Instead of students fighting for recognition, the way we older graduates remember it, the University come to them asking how they can help. Their coach, Felix Shardlow, is paid to run a number of sessions each week, and is also employed to coach at Brighton University. Paid coaches are springing up all over the country.

Here in St Andrews, they asked what size an indoor Ultimate pitch was before deciding on the dimensions of the big new sports hall they're building! A multi-million-pound decision, and they want our opinion. They provide seven hours of paid coaching per week; a weights programme; an enormous transport budget; hotels; funding for things like beginners tournaments as well as BUCS/SSS; a tailored leadership course for the captains; a week-long preseason training featuring things like slow motion cameras for

video analysis, GPS wristbands and heart-rate monitors, top external sprint coaches etc.; funding for UKU coaching courses; scholarships to help with the costs for people who make GB squads. In fact, if someone with a strong Ultimate background applies to the Uni, I can now put in a word on their behalf during the application process. They still need the grades to get in, but even so...

In short – University Ultimate has a level of respect that was unimaginable 10 or 15 years ago. Not every Uni is on board to the same extent yet, but every year more and more are starting to look at their Ultimate club in a positive way.

In the small pond of university sport, Ultimate is a big fish – and getting bigger.

Benji Heywood - Director of Ultimate, University of St Andrews

Alumni cup

Many inaugural tournaments run the real risk of failing to secure the attendants to warrant a repeat of the event.

While the Alumni Cup attempted to side-step that issue by being conjoined with University Nationals, the disorganised nature of Ultimate players combined with increased responsibilities and reduced fitness with age made it difficult for alumni squads to field the 'dream teams' that had fuelled pre-tournament hype. As the TD issued monthly updates approaching the tournament, each list of entries differed from the last by three or four teams, culminating with two changes in the week before the event. As such, the first action of many of the teams after getting to Manchester was to take a good look round and size up the opposition. With some of the power houses of university Ultimate (Warwick, Edinburgh) missing from the field, there was definitely room for some surprises in the quarter-finals. However, early showings suggested that Loughborough had brought back enough of their championship-winning side of 2005 to be very strong contenders (and they were wearing kit printed for the event!); that Sussex had a great deep game; and that Cambridge had done well to get a lot of players who'd spent time together both at university and on the Strange Blue club team.

Personally, my mission had always been to get a range of players from Leeds' past back on the field: I was happy that we fielded a player from the 90s on both days (albeit only for one game each), while conversely Si Hill was slightly disappointed that there wasn't anyone on the team younger than his shirt. With our first game against Oxford, I thought a rivalry from my past was about to be resurrected, only to discover that there were no returners from 2002-2004, and that there would be little to gain from reminiscing about past results in the

post-game speeches. After our first victory, Leeds spent the rest of the day playing teams that I'm sure we'd never met in my student days, though it was interesting to discover where regular club rivals had studied. Across three rounds of pool play, the value of familiarity was demonstrated, as we spectacularly failed to implement a zone defence and then struggled with communication trying to integrate someone for just one game.

While our anecdotal experience on this front is compelling at a personal level, the data (visualisation to be published online) suggests that teams with multiple players from one original team were stronger, with an arguable correlation with championship winning players. The strongest observation is clearly that the three teams with the biggest squads all made semis - and that the semi-finalists with a smaller squad didn't progress - but as the tournament matures, different patterns may emerge.

The quarter-finals - re-arranged to Saturday evening following the torrential rain preceding the weekend - showcased a good range of established and recent university teams as Brighton met Manchester, Leeds played KCL, Loughborough took on UCL and Cambridge faced Surrey. Manchester confirmed that their strong showing in the pool play sudden death loss to Loughborough was no fluke, nullifying the big plays to convincingly beat Sussex. The Loughborough machine rolled through UCL, and Cambridge were informed by their captain that going up a few points early could decide the game, so took it to Surrey and maintained a convincing lead throughout. In the last of the quarters, a short-handed KCL were overwhelmed by a strong Leeds start (Rob Littler scoring the Callahan off his own pull to go 3-0 up).

Thus, Sunday morning's semi-finals saw a Northern derby on one side of the draw and (if one looked back to the 2001 regions) a Midlands rivalry on the other. After a tight start, the idea of home field advantage was quashed, with Leeds getting a number of big blocks to pull away from Manchester. The Cambridge-Loughborough affair stayed closer for longer, but with steady hands at the back for Cambridge, the more expansive style of their opposition provided enough opportunities to take the game. In the consolation brackets, the disappointed Mohawks swept comfortably to 5th place, and there was a very vague trend towards better results for more recently established teams, with the historically strong institutes of Southampton and Sheffield being bested by the likes of the London colleges, Birmingham and Bangor.

With conditions leading the finalists to bring the game forward, few spectators saw a real spectacle of a game, as the soft ground encouraged big defensive bids. While Cambridge were patient on offence, the defensive intensity of Leeds gave them enough possession to be 10-8 up when the cap went on. Securing a break in the next point gave the northerners four game points, but Cambridge hung in, capitalising on errors to bring it back to sudden death. A miscommunication led to a Leeds' deep shot sailing into an empty end zone, and for two passes the ghost of St Andrews 2004 (when Aberdeen recovered from 9-3 and 13-9 down to win 13-14) hovered over Leeds. A punt from the brick mark was met by a flying defender, and after a quick swing, the third huck of the point was completed to avert the choke. For Jon Middleton, one of the Cambridge alumni, this became the 8th Ultimate title he's contested as a runner-up: University Mixed Indoors, University Open Indoors, University Mixed Outdoors, University Open

Outdoors, UKU Tour, UKU Nationals, EUCF Finals, and now UKU University Alumni. Hang in there, Jon.

Talking to a few other players since, I believe the minimum criteria for the tournament to achieve a pass mark were met comfortably. The organisation was something of a given (with bonus marks for handling the preceding week's downpour); Lookfly's support with the team photos was excellent (albeit with a predictable penchant for bare skin in the 'silly' photos); there were competitive games throughout (including, with no bias whatsoever, a great final); and most importantly, the tournament represented an opportunity to lure retired players out for a run around. So what lessons should be learned to make the Alumni Cup a first class tournament? UKU's objective when launching the event was to provide a retention mechanism for Ultimate players who drop out of the sport after leaving university (the data displayed in the graph confirms that the field was dominated by recent graduates) and sadly we won't be able to measure that impact for a number of years. Nonetheless, the fact that the event generated a high level of interest, in a congested calendar, during such a wet spring and with only a few months notice, augurs well for the future of the event. It is feasible that the dual nature of the tournament will even foster closer links between alumni and the current student teams, a situation that should benefit both parties. Once the event is sufficiently established, it may even be worthwhile searching the schedule for a 'Champion of Champions' game, where the University winners play the Alumni winners. It's not exactly the NexGen Tour, but it's an idea...

Rich Hims

Uni coaching

What everyone should know when teaching Ultimate to freshers

This article is a guide for experienced university players on how to teach basic catching and throwing techniques to incoming freshers, and how to play with and against the freshers at the start of the year. When experienced players are able to teach basic techniques to incoming players, the speed at which freshers improve increases dramatically, and when experienced players know how to play in a fresher-friendly way during the first weeks of term, the retention of players skyrockets. The first step to getting this working within your club is to connect with the returning experienced players before term starts, and make sure everyone knows the specifics detailed in this article.

When a fresher arrives at their first training or taster session, they should be welcomed by an experienced player, and invited to throw a Frisbee around for 15-20 minutes – in pairs or in as small a group as possible, with one experienced player per group. After a few throws, the experienced player should ask if the fresher would like some tips on their catching or throwing. It's important to ask this question and get a 'yes' answer, as then the fresher has psychologically 'bought in' and will be eager to listen to what you have to say.

When teaching catching technique, focus on a few important points:

- Move your feet to get your chest behind the disc
- Use both hands, clap catch in the centre of the disc with both hands hitting it at the same time
- Watch the disc into your hands

Throwing technique involves four points:

1. Footwork – step out wide at 90 degrees, bend at the knees
2. Grip – fingers tight inside the rim

for the backhand (index finger where it feels comfortable); power grip for the side-arm (index and middle finger together, not split)

3. Release – coil up before backhand, cock wrist back before flick, release at or below knee height, with outside edge pointing slightly down
4. Spin – snap the wrist

The order of these four points is critical. Don't teach the fresher about grip until they have their footwork sorted, don't teach them about the release until they have their grip sorted, and so on. Focus on one point at a time, and whenever you give some advice, give some praise, such as, "your throws are getting to me, which is great, but try releasing the disc lower for more consistency" or, "there's a lot of spin on your throws, but make sure you step out at 90 degrees as it'll help you in the game". Remember at all times that you are setting an example with your own throwing and catching, and a lot of players learn by watching rather than listening, so be a model player with clap catches at your chest and wide, low pivots.

After some throwing, it's time to play. Remember that when a fresher comes to Ultimate practice for the first time, they don't want to learn how to play great Ultimate; they just want to play. They certainly don't want to be told to stand in a line and run in a particular direction for no apparent reason, so skip any drills and go straight into games.

Split into teams to play five-a-side games (no more than fives – better four-a-side than six-a-side), ideally teams of five or six beginners with two experienced players, who will briefly teach them the basics of the rules and have a chat for a few minutes whilst the pitches are being set up. Make

the pitches big enough for a good run around – 20 meters wide by 40 meters long with 3 meter deep end zones is reasonable. If the beginners can be split into groups with some pre-existing connections (such as friends, living in same accommodation or coursemates), this is even better and will really help retention.

Spirit of the game should be explained by the team captains before the games start, but make sure that the game stops for any clear fouls and that the rules for that particular circumstance are explained clearly to the players involved, who should come to their own agreement about what happened. Freshers won't stop the game – you have that responsibility.

These are the points to remember when playing Ultimate with freshers so that they have fun, learn, and want to come back. When on offence:

- Let freshers pick up the disc if they want to. Progress to calling a couple of people at the start of the point who will pick up the disc and make sure you rotate through everyone.
- Throw slow, flat, easy to catch passes, both for short and long throws, even if they are easier to intercept.
- Throw when the cutter wants it, even if you know it'll be intercepted. In the worst case, the defender does a good thing, and your team mate feels you trust them.
- Let your team know you're always there for the easy pass if they need it, but don't demand the disc, reprimand speculative shots, or disappear up field.
- Don't teach a formation (such as stack) unless the freshers ask about strategy – it's too much information at this point. Better to work from principles around creating and using space. Under no

circumstances stand over the disc waiting for everyone to 'stack up', or pick up the disc and demand 'cuts'.

- Put up long shots if it's getting crowded around the disc. This will encourage deep cuts in future points, and will also give freshers the unique experience of chasing down a long throw... an experience which in itself can be enough to get a fresher hooked.
- Ensure everyone is getting disc time. Calling a 'string' play helps with this (player A looks to player B, who looks to player C, etc.).

Then when on defence:

- Don't teach the stall count (or stall anybody) for the first week, it only adds pressure and complicates things.
- If marking another experienced player, let them get free when and where they want around the disc. After summer it's tempting to play hard, but you must resist. If the experienced player you're marking goes for the end zone though, go for an amazing interception.
- If marking a beginner, let them get free too, though mark them out when they start clogging space around the disc as it'll encourage them to clear out. If the genders on the pitch aren't balanced, it can be better for an experienced player to mark a female fresher instead of another experienced player.
- No poaching. It's not a challenge to get a poach D in a game with beginners – especially when you're already out of position due to letting players get the disc as detailed above.
- No point blocks or even stopping break throws – you want throws to either be completed or be intercepted by beginners. If an experienced player wants to break

you, let them. If a beginner looks like they're going to throw it into your force, get out of the way. Don't let your team know you're not pulling in the same direction as them on defence though – make it look like you're concentrating and playing hard.

- Don't teach strategy, such as forcing one way, unless the freshers ask, or if you're nearing the end of the session and your team has a good understanding. Better to work from principles and simple instructions – man defence can simply be explained by saying, "if they throw the disc to your man, get it before he does".

- When marking confident or athletic beginners, raise the intensity to give them a proper challenge. Some freshers won't come back if you intercept their throws or mark them out, while other freshers won't come back unless they get a tough challenge and are shown what they can achieve, so play it by ear.

In general when playing a game:

- When two experienced players are involved in a foul and have a subsequent discussion, remember you are setting an example for all the other freshers, so explain your point of view honestly, clearly and respectfully, and settle the call in the 'proper' fashion – a joke between friends may be misunderstood by freshers.
- For violations such as travels, picks, and close in/out calls, and not quite being in the end zone for a score, only stop the game if it's a fresher who notices the violation – even if they affect the play, it's much better for the game to continue if the freshers don't notice.

Finally, remember it is your responsibility as an experienced player to



ensure everyone on the pitch is having a good time, and not just your team. You could be scoring every time and thus feel everything is going great, but think about your opposition, and adjust your tactics accordingly (having your weaker freshers pick up the disc, for example).

After the games it's good to circle up and let the freshers know how your club works – hopefully that everyone is welcome to continue coming along even if they didn't have a good practice that day, and that over the year they'll all be taught everything they need to know to go from a noob to a good player. Mention beginner tournaments, fun tournaments, and how Regionals and Nationals work, so you'll retain freshers who simply enjoy the game and will make your club socials great, as well as the competitive freshers who will be trying to get onto your first team for outdoor Regionals. Then let everyone know that some people are going straight to the pub (on campus near where you train, hopefully), and some are sticking around to play a quick game of seven-a-side first, where freshers will be welcome to join in after the first couple of points.

This game should be on a full size pitch, with as close to a 4:3 gender

split as possible, and everyone playing proper, hard Ultimate, hopefully showing what the freshers can aim for. Again, don't call picks or travels, but do call and discuss fouls properly when they occur. After a couple of points invite freshers to join in, but don't stop the game. Make sure the experienced players try to persuade their teammates from the five-a-side games to get on the pitch, and to sub out for any freshers that show interest in playing. You may only get a handful of freshers joining in, but they will likely love the experience of being on a big pitch with so many experienced players, and they'll appreciate greatly how they have been given the opportunity to play in a fairly high level game at their first session.

After the session, make sure as many freshers as possible come to the pub, and then talk to them! It's very tempting to catch up with your teammates who you haven't seen all summer, but there are better times for that. Go out of your way and make it your responsibility to get every fresher talking, as it can easily make the difference between them never coming back, and them captaining the team in two years time. The confident and athletic freshers will want to hear about the GB Junior and GB U23 opportunities available to them

if they stick with Ultimate – they want to be challenged and they want to know it's possible for them to achieve greatness. There will also be freshers who want to take up a sport but hate the ethos of rugby and football so now is a great time for them to find out if the vibe of your club is something they can enjoy.

By applying the advice given here, at the first session and to varying degrees for the subsequent sessions, your freshers will hopefully enjoy their first few tastes of Ultimate and become hooked in no time. By ensuring all experienced players learn these guidelines before the fresher intake each year, hopefully the recruitment and retention rates for your club will keep growing, and thus lead to huge performance gains.

Felix Shardlow

Felix Shardlow has been coaching the Sussex University team Mohawks for 10 years (Open & Women's Outdoor National Champions for the last two years), Brighton University's Panthers for three years (SE Open Uni Regionals finalists this year), the Brighton Ultimate first team since its creation in 2004, and has just been employed to introduce Ultimate to Brighton Uni's Eastbourne campus from scratch in 2012.

Talking to the boss

The Britney interview



The most successful **GB Open** team ever! WUGC © Neil Gardner 2012 nzsnapshots.com

The more you find out about the GB Open captain, the more intriguing he becomes – not only does he write poetry, but he’s published a romantic novel – in French! Furthermore, he made a pretty serious attempt at becoming Canada’s first astronaut and he still believes that Nalgene’s are indestructible. I decided it was time to find out more.

Name: Marc Guilbert

Age: 35

Originally from: Ottawa, Canada

Years playing: 15

What would you say most defines you, apart from Ultimate?

Being excessively focused and determined, along with having an unyielding nature. Set in a competitive environment like Ultimate, such traits obviously come in handy.

Where does the nickname ‘Britney’ come from?

The year before joining Clapham, I played for a team called Smash and Grab made up of a mix of Brighton and Cambridge. The guys on the team started calling me by that name because I had shoulder-length hair at

the time, but it really caught on after I won MVP for some mixed tour that same year and they convinced the announcer to call me up to the stage as Britney to collect the award.

Right, let’s get this question out of the way. I got up early, and paid \$5 to watch that final. WTF?

I knew this question was coming, but not how it was going to be worded. Having had to answer this before, I’ve found that I have two distinct reactions to such comments.

My first reaction is the one that probably best epitomises why I was put in charge of GB Open in the first place. In essence, I frankly couldn’t care less about whatever feeling of disappointment you may have towards the Open final or how much of a spectacle it was for the crowd. My only concerns are those for my team and team mates. And believe me, each and every one of us was in that game to win it. We all wanted to become World Champions. Unfortunately, it’s not how it ended. We didn’t perform like we had done in the rest of the week. Let’s however make something crystal clear: we earned the right to

be there. Those who played WUGC will know that you don’t get to the final at Worlds without winning a series of big games. This is why it is one of the toughest tournaments in our sport. The 25 guys that entered that stadium on that Saturday had already accomplished something no one else in the history of Great Britain Ultimate had ever done. Each one of them thoroughly deserved their time in the spotlight and that shot at the title. So, instead of questioning our final result, why not praise the guys for having had such a heroic tournament. If anyone however, still feels the need to criticize our performance, feel free to have a go at me, but you better come well prepared because I’ve spent the last three GB cycles raising Open’s standards and have directly focused the last two years (as both Open’s team manager and captain) on paving a way for us to get to that final.

My second reaction is as poignant, but far harder to explain. It has to do with the expectation and preparation of the team. Ever since our first trial in late 2010, I have tried to convince every Open player that this GB team was going to be the one that wins

Worlds. Let it be said that engraining that belief was extremely tricky, given the multitude of knocks and blows to our confidence we suffered throughout the two year programme. As expected, the scrutiny of the UK Ultimate community was also relentless. While this in itself was never a problem, every player needed to find their own invincibility and realise that if they acted and played confidently, we would keep getting stronger and keep winning. Circling up after our sudden-death semi-final win against Sweden, it was apparent many players only started to believe they could be World Champions at the precise moment the last point was scored. But self-belief cannot be acquired in one pass, nor can it be gained in one evening: self-doubts are much harder to get rid of. No amount of shouting can solve this; no pats on the back or time-outs can turn this around. In the end, what is required is mental toughness. Hope is useless in sport, confidence is what is required. Thus, future GB teams cannot hope to ‘over-perform’. Instead, they need to prepare themselves to win and be disappointed should they fall short of



their goal. This might require more tenacity and discipline, but it is the only way to reach the very top. No other GB team needs to learn this again like we did.

What was the feeling in the team after winning silver?

There is a tremendous amount of pride in the silver medal we won. This can never be taken away from us. Yet, as successful as our tournament was, it did not end the way we wanted it to. Many of us are left wondering 'what if'. Because of this, our result is slightly bittersweet. In the end, it's up to every player to find peace with their individual performance and our collective result. Only then will that silver medal shine as bright as it should.

You selected a young squad, with a focus on fitness and commitment. Obviously the results vindicate that approach, but I can't help thinking that you would have been better off with an older, more skilled, but less fit team. At any point did you miss having any particular player on the team? We played ten games, each of them requiring a different combination of

skills, fitness and experience. I fully agree that in order to compete, any squad must have a balanced mix of players with unique skill sets, but you have assumed from your question that we weren't skilled enough to do so. This couldn't have been further from the truth. Please don't ignore the outcome of the nine games which put us in a position to be in that final before judging our overall performance. You also forget the most important point: the only team capable of beating GB Open in Sakai was GB Open itself. We only lost when we didn't play our game, and not because we got out-skilled or out-matched. This has been true since we started in 2011. The 25 guys that travelled to Japan understood this and it has never ceased to serve us as an empowering realisation. Thanks for the opportunity to make this clear to the rest of UK Ultimate.

What is it that keeps the North Americans dominating?

I believe half of it is exposure. Within Clapham, we have called this 'games to go': games that are worth more than what you have been used to play for; games that push you to a higher level. Unfortunately, in the UK, these

opportunities only come around once every couple years (this is true at every level). The key is to learn from these and to grow beyond them. In my opinion, the USAU series offers a much more competitive platform by which teams have to perform more frequently in such 'games to go'.

The other half boils down to identifying and breeding talent. North America has a much bigger talent pool. This will never change. That said, I believe UKU's GB Programme will continue to gain momentum and will become the stage by which elite players can raise their individual and team game. This is how that gap between us and North America will narrow even more.

The Americans don't select a national squad; they just send the best club team. Do you think this would ever be the right approach for Britain?

This is a very tricky question, one to which I don't really have the answer. Given the size of the UK Ultimate community, national selections will always remain important to attract the strongest athletes. However, we need to find a way to re-create the synergy of the top UK clubs. Recall that both Chevron and Clapham had very close games against the Open squad (Clapham winning two such confrontations). There is no substitute for training week in and week out with the same people; such connections win games. This needs to be taken into account, regardless of the selection process.

In Europe, there's great competition between GB and Sweden. Are there any other European countries that you

can see breaking into the finals in the future?

In my opinion, we owe the rise of GB Ultimate entirely to the UKU and the hard work invested throughout the years by Si Hill at setting up an infrastructure to facilitate competition and grow Ultimate within the UK. Thanks to such efforts, depth is finally one of our strongest assets. That said, I truly believe continued success hinges on the growth of the GB Programme. Frameworks tailored for elite GB players are needed to keep us progressing.

As for the rest of Europe, they are never far behind. Finland, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland have all shown they are capable of producing top performances at international tournaments. Cultivating existing intense European rivalries is another method to duplicate the competitiveness of North American tournaments and will benefit European Ultimate as a whole.

A lot of good players find their game suffers if they become captain, but as captain of both Clapham and GB this doesn't seem to be an issue for you. How do you do it?

As simple as it may sound, trust is the key to any captaincy. Not only do your players need to trust you are doing everything in your power to set up the team to win, you need to trust them to do their job and entrust them with the necessary power to do so. This is why, for GB, I appointed Sion Scone (Brummie) as coach, Colin Harris as our strength and conditioning personal trainer and always had a number of assistants. Besides being



Japan were considered strong favourites to get to the final, and beat GB in the pool games; however, they were knocked out by Sweden in the quarter finals, who were in turn knocked out by GB in the semi finals. Which proves that it's not simply about winning games - it's about winning the right games.

the key to our success (a point not to be underestimated), such appointments eased the burden of responsibility and diluted control. On a more personal level, I believe a captain needs to be an example of selflessness. One's work ethos can never falter with this title. I would never dream of claiming that I have ever been the best player on Clapham or GB (in any of the years I've played for these teams), but anyone who's ever played with me knows that I will do everything for my team mates. At no point did this philosophy ever change. If anything, it has been intensified. Shouldering the title of captain is obviously an absolute honour, one that makes me want to win even more. Instead of fearing the role, I prefer to use it as motivation for me to train with the most complete dedication and to perform at the highest standards. However, in the end, lining up, I will only ever be one of seven; trusting and trusted to play his heart out.

If you had to choose: GB or Clapham?

I play with different numbers (GB 15, CU 4), precisely so I don't have to make that choice! In my opinion, WUGC is much bigger than WUCC, so

representing GB bears more weight. Also, having been captain to the team that just won silver at Worlds is an incredible honour, one I most likely will never be able to match. Yet, when all is said and done, Clapham is the home where I learned all the skills I needed to make it to GB. There lies the importance of belonging to Clapham. Ultimately, my motivations to play for each team are slightly different. GB is an opportunity – one where you work towards selection and to have a chance at representing your country. Clapham is more a pursuit – one to uphold the long lasting tradition and dynasty of a club. GB or CU you ask? The combination of both suits me fine.

How much of your success as a player do you put down to natural talent and how much is down to your diligence and commitment to training?

It's all commitment to training. I don't make excuses nor ever take shortcuts. I'm the workhorse that would dig its way through hell to reach my goal. I'd love to possess a fraction of the raw athletic talent demonstrated in some of the up and coming players in the scene. It's extremely exciting to see the new breed of young natural

athletes take up the sport and grow up with it. However, the days of top level Ultimate being contested by recreational players are over. Thus, regardless of raw talent, one will never truly become the best without dedication and hard work. That has always been my edge.

As a player who never seems to be injured, is this because you're tough as nails or do you train for injury prevention?

Everything is about discipline. I believe athletes must try to leave the necessary space when balancing what is in their control to be affected least by something they can't control. Such a philosophy for training and injury prevention can be as detailed as you like. For me, it means paying attention to details, listening to my body, reducing cross-training when in pre-tournament mode (to minimize injury risks from secondary sports), setting myself a well-balanced training routine (written down and followed to the letter) so not to end up over-training or under prepared, varying my workouts and making an effort not to neglect anything (i.e. doing the workouts I need to do, not only those

I want to do) and, above all, being careful with nutrition and sleep. While these rules haven't always prevented me from getting injured, they have helped me get well quicker (again, by having the discipline to do all the rehab) and given me the focus to keep training or adapt my training until I'm back to full health. In the end, I simply don't stop training unless I absolutely have to; that seems to have worked for me so far.

Finally, what words of advice would you have for any young player who looks at Marc Guilbert and thinks 'I want to be like that guy'?

Suck it up. Get the basics right. Train – all the time.

Interview by Jack Goolden

WUGC - Mixed

Mixed feelings

We always knew that WUGC 2012 was going to be a much harder tournament than Slovenia 2011, but each of the GB squads had taken their own approach to managing this step-up in difficulty. Whether through bolstering the roster, intensifying the strength and conditioning programme or studying video footage of the opposition, all of us had reason to consider ours the best GB squad ever to have taken the field in our division of choice. With confidence in ourselves and in our preparation, then, it's heart-wrenching to look back at a tournament where only the Open squad can claim to have met their expectations.

The Mixed team had focussed on acclimatising in advance, going to such lengths as running sprints in squash courts, hitting the treadmill in thermals and benching in base layers. In the months before the tournament, many had modified diets to include more rice, and immediately before Japan, we'd shifted waking hours to reduce the effects of jet lag. Ultimately, however, it feels like our mental preparation was some way behind our physical preparation. Starting the tournament against newcomers Colombia and China may have allowed us to maintain a certain level of complacency, and while we made the effort to scope out the opposition's offence, it's clear in hindsight that we allowed ourselves to get dragged into a fight, with error rates much higher than we could afford.

Our first real test came against the Australians; the pool game that we had targeted as making or breaking our tournament. There aren't many things Ultimate shares with rugby and cricket, but a strong GB rivalry with the Aussies is one of them. The Barramundis started the game

strong, and quickly got their chipper attitude in gear, flooding calls with supportive teammates in a way we'd agreed not to do. As they threw us off our stride, systems fell apart, errors mounted and the gap grew. With a final score of 9-17, we really felt that we'd let ourselves down and that we would have to pull together as a team for things to change.

So, halfway through the group stages, we were on seed but not feeling brilliant about our performance, and about to face another British Ultimate rival – particularly for the Mixed division – in the form of the Germans. Having had some frank discussions the evening before, we knew some things had to change, but could take confidence from the recent victory margins over Germany, and from their complimentary speech where they urged us to represent Europe in the division at worlds. Sadly, historical success is not always an indicator of future performance, and this game may have been the worst we'd ever played. Taking nothing away from the German team, they were able to run their deep game too easily and had a plethora of cheap mistakes to exploit. As the time cap went, we found ourselves 12-10 down in a game to 14, and finally our intensity rose. When Sam Bowen laid out off the pitch and very nearly into the Ulti.tv camera for a block that still couldn't quite stop Germany scoring, the team truly responded, trading gritty up-wind goals before finishing with two breaks to claim the victory.

Pool play culminated against the Finns, a rather different team to the one faced in Slovenia, and apparently weakened by the greater travel requirement. While they had one or two great players, there were always mismatches for us to exploit on offence and the chance of cheap turns



Rich Coward

Karen Brimacombe

GB v USA © Neil Gardner 2012

on defence. Restricting the Finns to a single score in the second half and no breaks throughout, a 17-4 result felt deserved and perhaps confirmed the turn-around started in the Germany game.

With our pool having gone to seed, we could have expected to face the Japanese in our quarter-final, but the hosts had secured a big win against the USA, targeting the American's #1 handler with a cup and man mark. Having done our research in the off-season, we were happy that windy conditions would not favour Blackbird's natural game, but equally

their roster additions since USAU Nationals 2011, and a second year together as a team, would make them a testing opponent.

Starting on defence, but pulling into the wind, conditions were a clear factor from the off, with cagey handler-play the order of the day as the teams traded to 3-3. The first break of the game went to the Americans, which they consolidated by securing a second downwind break before trading out the half. The second half started disastrously, as a deep pull from the American defence was followed by pressure defence and they earned themselves a Callahan goal. From 10-6 down, it was always going to be a big ask, and while the GB defence were regularly able to force turnovers, we simply couldn't convert.

Our placement games were completed almost by rote: France surrendered in the face of consistent pressure as they were held to just three points per half, and the most notable event in the Germany rematch was the end-game downpour. So, we're left wondering once again what is required to bridge the gap between also-rans and semi-finalists. The post-mortem started while some of the squad were still travelling, and a full Team GB meeting is planned to share lessons learned. Four years is a long time, and the 2016 Mixed team is unlikely to have as many returners as we did from Vancouver 2008, but while the experience itself cannot be directly passed to our successors, perhaps some of the benefits can be.

Rich Hims



WUGC - Women

Interview with Carol Moore

We went behind the scenes at camp GBW and managed to get the Coach, Carol Donkey “Donk” Moore, to answer a few of our questions about the ladies and her experience!

So Carol, how long have you been playing Ultimate for?

I started 1999, as a student at Glasgow University (Far Flung).

What got you hooked on Ultimate?

I have never been a girl's girl, and initially getting to play with the boys was a definite draw, as there were no girl's teams around at that time. I loved the intensity, physicality and skill involved, and having a tactical brain I'm a definite sucker for a thinking man's game.

Why did you stop playing?

I officially retired from the playing side of things in 2009. My body failed me – I was just too injured for too long.

Do you regret retiring ahead of Worlds?

No, it was the right time for me, though my physio will definitely have seen a downturn in his profits since then! There's always another big tournament on the horizon, so you just have to call it a day at some point.

What was your initial reaction when asked to be the coach for the GB Women?

Initially I was sceptical as to whether I could cope with being on the sideline but having watched them the season before I definitely had some clear ideas where they needed to improve to reach their potential. I've played with all the captains at various points and apart from their obvious natural talent, I think they did a fabulous job of inspiring the younger, more inexperienced players. I knew they had all the right ideas and just needed a little nudge to keep them on track.

Was it a difficult transition from player to coach?

I didn't find it too difficult as I'd spent a lot of my latter playing years coaching/captaining. I think if I'd gone straight into this with no experience then it would have been an almighty shock to the system as to how much work goes into things behind the scenes.

What were your expectations? Did you have any concerns?

Honestly, as I had been out of the scene for a few seasons, I was not fully up to date with the new players that were coming through so I was very open-minded. I had no concerns as such, but I was aware that the selection process would be vital to creating the team we needed this year but also one that could be built upon for the future.

At the trials, how did your expectations change?

I realised that we were essentially picking the new crop of GB players for years to come, and that we had to think of the bigger picture and look for real potential for growth.

When you got to Japan, how did you have to adjust mentally being so invested in the team and yet not being able to influence the results directly as a player and how easy was that adjustment?

There was definitely an adjustment required having to work from the sidelines instead of simply getting my head down and playing my guts out, but as the season progressed and I got to know all the girls it actually became easier to hand over the baton and put my trust in them to come up with the goods. There are so many other ways in which I could influence the game that I had to concede that the younger, faster legs were doing my on pitch job for me and I had to do my part to allow this to happen.



As you were in charge of line calling, how did you find coping with this during the tournament?

It's really tough but definitely worth doing and was something we worked hard to get right. Without set O and D lines it was really needed, especially with such high temperatures. It also gave the captains more time to focus on the on-pitch playing.

Do you think line calling is essential for Worlds Tournaments?

I think that with the team we took to Worlds, line calling was essential for us. Having the stats allows you to avoid having someone on or off for extended periods – even your best player becomes a liability when they are tired. Ensuring the players are aware of their roles within the team as the season progresses and dealing with any unrealistic expectations with regards to pitch time is all part of the management of the team, whilst

also having the flexibility to utilise a player who has stepped up during the tournament. The standard squad size now means that there are always players who get less pitch time, be it due to having specific roles, having less experience, having strengths that didn't suit a particular game, but the true professionals are the ones that stay involved on the sideline and are ready to go on and give it everything when they get those moments on the pitch. Every point counts.

Do you have any tips for coaches or teams that want to call lines?

There were some players who only played O, some that only played D, some that could play both, certain lines for specific zone D's, and all of these combinations were on The Clipboard. The sheet itself is a very personal thing, everyone would do it differently, but my sheets involved O players being in red, D players in

capital letters (so any player could be red and in capitals), listed from handlers down to deep receivers. Specific zone lines were listed at the bottom of the page for ease of picking them out at any time. As the pull was being taken, I knelt to indicate that nobody was to talk to me, and I noted with dots the next points' line both O and D in preparation. It looked like a very complex sheet but with a little practice it worked like a charm – the more you can have planned ahead of time, the more you can focus on the changing game as it unfolds.

[Do you have any suggestions for future coaches on nutrition during a tournament?](#)

Having a treat box handy – or a player with a treat box handy – is always a winner.

[What was the hardest part about being a coach?](#)

Building the confidence in some of the more inexperienced players and managing all those women. It really is true that coaching a women's team can be more about managing personalities to get the best out of them rather than shuttle running.

[What was the best thing about being a coach?](#)

Getting to work with some of the best young talent we've seen in the GB setup for many years, as well as a season of great memories and fun times... Oh, and my typhoon resistant clipboard.

[What is your opinion on the girls' performance?](#)

I think they did spectacularly well, with some standout individual performances from those that took their place on the team and ran with it – the tournament result in Japan perhaps didn't reflect how close they came to being a few places higher, but I know that being the true athletes



they are, that being so close will only spur them on to keep improving.

[A lot of people were surprised by the result of the Columbian Women's team. How did their tactics differ from North American teams?](#)

Surprised only in the sense that they appear to have come up the rankings so quickly, but they have been working on this for a long time, investing in experienced coaching and working hard. Their tactics revolved heavily around several key players, and although we and several other teams had some issues with their interpretation of the rules, nobody could deny their tenacity. In years to come I'm sure they will refine their play and become a very formidable team.

[Do you think the UK will ever go the way of the US where the team that wins at Nationals gets to represent the country at Worlds?](#)

I honestly don't see the GB Women's team going this way for the foreseeable future until our base has grown and our depth of experience has widened. I truly believe that a selected team may well have the better team on paper, but there are undeniable advantages to having a club team who have fought to get the spot, who know each other, train together regularly and who will fight for each other. I feel that the development of the women's scene may be hindered as there would be a temptation to try and pool a 'super team' during the international season, and the growth of other teams which we have seen recently would be stunted.

[What is your advice for women who want to reach an Elite level of Ultimate – how do you hit the right balance between training, throwing and fitness?](#)

The sport has undoubtedly become a sport for athletes so you need

to be in top physical condition, not only to ensure you can beat your opponents, but to ensure that your decision making during the game is not influenced by tiredness. Ensure you are doing the right stuff early on in the season to prevent injuries and burnout – listen to your fitness coaches and try to make as much of your training as relevant to ultimate as you can. Disc skills should not be an afterthought – work on your weaknesses over and over again, make it game relevant, be consistent and occasionally inspired – become a threat on the disc. A handler who can run and a deep cutter who can throw will be selected over a static handlers and a pure receiver every time.

[And finally, if you could pass on any key information to potential future coaches of women's Ultimate, what would it be?](#)

Be prepared. It won't be an easy ride, but it's worth it.

[Did you have to order special medicated high strength sunscreen to deal with Japan's UV?](#)

I certainly did, the invoice will be with you shortly.

(Interviewer's note: :S *gulp!)

[Were you worried that being a ginger might cause some lack of respect from the team?](#)

Not at all, everyone knows that with being ginger comes great responsibility and I feel the team embraced this and were willing to learn from the ginger wisdom.

There you have it! You've heard it here first, straight from the Donkey's mouth! Thanks to Carol for her honesty and wise words.

Interview by Jools Murray

WUGC - the Masters

My abiding memory of the two weeks I spent in Japan has to be the friendliness of the people, their 'nothing is too much trouble' attitude and seemingly genuine pride in the fact that we and hundreds of other athletes from across the globe had chosen Sakai to hold the most important tournament the sport has to offer. So, visit Japan – whether related to Ultimate or not – I am pretty convinced you'll have a great time. Now on to the Ultimate...

Our first game was in the sweltering mid-afternoon heat against Germany. Although they boasted a couple of well-known faces, they were not at the strength they probably could have been, and we ran out relatively comfortable winners with our D line getting the majority of the spoils. Our next was against France – they made us work hard, but once we pulled away the game was never in doubt.

Next up were Australia. Featuring a number of players familiar to the UK scene, it should have been a hard-fought, well-spirited game but it ended up a highly 'chippy' affair. As usual Tom Rogacki caused problems for GB all across the pitch – his game being so multi-faceted that shutting down one element of it merely meant he would focus on another. As tough and frustrating as he is to play against, he is clearly the dominant force in this division (he had 5 assists and 7 goals in this game alone). The hugely disappointing thing from the Australia game was that we felt that we had lost the game, rather than Australia winning it. Leading by three and having the disc, we should never have ended up on the losing side but the fact is when Australia pushed we didn't effectively deal with the pressure. Despite some great work from Phil Webb that kept us hanging in there (3 goals, 2 assists) we went down 16–14.

Canada were represented by a list of "who's who" in Ultimate from years past with big names such as Jeff Cruickshank, Mauro Ortiz and Mike Grant (albeit limited in playing time with an injury). They also brought a weirdly aggressive attitude to the game and to the sideline. There has been a lot written elsewhere about the alleged bad spirit and style of play from the Canadian Open team, and possibly it permeates through their whole system, but off the pitch immediately after the game they were fine. An intense game with some great Ultimate but (common theme alert) we lost it when it got close at the end. At 11–11 we turned them over, called a time-out and then promptly let them score three to win the game.

By this point we were pretty much playing for pride and/or a mathematical miracle. The game against Japan was enjoyable for all the reasons that makes Ultimate such a great sport. Fast paced, close game, mixture of defences and big throws with a quick short game – all played in a very highly competitive atmosphere (Japan were still in with a shot of winning it all) and the best of spirits with a focus on making the right, fair calls. Rob McGowan and Dave Bixler caused the Japanese defence a lot of problems – scoring six and three points respectively – benefiting from the pin point throwing of Sion Thaysen, Lewis Glover and Si Hill. We hung in there throughout, trading points, neither team establishing a comfortable lead until late in the second half when Japan got a couple of breaks to bury us.

We won all the remaining games (re-matches versus France and a couple of games versus New Zealand). It was great to see Sammy Neilson (competing in his 22nd world championship if you include Club



Worlds) still destroying teams in the wind with his array of throws and being the second leading stat scorer on the New Zealand team.

All said and done the finishing position of fifth at the end of the week was a reasonably fair representation of the team. We were likely only a couple of players away from a realistic shot at the title as very close games against Canada, Australia and Japan illustrate. However, at this level small weaknesses get magnified by quality

opposition, so fifth place is probably about right. One key benefit from playing Masters is finishing a day earlier than everyone else – ably led by Dan Berry and Dave Grayson, we promptly found a bar and forced them into an emergency run to the cash and carry to support the thirst we had built up over the week.

Rob McGowan

Women Masters



Kaela Jorgenson

Hirai Eri

USA v Japan Women's final WUGC © Neil Gardner 2012 nzsnap.com

The idea of a Women Masters division at the World Ultimate and Guts Championships (WUGC) 2012 began slowly, in January, with an email. Luckily it turns out us 'old' girls know how to work a computer, and a group of not particularly ancient ladies realised that this was the chance they were looking for.

The legend that is Anja Haman (who currently lives in Canada but has previously been a key member of the GB Women's squad in 2008) took it upon herself to get the required number of six teams to Japan. With the host nation, Canada, USA and Australia already confirmed, she looked towards Europe to find two

more teams. The rumours were that Germany had a team and Finland was talking about being close to having a team. WFDF lowered the age criteria for Women Masters to turning 30 in 2012, so while half of our players were 29 at the tournament, it meant GB had a team too.

The GB Women Masters (GBWM) had trials and trained primarily in Leicester's Victoria Park. The trials might not have been quite like those of the Canadian Women's Masters, with rumoured numbers of 80-90 people, but nevertheless, we had a team, and we trained together as much as possible. We challenged LeedsLeedsLeeds to a friendly, which

was really good for us, and I would like to thank Leeds for playing against us. Some of us played three aside in the torrential rain with hangovers, which cemented some great friendships. Some of us were recovering from injuries, but came and stood in the rain to watch. Some of us were nursing bad backs and hips, while another looked too sprightly to be the oldest person on the team. Some of us bonded with knitting, and once we almost succeeded in getting Clare to drink a cocktail. The team was shaping up.

The team travelled to Amsterdam for Windmill Wind-up. It was a great experience and everyone bonded together well, more so off the pitch than on it. We started with only 6 players for the first point of the first game (and scored), before the rest of the team turned up to help us take our first ever victory.

Finally we found ourselves in Japan. Going to WUGC in the inaugural year of the Women Masters division was really exciting. For most of the team it was a little bit last minute and we had to learn a few names upon arrival in Japan. The whole division was there to play Ultimate, and the atmosphere was absolutely brilliant. Other teams always stopped for a chat whenever they saw other lady masters around the fields.

We played a warm up game against Australia and as we ran some drills the heavens opened and our shiny new kit GB was thoroughly broken in. With half of our team turning up as the game began, we didn't really get into our stride for this game, and neither did the Australians. But we got our feet on the pitch and our hands on the disc, and I think we started to understand that although there were going to be no easy games in this division, we definitely were not going to give up without a fight.

Our first game was against Canada. We scored the first point and everyone breathed a sigh of relief. People started to play properly and it felt a bit like we'd all been holding back at training. Best of all, it was really fun. The rest of the games were all fantastic, although in some we could have probably scored a few more points. On Wednesday we got our first win beating Germany 17-10.

Our final group game was against Australia on the Thursday morning. It didn't matter if we won or lost, whatever the result, that very same afternoon we would have to play Australia again. We lost the first game but came out fighting in the second, and altogether more important, game. A win would have put us in the semi-final. It was fantastic, and so close. Down by two when the cap went on, the Aussies kicked harder and scored two to win the game. In the speeches, Nicole made lots of us cry (on both teams). It was probably one of the toughest fought and most spirited games I've ever played.

Having lost, we played Germany and won, to take fifth. It seems strange telling people that we came fifth out of six and still be really proud. The Ultimate was fantastic and actually getting a team together was a really big achievement. I feel like every member of the GBWM team has paved the way for a new division and there's no going back now.

Now the ball is rolling on the Women Masters division, it will soon be time to start thinking about European Beach in 2013, where it is hoped to run again. Given the strength and depth of European Ultimate, it would be great to get a team together to stamp GB on the division.

Felicity Perry

Geographical bonus

While Ultimate in the UK is a small but growing sport, in global terms GB is one of the “major players”.

Six nations entered teams in all five Ultimate divisions at WUGC2012 with hopes of an overall top 5 ranking and qualification with hosts Colombia for World Games in 2013. GB qualified in 5th behind Canada, USA, Japan and Australia with the Open team's stunning silver both the only medal and the only result that saw GB finish ahead of any of the top four nations. Conversely GB Women finished behind Colombia and Germany as well as the top 4.

This was a broadly similar set of results to 2008, so there is a set of questions to be asked:

- Why has GB not progressed, relative to the other nations?
- What were the factors that allowed those nations to stay ahead?
- How can we improve for 2016?
- Do we risk falling further behind? In particular does the selection of “all-star” teams for each division benefit both the short and long-term development of UK Ultimate overall and maximise results at Worlds?
- Would the US approach of having the best club team represent GB or the best team with a specific number of additions like Canada be more successful?
- What are the contributing factors to US and Canadian success and can we emulate them?

Let's be clear, all of the GB players worked very hard to prepare for Worlds and made many sacrifices. Each player will have spent around 20 hours a week training and playing Ultimate in preparation for the tournament. They had access to professional coaches and medical staff and were, to my mind at least, the best prepared GB teams ever. However, club



Ultimate is the primary development ground for a majority of players in the UK, and the disruption for two of every four years (over the EUC and WUGC cycle) means these preparations will have come at a cost.

As the 100 or so GB players – you'll have spotted them at Tour trying to look nonchalant while carrying a foam roller – were focussed on Slovenia and Japan, their club teammates will have suffered through reduced numbers at training, reduced training

sessions, and fewer tournaments. The two “best” elite club programmes in the UK, Clapham and Iceni, will have had two years away from playing in the US, as a significant proportion of their squad prioritised their limited financial resources on GB. If these clubs are most often used by others to assess their progress and development but have, however unintentionally, set the bar lower for themselves, there will be a detrimental effect on everyone else.

Most of the top clubs will have lost their better players, who are often an essential element of the leadership, to GB. This will primarily hinder the development of a club's non-GB players – often the next generation of stars – although it will also impact the development of the club as a whole and have repeated knock-on effects on the competitiveness of UK tournaments. The accomplishments of DED this year demonstrate how a club that prepares for and prioritises Tour will do better than its peers. Diminished competitiveness means that the top teams/players play many games where the final result is a foregone conclusion and so there is not significant pressure. The ability to perform under pressure is what defines the best teams at club and international level.

While several UK club programmes have shown they are capable of converting raw talent into Elite players, very few seriously aim at going from Elite to World Class. Indeed it is evident that the majority of GB programmes that aimed to achieve a World Class level in Japan were unsuccessful, given the lack of medals. Yes, several important steps were taken, and the experience can provide further learning, but it is now for our club teams to utilise the knowledge GB teams gained in this cycle and supplement it with further international competition.

There are obvious differences in the talent pool available in the UK compared to North America e.g. Toronto has as many registered players as the UK, and so it is clearly tempting given the relatively short distances to create an all-star team. However, without the extended familiarity and trust built over years of training with your teammates week in week out, and further developed through the experience of nerve-shredding competition, will that ever be enough



to offer a realistic chance of defeating our international peers? For comparative purposes it's worth noting that Team USA (Revolver and Fury) have a long history as club teams including the experience of several UPA series and are WUCC holders.

Some of the advantages of this experience may be less obvious when considering reasons for success. For example, strong personalities will have had time to crash into each other and either reconcile or move on, so that issues don't resurface at a crucial time (or at least less often). Individual roles within a team will have been established over years and provide a framework within which the athlete is familiar operating, which is crucial in helping a 27 person squad

stay focussed during a tournament week. Familiarity with demanding situations educates teams on the value of sharing collective responsibility for highs and lows and reduces the pressure on individuals to deliver. This familiarity also creates a supportive environment within which good spirit can flourish.

As Josh Wardle highlighted in last year's Ultimatum, the athleticism that is prevalent even in "social teams" in North America is not matched by many UK teams. If your team cannot compete with your opponents athletically, then you are not even playing the same game, so you will never win. Following an Ultimate specific training programme will not make you

the best player overnight, but given time it will allow you to compete with the best, and at that point it comes down to teamwork. Once you can get 15 good athletes to training twice a week you have a good chance of being a more successful team in the long run. This approach will become more feasible as the number of players in the UK grows, and in particular as the balance moves away from the current university student bias (who economically gravitate to the south following graduation).

The competitive advantage the Tour gives UK Ultimate has propelled GB to the forefront of the European scene. No other country in Europe can boast a similar level of competition and that is acknowledged by the European teams that have played at London Calling in the past few years. It was only this year, while missing their GB open and masters players (and the related reduction in preparation), that the UKs top club teams were unable to defeat our continental visitors*. Similarly, despite several of their best players playing for GB, Clapham's defeat of GB and narrow loss to Sweden at Tour 1, and Iceni Savage's victory over Germany, gives an indication that a UK all-star team is not currently significantly better than a representative club team. This is perhaps the best illustration that a focus on club Ultimate at an elite level would be more beneficial in the long run.

The addition of the best European teams to Tour 1 has been an important step in improving the standard of competition available to UK teams, but there remains a significant gap to that available in North America. It is worth noting the distance travelled and money spent by North American teams to attend those tournaments far outstrips what the top UK teams manage at present. These tournaments have and will continue to

welcome UK teams with open arms, offer massively reduced entry fees, and often provide free lodging, food and (generally drinkable) beer. They are available every year and also provide a better playing experience than most "Worlds" tournaments because the level of competition is higher. Ragnarok's plans to attend the USUA Open in 2013 suggests that the cream of Europe have started to recognise the value of taking this approach, and will progress quicker than UK teams that do not.

The success of the Colombian teams at Under-20 Worlds this year was founded on training together three times a week (with fitness sessions on top). This allowed them to compete with (and defeat in the case of the Junior Women) the USA, and sets the standard for what will be required for Worlds success in four years. Without a similar, nationally funded programme, GB's best bet of progression is for their existing club teams to emulate this approach in the lead up to XEUCF in 2013 and World Clubs in 2014.

Are you focussing on the right things to become a better team/player?

Things that help

- Year round strength and conditioning programme
- Playing international teams as often as possible
- Having a coach to plan and run training

Things that do not

- Sublimated kit
- Using old discs for training
- Very large shorts

Jaimie Cross

*In both 2010 and 2011, Tour 1 finals were Clapham vs Chevron, despite international participation.

U20s at WUJC



Four GB junior teams competed in the Junior Worlds in Dublin last August, including the U20 Open team. The championships were a real success for team GB, finishing sixth overall, and I hope many of you followed the teams' progress in Dublin at the time!

The starting point of our journey to the World Junior Ultimate Championship (WJUC) was in the closing days of the European Youth Ultimate Championship 2011 in Poland, where the GB junior U20s staff sat down to decide the build up plan to Worlds. What came from that meeting was the creation of regional skills days. These were designed to not only increase the pool of players for the national squads, but also increase the general level of junior ultimate across the country. So after days of preparation and many emails on returning to English soil, the first skills day took place in late October in Guildford. Little did we know that those ice-cold, windy days would be the best preparation for our summer Ultimate in Dublin. Those sessions showed us the incredible junior talent from Exeter to North Yorkshire.

On our return from a winter break, we invited the most promising players to

attend a two-day trial in Stoke-on-Trent, where they were put through their paces and given a chance to show off their abilities. Here we focused on potential, attitude and willingness to learn – at least as much as ability and fitness.

We went away from that weekend with some tough decisions, but in the end we invited 30 players to join the training squad for Worlds. This included a handful of U17 players (one as young as 14) who, in the end, decided to play for the U17 squad and thus form a solid base for the U20s team for years to come. Over three weekends in sunny Warwick, Jools Murray, Nick "Stato" Sampson and Mark Penny helped forge one team. Evening team building activities complimented hard trainings, and the players were sent away with homework to complete between sessions of a tough fitness programme and regular throwing.

By the end of those three weeks there were 25 players ready to take on the World in Dublin, but only 20 could be on the team. The impossible choices were made and a team was invited back to Warwick for one final training, with some past GB juniors returning to support them.

At 4am on Saturday 11 of August, coaches left Gatwick and Exeter to travel up and down the country picking up the U20 Open players and staff, and the members of the other junior squads. We arrived in Dublin just in time for Saturday dinner and used the rest of the time to settle in. On Sunday, as we headed out to the opening ceremony in our brand new Lookfly kit, we felt the party atmosphere building. At the entrance of the University Park we were welcomed by the other teams – a few even cheerfully sang our own GB chants to us. We waited in this area until we were called onto the show pitch, to be cheered by the gathered crowd. The opening ceremony began with a welcome speech by the TD and a performance by a local Irish dancing group, followed by some unplanned flag running and gymnastics. After the show game between Israel and Columbia we returned to our accommodation to get a good night's sleep before our first game.

Player's Account – Cameron Burgess, GB Junior Open U20s #43

The World Junior Championships; where to start?

This was my first year of involvement with the GB junior program, so it was a very nervous time for me. I went along to trials on a cold morning in Stoke with few expectations and got selected for the training squad. It took three more sessions before the final Worlds team was announced and, after waiting patiently (impatiently) for the team list, I found out that I had made the team. The only thing left to do was to hit fitness, and hit fitness hard!

Before I knew it, I was boarding the coach along with my teammates heading to Ireland. The first thing we did on arrival was get our kit – this was awesome, as it really sunk in that I was representing my country. The place we stayed became an Athlete's Village: Ultimate completely took over Dublin City University! It was so cool to be surrounded by players from all different countries, and getting to talk to them about their experiences and journey to get where they were. We had a day where we practised against the GB U17 squad to test all of our



Italy v GB WJUC © Graham Bailey 2012 grahambaileyphotography.com

skills and basically get disc in hand before the competition began, but it was only a light training as we didn't want to tire ourselves out.

Then came our first game against Ireland. As hosts of the tournament, Ireland had massive support from the crowd. When I stood on the line ready to play some defence, I was so nervous, and I'm sure I wasn't the only one! But with fantastic help from teammates and coach support (even the physio became our biggest fan!) we managed to defeat Ireland 17-7; a great start to my "international career". In our pool we played some of the great teams in Junior Ultimate such as Canada and Sweden; we also got to see the up and coming talent in Latvia, which was amazing. As the days went on and the ice baths got longer and longer, our games only got tougher and tougher.

My favourite game of the tournament was against Japan. The determination and desire of both teams lead to a

great game with a really close score line. It went to sudden death, but we ended up winning after turning over Japan after their time-out in front of our endzone. We ended up coming sixth overall – I was knackered, but so proud of how far our team had come.

It was the best week I have ever had, and the memories and banter we shared will stay with me for a long time yet. I made some really good friends in my teammates who I still see and keep in contact with.

It was especially thanks to Jools and Stato for coaching us along the way, developing us as players and people. A huge thanks also goes to Joe Wyatt for managing the team and making everything we did possible. I wish I could do it all over again!

The 2012 WJUC in Dublin was one of the most exciting weeks for Junior Ultimate with top quality Ultimate produced from 20 countries around the world, and to be a part of it



was an amazing experience. The unpredictable Irish weather brought the best out of teams who pulled together to play in sweltering heat one day, and torrential rain and wind the next (play was stopped for an afternoon after a tree fell over!). The whole tournament displayed a very high level of Ultimate and Spirit from all teams, which shows a great future for the sport.

Player's Account – Will Carter, GB Juniors Open U20 #83

WJUC was a real success for team GB. Our opening game against the hosts was a fantastic way to get ourselves going in the tournament. This game showed us that even the 'easier' games had to be fought for, with every point being played at full intensity. After a close first half we stepped up our game and kept a cool head, so that in the second half we maintained possession on offence and applied difficult pressure on defence to take the game 17-7. Another memorable game was our 15-13 pool loss against

Sweden. This was an immensely close game in which both teams went ahead at times; until the end there was never more than one point separating us. Possession was the key to winning each and every point, and both teams played excellent offence and defence – with several long lasting points, the result was always in the balance. Even though we lost the game, we came away with our heads held high, knowing that we made Sweden work exceedingly hard for the win. From that game we really came together as a team, knowing we had an amazing offence and defence that could take on any team in the tournament.

Throughout the week we grew as a team off the pitch as well as on it, and we used our evenings to get to know each other better and to play games. These evenings were a good laugh, but were also a great way to bond as a team so that when times got tough on pitch we could play together as the strongest unit possible – this really showed in our sudden death victories against Italy and Japan – games where we had to dig deep to beat highly professional teams.

The whole experience of Worlds, and the year leading up to it, was nothing short of exceptional, from intense training weekends to post game ice baths. However, what I shall remember most is the thrill of being involved in the highest level of Ultimate with teams from all across the world.

Coming year

As the dust settles and we all get a well-deserved break from the world of Junior Ultimate, we are thinking "what's next?". Finally, this is a good chance to publicly thank Jools and Stato for their many years of help to the GB Juniors.

*Joe Wyatt
GB juniors U20 Open Manger*

Inside eye from WJUC

To be perfectly honest, the World Junior Ultimate Championship (WJUC) turned out to be soooooo much bigger than I had ever imagined. Somewhere in my head I had expected a regular tournament – just longer and with more people. Boy, was I wrong!

Think of every question, no matter how small, you have ever asked anyone (teammates, opponents, staff) over the course of a tournament weekend. Now imagine asking each of those questions, every day, for a week. And it's not just you; it's everyone. All 1,200 players, coaches and parents each asking every possible question on a daily basis to the volunteers and tournament directors.

Ok, I might be exaggerating a little bit but please believe me, that's how it felt. And that was just the public side of things! Behind closed doors there was so much more going on.

Accommodation, security, catering, pitch inspections, schedule re-writes, supply runs, anonymous text messages, food vendors, pacifying locals, WFD and EUF meetings, liaising with police and then being grateful when someone hands you lunch so you can do it all again in the afternoon.

Looking back on it now, it is only the photos and videos that convince me there was Ultimate being played that week. I would honestly say I paid attention to about 20 points in the entire week and most of them were while waiting to present the medals at the finals.

For me the week was a blur of colour as I cycled between our two (later three) sites to check that things were running smoothly for players and volunteers. It was an amazing sight to see so many people running around and so much action taking place but only snippets of it stick in the mind:

- The Canadian women encouraging me to repaint the sideline while play was at the other end of the field, "It's ok, we're going to D them up there".
- The German women adjusting their cool down so they could get in single file and give me a high-five as they went past.
- Asking local teenagers where they got the disc from and being told with a happy smile that it was a present from the Italian lads they'd been hanging out with all week.
- Chatting with two Colombian boys before it all began using my ten words of Spanish and their ten words of English.

Despite all the stress, confusion and anxiety; despite a nervous breakdown; despite the requests from coaches and lack of co-operation from the weather – it's moments like these that make me immensely glad we did it.

1,200 people came to Dublin for an Ultimate competition. We got to show off our sport to locals, on national TV and radio and, as far as I know, all the players went away happy. That's what really matters to me and the rest of the organising committee: the players were the most important people at the competition. For them to leave with good memories of their time in Dublin and of their experience playing international Ultimate is a credit to the fabulous work done by everyone involved in the event. Regardless of what went on behind the scenes or the demands that were placed upon the organisers, the players got out to play every day and had ample opportunity to mix with fellow young Ultimate players from around the world. That, for us, was the biggest goal of the competition. Mission accomplished.

Throughout everything that happened during the week, the crew of volunteers and staff were amazing. Questions were answered with smiles, directions were given helpfully and solutions found to problems. I tried



to show my gratitude to everyone whenever I could with what became my catch phrase, "Thanks for making it work". Without all of them the event would not have been possible and to them all I will be eternally grateful.

Hosting a major international competition is not an easy undertaking, nor is it one to be afraid of. We were not professionals and nor did we aim to be. We tried to provide the services and facilities that we would want as players and with indifference to some factors outside our control, we are happy with what we provided to our participants.

The accommodation, dining hall and fields were all within walking distance of each other. Catering were finally convinced that even though we had listed 1,200 people, they should be prepared to feed 1,500, as everyone will eat extra. Each and every pitch had ample warm up space around it so no fighting with six other teams for one small patch of grass.

There were some things we got wrong. Pitches couldn't stand up to the weather and the emergency pitch area wasn't big enough. Line markings weren't refreshed often or quick enough. Party facilities (duration) weren't good enough on Friday and Saturday night and changes to the schedule were poorly communicated to teams.

None of us try to hide the negatives but we feel that the positives won out. Given the positive responses we have received from participants since they

left Dublin, we get the impression that others feel the same way.

If you are considering hosting an event, or have the chance to get involved in organising one, I cannot recommend it enough. I would be happy to share more of our experiences but will offer this advice above everything else – it's going to be bigger than you expect.

Dominick Smyth

My first tournament
Luke Richards, aged 13

During my weekend in the sun, the Arctic Ultimate Frisbee team got driven to Cheltenham in Gloucestershire for a Frisbee tournament on 30 July 2012.

We were split into four teams: Arctic 1, Arctic 2, Arctic 3 and Arctic 4. The more experienced players were in Arctic 1, 2 and 3, and the newer ones were in Arctic 4. I was in Arctic 4.

On Saturday we scored only two points and lost our matches because we were playing more experienced people. They were very quick, but we got better throughout the day. The weather was sunny but windy, and when we threw the Frisbee in the wind it would go off our target.

Sunday was better because there was less wind and more sun, so Arctic 4 was in with a chance of winning. In the last match we showed the other team what we are made of by scoring 9-5, 9 points to us and 5 to the other team, so we won the last match before we went home.

Luke Richards

Herd @ Mixed Nationals

2012 saw Mixed Nationals being played alongside the Open and Women's Nationals for the first time. Having played for Thundering Herd since 2006 (and with a Mixed Ultimate career seemingly spanning millennia), I'm a big believer that the Mixed format of the game is what sets us apart from most other sports and I was excited to see Mixed at the UK's top tournament.

As a new tournament in the Mixed calendar, it was hard to predict the quality and number of teams that would turn up. Huge kudos to all those at UK Ultimate and UK Nationals who took a leap of faith to make the tournament happen, and for the eight top Mixed teams who took part.

The 2012 Mixed Tour had been a good one for Herd, getting two teams into the top ten. This depth gave us an advantage for covering the gaps left by our players in the top Open and Women's teams, and it was fun to mix our first and second team players for the first time in the season. We have always developed our strong Herd 2 players for European and Worlds squads, and Mixed Nationals was a great opportunity to do the same on home soil.

The eight teams were split into two pools. In pool A (an ironic name for a group consisting solely of teams beginning with the letter B), it was a battle between Bristol, BAF and The Brown to follow Bears to the semi-finals – with lowest seed The Brown taking two scalps to make it to the top four. Thundering Herd started in pool B with ABH, MXU and Limited Release. Despite winning all pool games with an average victory margin of 7 points we twice went down 0-3 before mounting a comeback. There were certainly no worries that the first Mixed Nationals would be a walkover! As Ltd appeared to tire throughout



the day, MXU won the battle of the acronyms to take the fourth semi-final berth.

As well as playing with new players, it was great to meet new opposition from the Mixed Tour. It's hard to miss the MXU shirts, but it was the first time I had played them in several years. We also came up against ABH and Limited Release – two Herd rivals from the past, with some talented young players suggesting a bright future. I hope Mixed Nationals acts as a catalyst for developing more top Mixed teams for 2013 and beyond.

Our semi-final was against the surprise package of the tournament, The Brown. Some late night arrangements had put us on the show pitch for Sunday morning, and we were excited to show off to the Open and Women players as they enjoyed breakfast. We also had the pleasure of being live-streamed, with

commentary from the world famous Steve and Tom (although they may have over-slept and missed the first half!). When my mum can watch me in a Mixed Ultimate semi-final with live commentary on the web, you feel the game has come a long way.

The Brown brought their high-energy game from Saturday, and it was only towards the end of the match that our experience and fitness pulled us through. In turn, this drained our smaller-than-usual squad and we weren't able to put up much of a fight against a consistently superb Bears team in the final. We were delighted to be involved in the first UKU Nationals Mixed medal ceremony alongside the likes of Iceni, and next year we hope to go one better by taking the gold.

It was a big decision to schedule Mixed Nationals alongside Open and Women's, but with over 50 teams competing in Mixed Tour in 2012, it's

right that we showcase the best of the game. Now the UK Ultimate scene has seen the Mixed division represented at Nationals, I predict a much greater number of players aiming to represent their Mixed clubs at the highest level next year.

I am also sure that adding another division – and another 200 players – to the top end of UK Ultimate will benefit GB performances at future Euro and World Championships. With Mixed Nationals firmly on the map for next year, the Herd know we'll be back again – and with more players keen to play at the top level of Mixed Ultimate.

Jon "Kos" Brooks

The rise of JR

Say what you like about Jest Ridisculous, but you can always spot which pitch we're playing on at Tour. We've taken sublimation and public decency to new heights, and we've risen from the depths of C Tour to consistently challenge the A Tour in our continuing quest to "be awesome without training".

Let's step back for a moment and work out just where this group of pink-shirted misfits originated. The club was formed for the 2010 Tour season, coalescing around co-captains Ben Corby and George Hudson. Drawing former players from their local college team in Bedford (Ridisculous) they combined this force with the cream of Leicester University's Jesters to create "Jest Ridisculous", or "Team JR" as it quickly became known. This team was young, highly athletic and committed to a style of Ultimate that had grown out of a small group of self-coached college students. That included players who had perfected chicken wings before forehands and who didn't approach the Tour with the solemnity and gravitas of players schooled by established clubs.

Initially garbing ourselves in simple pink jerseys, we started from the bottom of the Tour with a clear intention to climb all the way to the top. Despite often turning up with scratch squads (one memorable Tour saw us qualifying from C to B Tour with only eight players), we were a hardened core of athletes who managed to excel in the hard and fast world of the UK Tour. We never trained as a team, relying entirely on our personal friendships and on our natural ability to 'turn it up to eleven'. By the end of our first year, we found ourselves around the middle of B Tour, with an eye on something more.

The second season saw the birth of our defining feature as far as most



of UK Ultimate is concerned: that kit. Creating a mascot in the form of Viola, the lithe lady harlequin, we went to town with sublimation, creating a pink and black kit that is pure jersey marmite. People either love it or loathe it, but either way, the lads from JR don't care. It's a statement to be backed up on the pitch.

Recruiting a few extra players from their respective bases, the captains created a larger and more rounded squad, which had tactical experience as well as that taste of top flight competition. Still committed to not training together, we displayed an unbelievable level of cohesion, with opponents complimenting our "obviously drilled plays". Starting slow in almost every game, our natural athleticism and will-to-win created some truly 'ridisculous' comebacks, as players amped themselves up and fired off intense defence and flair-filled offence. This confidence

on the pitch was matched off it, with the team spending most of our free time playing mac line shirtless and generally swanning around like we owned the place. By Tour 3 in 2011, we were battling in the A Tour, though that first taste was somewhat bittersweet and we ended the season in the upper reaches of B Tour (We won't mention the unfortunate foray into Indoors, as a couple of club birthdays on Regionals weekend saw us playing against hangovers as well as other teams and failing even to qualify for Nationals).

Not content to rest upon our laurels, the 2012 season saw the club expand further as we tackled the Mixed Tour. Once again relying on our now proven approach of playing with friends rather than drilling, the squad pulled itself up to the middle of the Tour and has high hopes for following the pattern of the Open team and moving up in 2013.

The Open team started the 2012 Tour in B Tour, and then spent the season battling in the promotion/relegation zone between divisions, finishing the season 17th in the country. This season hasn't seen as many new faces joining as the previous one, which has allowed the club to bond more and develop additional structures on which to place its by now deeply ingrained tactic of just 'being more awesome' when things get tough. We still use chicken wings and scoobers to keep things less predictable, and we'll never look off a good hammer assist when the crowd is watching. This blend of showmanship, talent and pitch presence will hopefully mean JR will continue to become more of a feature in the UK scene. I urge you to seek us out at the next Tour, if only to marvel at how majestic those shorts look.

Chris Martin

British Thumber Time



On 22 August 1485 the Battle of Bosworth occurred just outside of Leicester. Over 15,000 people did battle and the House of Lancaster defeated the House of York, and in doing so they changed the shape of the kingdom forever.

On 26 August 2011 British Thumber Time happened just outside Leicester. Hundreds of people did battle and eventually the House of Warwick (Bears) defeated the House of Durham (Ashes), and in doing so they changed the face of social Ultimate tournaments in the kingdom forever.

In June 2012 it happened again. This is an attempt to explain just how bloody marvellous it was.

In late 2010 some chaps in Leicester were bemoaning what they saw as an 'if you build it they will come' mentality in UK tournaments. They longed for the ceremony and showmanship of the international spectacles which made this nation great. They decided to create something new, imagining a cultural event more festival than sport tournament where learned scholars would carouse in bohemian splendour arm in arm with the common man. There would be music, dancing, and most of all laughter.

And so it came to pass that British Thumber Time was born. Their attempts at igniting intrigue among the Ultimate community through Britdisc sparked vocal outrage and support in equal measure, but their goal was certainly achieved. For three days and nights, teams from around the country danced like they were possessed by the spirits of the boogie, drank gallons of port like it was

sweetest ambrosia, and occasionally played surprisingly hard fought games of competitive loose Mixed Ultimate. Things definitely didn't go exactly as planned but everyone had a great time and tales from the event quickly slipped into urban legend and 'you had to be there' whispers. Stories like 'The Building That Fell Down', 'The Bath' and 'The Vuvuzela Incident' are all now permanently imprinted in the collective memory of the people who shared that glorious weekend.

In the swirling maelstrom of patriotism that was the one-two punch of the Jubilee and the summer Olympics, they knew that they had a moral obligation to bring British Thumber Time back for 2012. With Nationals taking up the August Bank Holiday, there were initial concerns about finding a decent long weekend. Thankfully her Majesty stepped in to help and provided a four day Bank holiday in which to host the summer spectacular.

'The Diamond Edition' as it became known was designed to be the same, only more so. That meant more teams, more buildings (which all thankfully remained standing), more food, more port, more music, more superb merchandise, more free stuff, and more great memories. In every one of these regards they were successful.

The TDs' commitment to Ultimate innovation continued as well. They constructed the vast Teamocologicalator, a curious mixture of pipes, gears and cocktail stirrers powered by a blend of port and moustache wax. This machine selected their teams from the range of bids they received, ensuring the perfect mix of raw talent on and off the field. They didn't stop there though, and also recruited a 'Tournament Tailor' to provide sartorial advice in the lead up to the event and to ensure that every player

received the perfect tournament shirt as part of their player pack.

All this preparation meant that the 300 or so players who descended on that rural Leicestershire idyll this year received an event unparalleled in both elegance and banter. The evenings were filled with as much hilarity and feats of derring do as one would expect at such an event, with the party not ending until the sun had risen almost every day. Friday night's pub quiz (which had started five days earlier through Facebook) was hotly contested, though the sheer volume of everyone preparing for their first night of festivities did hinder the MC somewhat. That night quickly descended into a beer pong extravaganza, with four tables running outside the clubhouse as teams warmed up for the tournament the following night.

This 'festival of British Ultimate' as they now dubbed it gave every team ten games of Ultimate which was played in the full spectrum of UK weather conditions, from searing heat to unrelenting downpours. The games were played to a very high standard, and one Saturday pool almost came down to 'ability to sing the national anthem' as the decider in a three-way tie. That night the whole clubhouse shook as hundreds of people pogo'd and peg'd to two boisterous bands. The beer pong tournament which followed this came down to a three table final, and the whole dance floor found itself wrapped in toilet roll for some reason as people threw shapes into the wee small hours.

The sun rose on Sunday to a number of very sore heads, and the weather took a real turn for the moist. Every team took to the poor conditions with great aplomb, realising that the ground conditions were now perfect for completely safe stupendous lay

outs; some games on Sunday became minor acrobatic displays as a result.

As people went into the fancy dress portion of the weekend the final was still completely open, with any of the top four teams (Dazed & Confused, Lemmings, Some Team, JR) perfectly capable of achieving victory. The night was blighted with some security problems, but that didn't stop every last person there from pushing their livers and sanity to the limit on Sunday night, with hundreds of people dancing and sharing stories right through to the 4am Jagerstorm, which saw hundreds of Jagerbombs appearing on the bar which through some form of party magic also generated hundreds of pounds in donations to the Madventure Ultimate coaching programme in Ghana.

Monday saw Dazed & Confused emerge the clear victors of the tournament after two decisive games against equally strong opposition. Their final against Lemmings saw both teams producing some awe inspiring plays which would have been as at home on the Tour stage as they were in this curious little corner of the sport. Spirit was resoundingly won by the Carlisle Laker for their unrelentingly chipper and fair approach to every game they played in, however there was a consistently high level of Spirit from every team. This was no doubt brought about by the palpable sense of community and mutual adventure which pervaded the weekend.

So ended another chapter in the story of this weird and wonderful corner of the UK Ultimate scene. With more lessons learnt this year and even more stories created, I'm certain they'll be back for another round in 2013.

Chris Martin

On the savage side

Playing savage with Icen

In the five years I've played for Icen, I've come to learn that no two seasons are ever the same. This rings particularly true when you consider the different teams that have represented in Women's Tour this year. Throwing a savage Icen team into the mix simply added another twist to the 2012 season. Having been asked about our thinking several times already, writing this article seemed like a way to explain our approach to the season, how things panned out and what we learned.

Last winter, as we started to consider the 2012 season and team selection, co-captain Bex Forth and I discussed squad size at length. We concluded that it would be wise to err on the side of caution and pick 22-24 players, depending on what we saw at trials. When we actually came to select the team, however, we ran up to 24, 25, then 26 players; even then making some very difficult decisions.

So, what do you do when all 26 can make Tour 1? While a large squad improves numbers at training, pitch time is a tricky thing to negotiate under any circumstances. With 26 players, people would be lucky to play one in three points! It subsequently becomes hard for an individual to maintain focus; muscles and hands get cold when you spend too long on the sideline; and it doesn't have a spectacular impact on flow and on-pitch continuity.

Splitting into two teams has been the answer for other clubs with large squads. We felt that regardless of the method to split the team (evenly or 1st/2nd team) the two teams would be competing against each other rather than supporting each other. This wouldn't work for Icen.

So where do you go from there? To give credit where it's due, it was Bex who suggested the idea of a savage team. The benefits seemed obvious:

plenty of pitch time and thus maximal touches of the disc in competition, creating an amazing sense of team among that small number of players and forging confident connections to carry through into the rest of the season. Plus encouraging whole Icen unity and respect – the bigger team (lovingly christened Icen "Full Fat") was encouraged to support the Savage team during any non-playing time. Finally, there aren't many better incentives for doing fitness than knowing that you might be playing a Tour event without a sub!

Despite all this, I really wasn't sure how the team would receive our idea. Fortunately, everyone was excited by the prospect and we even had some volunteers to play savage at Tour 1. As Tour approached, however, there were some unfortunate turns of events. My right hand was diagnosed as broken after a collision at training, Bex and Rowan Pearson, a now veteran offensive handler, were forced to rest bad injuries and so on. After a three-day tournament in Copenhagen the weekend before, we had dropped to 20 players – that is, thirteen and seven, with some niggling injuries in there to boot. With only a few days to go, we were beginning to wonder if we could field two teams. When we warned the team of this, though, the disappointment was almost palpable (not to mention that dropping out at short notice is very poor form, especially since we'd put ourselves in that position in the first place).

Depending on which Icen players you talked to, you'd get some mixed reviews after Tour 1. The 7.5 players on Savage (that's 7 full players and me playing left-handed) attacked the weekend with no holds barred, quickly learning how different savage can be, both on and off field. I've never seen such fighting spirit. Every one of us had to be a play-maker and take the shots. Our warm-ups were short, dynamic and involved remaining in



the shade as long as possible, with carefully co-ordinated toilet breaks. There was no drilling and minimal running before games to save as much energy as possible. Before each game, we established team water and sweet stations at each end zone on our home sideline so that we could speedily take on water and sugar between points (much of which was provided by Full Fat players). It was hugely important to use every single time-out, even if we were feeling good at the time and felt that we had the momentum. We also considered the things on pitch that would save our energy, for example, team D and efficient O. Furthermore, we discussed how to focus our effort to conserve it in the long run, such as, working really hard on the mark and hounding the opposition handlers to deny easy resets. Even doubling our efforts on running down the pull to force a D as close to our scoring end zone as possible and save our strength after the turn.

After a number of hard-fought games, including a surprise win against the German national team in our pool game, we finished the weekend in third place. Having entered the tournament with a "nothing to lose" attitude and next to no expectations, I think it made our Monday-morning aches seem almost worthwhile!

While all this was going on, we were somewhat oblivious to the happenings on Full Fat. Due to the Savage team's result against the Germans in the pool

round, our larger counterpart met the Germans in their quarter-final. Germany came out on top, leaving Full Fat to battle it out against Bristol in the 5-6 game. I don't think any of us had been prepared for the Savage team to finish three places ahead of the full team!

As Tour 2 came around, there was still great desire to be on the Savage team (with one player wanting to do it again!). Despite the windy conditions, Lauren Bowman set the bar high with gutsy hucks and last-ditch layout grabs, and the team fought hard all weekend, only narrowly losing to Bristol and Leeds to finish fifth. Going into Tour 3, I think we were all pleasantly surprised to see Icen Savage in second position in the overall Tour standings.

Although the Savage team retired for Tour 3, we took the lessons from our savage experience into the remainder of our season. Our mantra thereafter was: on pitch play like you're Full Fat; off pitch treat yourself like you're Savage. The whole team certainly showed what this meant at EUCF in Frankfurt, all the way up to the sudden-death point of the final. I think it's fair to say that we took a risk in our approach to Tour this season, but I'm sure it paid off, and I for one would do it all again, post-Savage blisters and all.

Angie Wilkinson

The DED experience



Watching the Open final at Nationals 2011, the concept of DED Open was floated. Following successful indoor and mixed outings, a number of players found themselves keen to try to repeat this in the Open Tour.

Initially it was unclear where DED would be aiming their sights for this season. With the ever-increasing standard of Tour and Ka-pow! and Wessex both having the pull of bigger names, we knew a lot would depend on who we could convince to come to trial with us and how well we could bring things together in a short space of time. Thankfully, the promise of monthly sessions widened the net for our player base and we recruited a squad we thought should be playing A Tour; the only worry being that this didn't leave us many sessions to get used to playing together. So, numerous hours of ever-productive Ultimate player meetings later, we had our playing system worked out,

and it was pretty simple (probably could have done it in ten minutes). We were also determined to do this in the manner that we had approached DED's previous outings, with ethos becoming a large part of the selection process.

Coming into Tour with a less than convincing display at our own one-day invite tournament and a more promising one at the Fog Lane Cup, we were grateful to the powers that be for giving us a starting spot within the A Tour, and hoped to prove them right. A combination of getting used to and sticking to the patterns, along with some outrageous individual play saw us surprise everyone (including ourselves) to finish as the 3rd UK club team at the end of Tour 1, and spirit winners to boot. This could hardly have gone any better!

I should probably mention at this point that we suffered less than other teams

at Tour this year in terms of losing players to the various GB squads, with precisely zero players on our books representing our country (big congrats to the GB guys by the way – awesome job!).

The rest of the Tour season wasn't quite as smooth, with lack of belief against the established superpowers repeatedly seeing us losing touch at key moments and not fighting hard enough to get it back. That said, we hung around the top, ending the Tour on a semi-final against Fire which also acted to place the two teams overall in the Tour rankings. We were disappointed to lose it in a tight game, but Fire were well organised and deserved to win. Despite that loss, ending the Tour in fourth position overall exceeded our initial expectations.

Nationals, however, didn't quite go to plan. Having beaten Brighton

throughout the season, they showed something new at Nationals and dispatched us with ease – we weren't playing our best, but they were hot and went on to take the well-deserved Euros spot! Our inconsistency showed, while our opposition were bolstered by their returning GB heroes and hitting their stride. Our training had waned with the busy summer schedule, and this all showed. We had some great games but came out on the wrong side of the key ones, leaving us out of the qualification run. Finishing 10th was a disappointing performance to end the season on, but a chance for the team to really show its character by sticking together through our first adversity.

For DED it was a great season with some key lessons learnt, and a squad hungry for more. Roll on 2013!

Alex Rogers



After the most successful season in our club's history, we wanted to reflect on how Nice Bristols were finally able to arrive in the top two.

The club was formed in 2003 by Sue Pioli and Lucy Byrne; founded on good spirit and a supportive, egalitarian atmosphere. It quickly established itself as a top ranking UK women's team with a high skill level, boasting a number of GB players and has remained that way ever since. Sue Pioli retired as captain in 2009 and over the past three years the club has lost nearly all of its original, influential and experienced players – mostly to motherhood – but they remain connected to the club through close friendships, forged through years of playing together (and for an ample supply of cheap babysitters!).

With only a few exceptions, Nice Bristols has finished either 3rd or 4th in all Tours and at Nationals since 2004, until now. This year, we finished 2nd both in Tour and at Nationals, qualifying for the European Ultimate Championship Finals (EUCF) for the first time.

So what's changed? The short answer is no one quantifiable thing. The long answer is lots of small things, coming together at the right time and enabling us to win key games this year that we would have narrowly lost last year.

We can do better

Despite losing to the usual suspects (Leeds and SYC) in the pools and quarters respectively, we had a reasonable start to Tour 1 until we reached our last game on the Sunday.

We found ourselves in the 5/6 play-off against Icení "Full Fat". We never expected to face Icení at this level of the tournament, and in retrospect, it changed how we went into the game. We had everything to win and they had everything to lose. Much to everyone's delight, we relaxed into the game and won, finishing 5th. A good enough finish at Tour 1 you might think, however, our celebrations were cut short by an understated Irish voice declaring, "F**k this 5th place sh*t, we're a top 4 team".

We were all pretty taken aback and nervously laughed off this ridiculous notion. However, this planted the seed of an idea that we could and should expect more from ourselves, both individually and as a team, and it was to have a major impact on the rest of Nice Bristols' season.

Confidence and Belief

Following this unexpected win at Tour 1, our confidence levels as individuals and as a team rose hugely and made a massive difference to the rest of our season. We set new goals going into Tour 2, but rather than just aiming for specific outcomes, we focused on the process. We had to recognise that we had the potential to beat any team on the Women's Tour and we had to play every game like we believed it. It seemed to work: we finished 3rd and only lost one game by one point over the whole weekend. By this stage, our individual confidence levels were beginning to grow and unite to form our collective team belief.

Tour 3 continued in the same vein. In a closely fought and characteristically "gritty" quarter-final against SYC,



we went down in the first few points only to make a comeback and start controlling the game, pushing through for the win. This was followed by a tough semi against Leeds, where they made a nerve-wracking seven point comeback. Luckily we'd done enough in the first half to hold on for the win. Both of these were tight games that perhaps last season we would have lost due to a lack of belief, but with our confidence riding high, we were able to streak ahead to victory. So we made it to our first final in some years, finishing 2nd and achieving one of our season's goals.

Nationals was a special tournament for all of us. To secure our place at EUCF, we won an epic sudden-death semi-final over Leeds. What both teams invested into that game, both physically and mentally, was obvious to all who witnessed the bodies scattered across the pitch at the conclusion of the game; players collapsed from exhaustion and elation or crushing disappointment. This game became nearly every Nice Bristols' player's highlight of the season, and not just because we won, but because of the way we achieved it; having the confidence and belief in ourselves all throughout the game that we could and would win it together.

So what caused this change in attitude? Accomplishments: we saw each other play well and as we achieved more, we believed we could keep going. Verbal persuasion: we encouraged each other and talked as though we all believed we could achieve. Together, these things fed our confidence and resulted in a positive feedback cycle, allowing us to achieve even more.

Spirit

In addition to coming 2nd in Tour and at Nationals, we finished 2nd in Spirit over the whole Tour. Nice Bristols have upped our level of play without losing the spirit on which the team was founded. We have continued to have fun alongside our improved performance, which has undoubtedly contributed to our success – we have good team cohesion, which apparently is psychology-speak for 'liking each other'.

Japan

This year, eight of our players competed in the World Championships in Japan. As well as the improved skills and fitness that these players brought to the club, we also benefitted from their drive, determination and passion for the game. It made a noticeable difference to our captain, Sarah Garner, whose burgeoning confidence from representing GB, combined with her experience from captaining the club last year, enabled her to become an impressive leader. Having played under Sue, she learned about the founding team ethos first hand, and understands its central role in the club's success over the years. She managed to maintain this ethos, while inventing her own style of captaincy that fits in with an ever-developing team.

Development

We managed to enter two teams into every Tour event this year. Over the past few years we've worked pretty hard on recruitment, forming strong relationships with the universities in the southwest and now we are seeing the benefits. We have no formal trial process for our club, and everyone who's keen enough to come to our training sessions is welcome. It has



[ceni] v Nice Bristols UK Nationals © Andy Moss 2012

been an absolute pleasure to watch players come along to training for the first time and within the same season make it onto the first team. We now have two teams in the top ten and as one of the only top clubs with a second team, we think it is important to maintain this commitment to development. We have, however, found that it is really hard to maintain two teams in a balanced way throughout the season and it's something that we are still trying to figure out.

European Experience

The final tournament of the 2012 season was EUCF. We approached this tournament as an opportunity to give some of our newer players some international experience, and not just with the co-ed showering! With a squad of 19, we came 6th and we won Spirit. This was a fitting end to an incredible year for us, and shows how all the little things can add up to a great end result. Here's to 2013... Nice season Bristols, really nice!

Sarah Garner and Emily Arnold

Clapham at EUCF



At the European Ultimate Championship Finals (EUCF) 2011 in Bruges it felt like four years of hard work had finally completed the transition from old Clapham to new Clapham... only to lose an epic sudden death to the hands of the mighty Flying Angels of Bern. We would have to wait one more year to regain the title, completing a long five years since the last Clapham European gold medal.

The off years when national teams are formed are always a bit funny. 2012 was a Worlds year with GB in full effect. These years disjoint the club season somewhat, rightly taking priority and they provide great platforms for gaining experience. 2012 was an amazingly productive year for GB. Taking silver in Japan is a once in a lifetime achievement. I have a lot of respect for that team and its leadership. Early in the season they took a lot of flack (losing heavily to us at Tour 1!) but they stuck to it, kept their focus and produced some great results. No mean feat.

And so the summer unfolded. GB players returned, the London 2012 Olympic Games happened, Nationals came and went, and quickly we were at the end of September, on a flight to Frankfurt.

Although a GB focus had dominated much of the year, Clapham's 2011 EUCF experience still felt close. Trainings at the end of the season are always great, when, as Lorenz Stauffer put it, "everyone is fit and clicking" and so at the back of my mind I wondered, could we really win this thing? Have we really learnt our lessons?

On to Frankfurt! Our opening game against fellow UK team Chevron Action Flash saw a bitty sudden death victory. They came out strong, and over the course of the game we edged them off. In the next game, Viks were out of sorts, not quite the force of previous years. In the last game of the day, we met Freespeed, who in our last two outings had more than the measure of us. There was no let up. Towards the middle/end of this game, Richard Harris had no less than seven massive blocks (only to be scored on). It didn't matter. The D started to click – Freespeed were broken.

Three wins meant we would top the group to set up a quarter against M.U.C., who we beat comfortably. Which took us to a rematch of the 2011 final versus The Angels. This time, we were purposeful and mindful of their dangers. Our D-line played some of the best ultimate I have ever been a part of. Seeing them off 15-9, we felt

a real air of confidence in what this weekend could bring.

And then there was the final against our old friends. This Chevy team was young and were buoyed by a pick-up in their old mentor Dave Pichler. They have evolved strongly over the past few years proving to be a real force in the UK and in Europe. They are athletic, quick and they take their shots deep; coming down with the majority. But we have played them often and we had a clear strategy. Point by point we chipped away, confident in the knowledge that breaks would come. Consistency is a great leveller, and we knew that if we kept at it, turns would

result and the D would score. We are so spoilt for choice of fantastic players that I had no doubt when calling lines; the question wasn't if or how we would get the Ds and score, but just when they might happen. As the D grounded away, our O-line produced a steely display – this line is so hard to turn it's unreal.

In the end, five years of hard work culminated in gold medals, with a 15-11 victory. Looking forward our ambition for Europe is high. Now that we have won EUCF again, we want a repeat. Not in five years time, but next year and the year after that. We want to improve and we want to beat



Ultimate abroad

Experiences as a student in Russia and Austria



Thomas Baeriswyl

the best teams. The level in Europe is getting stronger, and so we need to rise to the challenge.

We can learn from the Americans. They are still ahead, their marks are simply much better. Individual European players have strong marks, but none of us (Clapham included) can mark as a team. That for me is a big difference in the level of quality. It is this collective raising of the bar (as clubs not as individuals) that will take us closer to the next level. This will take time and it is not easy, but it can be done. Change manifests slowly, not maturing over night (frustratingly).

There is a lot of talent in Europe, lots of fantastic new players. If we can keep butting heads, the dividends will pay out. The American clubs have disciplined, collective training ingrained in their game. They've been doing it since the 1990s. They do it by having die-hard regional tournaments and annual national tournaments. In Europe, though there is a lot of talent and a lot of fantastic new players, we are still figuring it out. It is a steady climb but we are moving in the right direction. I look forward to what next year brings and the year after. Let's take more.

Ollie Benjamin

I picked up Ultimate as a fresher at the University of Sheffield. After two years, I was presented with the daunting task of organising my Year Abroad. I decided to work as an English teacher in Innsbruck, Austria and study in St Petersburg, Russia. Once my placements were confirmed, I hopped onto Ffindr and discovered that both cities had Ultimate teams, and in September 2011 I set off for my first destination: Austria.

I had a few preconceptions about Austrian Ultimate, having been informed by friends that Austria tended to finish near the bottom of major tournaments, and that they had a long way to go with development. Innsbruck, located in the Alps of Northwest Austria, is Austria's fifth largest city with only 90,000 inhabitants. I wondered at how big the Ultimate community could actually be, as there were no other listed Ultimate teams in the whole region. Nevertheless, I headed off to my first training session with Flying Circus.

When I arrived, I was a bit taken aback. I had presumed that everyone would be at university age, or possibly a bit older, but it turned out that the majority of players were over the age of 30. Out of the more than 30,000 students in Innsbruck, only 8 were part of the team. Although Flying Circus had three Austrian national team players, their main aim was to win spirit at tournaments. Soon after arriving, I learned of another club, called INNsiders, who were based 45 minutes away. The style of Ultimate was completely different. Most of the boys had just got onto the National team and were working together to enter a competitive team to Austria's Open and Mixed Divisions. One of the boys, Thomas Mitterer, co-coached the Austrian Open U20 National Team for 2011/2012, and along

with other members of INNsiders, came second at the European Youth Ultimate Championships in 2011. Their mentality was to put Austria on the European Ultimate map, and after the success of Austria at Open Tour 1 as well as the World Junior Ultimate Championships, they have done well. Although the club level in Austria is nothing compared to the UK both in terms of number of teams and level of competition, Austria definitely have a chance of being a strong European contender in a few years time.

Before I headed out to Russia, I did a small amount of background research. I knew of one team, Cosmic Girls, who are well known internationally, and Jupiter, a developing Open and Women's team in St Petersburg. Although my Ultimate skills would have improved quicker at Cosmic Girls, I wanted to enjoy Ultimate socially. Luckily, Jupiter were keen to enter as many tournaments (both fun and serious) as possible in preparation for Russian Nationals, and I was able to attend a lot of them – including a beach tournament in the middle of Russian winter! We were also lucky enough to attend a training camp run in Moscow by Sockeye.

The camp, which was run by Tyler Kinley, lasted for three days and focused on improving all aspects of Ultimate such as cutting, handling and playing, defence; it really helped to build the team's skills, as well as my own. However, the most interesting part of the camp was the change in people's attitudes. The camp was followed by a three day hat tournament, where Sockeye players were incorporated into each team. I was lucky enough to play with Moses Rifkin, an O-line player, and he helped me improve as a handler and cutter, but also taught me the importance of Spirit. Many players brought up

that Russians are renowned for bad Spirit, and that they wanted people to know internationally that they were trying to change this. The training camp brought a sense of unity to the Ultimate community in Russia and by the time I left, I felt like I had left some of my best friends behind. The Russians, just like the British, are a very tightly knit community, and I was lucky to be a part of it. Jupiter went on to win Nationals, and are now looking to enter more international tournaments in Europe.

For Russian Ultimate as a whole, it's interesting to see their main successes internationally have come through their Mixed teams. This is surprising, as there were hardly any established Mixed teams (Jupiter barely played Mixed) in Russia. Despite this, Made in the USSR won the Mixed Division of Paganello and the Russian National Mixed Team were the European runners-up. While perhaps this success wasn't fully displayed at Worlds, as they finished in ninth place, the Russians are not to be messed with. With Ultimate infiltrating into schools and smaller clubs in Russia, it won't be long before the Russians can give us a run for our money.

So did my Russian and German improve? Hopefully. Did my Ultimate improve? Probably. Did I make friends for life? Definitely. The only advice I can give to anyone going abroad, whether it be for work or for study, is to be brave and join a team near you. You will never regret it.

Sarah Harrison

Keep it in the family

Ultimatum 2011 was a proud moment for me. "Did you see Ultimatum?" a text from a friend said. "Not yet, why?" I replied. "There's a double helping of Sarjeant", read the response. Well, our parents would be proud – my younger brother Paul and I starring in photos in the coolest Ultimate magazine in the country. Fame and fortune aside, this got me thinking – how many other sets of siblings play Ultimate in the UK? Do they have similar stories to us? So when I saw the request for articles for Ultimatum 2012, I decided this would be the perfect opportunity to find out...

Let us rewind to 2005; I'd been playing Ultimate for two years at University by this time and had been loving it. As someone who wasn't naturally sporty at school, I enjoyed the encouraging atmosphere and social aspect of Ultimate. Paul had just started his first term at Leeds, and had tried out for various sports teams with limited success. After having been on most of the sports teams at school, he was unsure about trying Ultimate as he didn't really see it as a "proper" sport. After some gentle encouragement, and a few chilly days teaching him how to throw a sidearm in the local park during the Christmas holidays, he got in touch with the captain and joined the club in the second term – he has never looked back.

In fact, sibling encouragement seems to be paramount in all the sets of siblings I talked to. Ange Wilkinson, whose sister Linz encouraged her to start playing Ultimate, said, "I thought it was pretty funny and didn't really appeal to me since, on summer holidays as a child, Linz and Dad used to throw a Frisbee a fair amount, while I couldn't throw for sh*t and used to try and steal the disc to make sand pies!

"Linz bought me a Random Fling disc for Christmas when I was still at school and a couple of years later I ended up at Nottingham Uni. I didn't like the cliques and initiations of the other sports and I guessed Ultimate couldn't be that bad since Linz clearly enjoyed it so much. And so I gave it a whirl, met some wonderful people, and never stopped!"

Francesca Scarampi ended up joining the team at Leicester University after seeing her brother Adriano play. "Adriano started playing first and was always raving about how much fun he was having and what a great sport Ultimate was. I was so intrigued by Ultimate that as soon as Adriano left Leicester to go to Spain for an Erasmus year I joined the team. When he came back he couldn't kick me off the team as I had already played for a year and there was no way I would have left! So we started playing together and actually had a really good time doing so and still do."

So does having siblings on the team improve the performance of the team and increase the connections between players? Linz certainly thinks so: "We've played so many indoor tournaments together, and watched each other play for so long that it seems easy to anticipate what Ange is going to do and what to do to work together well."

Alex Thorne played on the University of Pittsburgh team that won the US College Championship this year – a team which included three sets of brothers! Alex threw to his brother Max for the winning point in the Championship final. "I've been throwing with him in my yard since we were little kids, and throwing to him on the field is so easy because of that," he said. "We both know exactly where the other wants to go, and exactly what throws the other has. It's

so much fun connecting with him, and honestly so easy."

There's also the emotional benefit of having a sibling who understands Ultimate and can support you. Ange and Linz both recently went to Worlds in Japan, competing for Great Britain in the Mixed and Women's Masters divisions, respectively. "I love seeing Linz at tournaments and having her out in Worlds at Japan was really helpful for me as I know I can talk to her about anything," said Ange. "It was so nice to have someone so supportive who understood me, and also any Frisbee-related woes I might have, so well."

But is there any animosity between siblings playing on opposing teams? Could a bit of friendly sibling rivalry change your relationship for the worse? According to Alex, "I definitely feel some rivalry in the sense that I feel like I should dominate Max as I'm the older brother, but now he's probably better than me and it's kind of frustrating. Good thing he's on my team when it matters."

Ange added that setting limits is important. "We tend to avoid Ultimate

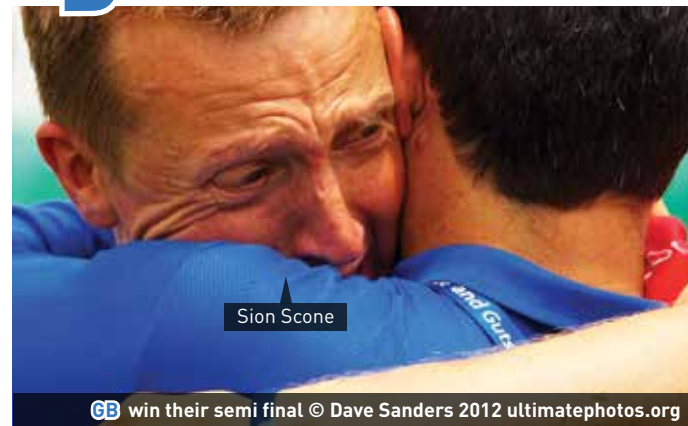
trash-talking, as I don't think it's really helpful to our relationship. For the past 4 years, Linz has played for Leeds and I've played for Iceni, so we've played against each other in a lot of competitive, high-level games. I find it a bit weird to be honest. That's because part of me feels proud when she does something great, while the other part of me is her opponent and is perhaps a little bit annoyed! We're both really competitive and sometimes there's a bit of friction between us on pitch, which we learnt quite a while back, and so we have an agreement not to match up on each other, as far as is possible."

So in closing, I'd ask you to think about your own family members and close friends. Could you get them involved in Ultimate? It might even bring you closer together. Francesca Scarampi has the final word: "Over the years both Adriano and I took different life choices and lived far away from each other, but playing a sport together has kept us connected over the years and enabled us to become really good friends."

Gemma Sarjeant



Mugs' gallery



Brits abroad

Two GB players play at US Nationals

"We're going to da SHOW!" You can hear this cry from every US Regional qualifier with great pride and sometimes relief. It is in itself a great achievement to qualify for US Nationals. There are good, and sometimes great, teams that don't make it past this point. From 2013, the USAU is introducing the new Triple Crown season format that will include a modified Nationals, a pre-season tiered Tour and the showcase US Open. But for 2012, US Nationals was enjoyed as it has been for the last few decades, with the top 16 North American teams in the Women's, Open and Mixed divisions, on the polo fields of Sarasota, Florida.

In addition, this year featured two GB players guesting with US teams: Justin Foord for GOAT in the Open division and me, Bex Forth for Showdown in the Women's division. So why spend the time and money to go over to 'da Show'? This was Justin's viewpoint, "US Nationals is one of the best outdoor tournaments I've been lucky enough to play in. There's nothing better or more exciting than going into a game, having almost no idea what the outcome will be." Quite simply, it is the greatest national tournament given the depth of team talent at world class level.

Will the UK ever get to the position that the US is in? Our shorts have got longer and the appearance of sweatbands, headbands and trucker hats are now more plentiful; certainly, UK players are looking pretty fly. However, the US player base is clearly larger than the UK and the top 16 teams show the fruits of these player numbers – "They simply have more players to choose from," as Justin puts it.

In the Northwest Region alone, it is clear they are in an enviable position with many top teams who

go on to finish extremely well. The player numbers don't tell the whole story though. Some of the teams at Nationals, Doublewide and Showdown (the top two teams from Texas), are in similar situations to UK teams. The state of Texas is 2.5 times larger than the UK but has far fewer teams (a general population of 25 million vs. 65 million in Texas and the UK, respectively). Texas Sectionals had 13 Open teams and 4 Women's teams. If you compare the UK scene with the Texas one, we are very, very lucky. We have more teams and we're closer together. Texas players are very envious of our national Tour and proximity to European tournaments. The University of Texas's competitive college programmes and Austin's desirability as a liveable city have meant that many of the talented alumni stay in Austin after university. Both Doublewide (Open Champions 2012) and Showdown (Women's third place 2012) have competed very well at US National and International Club level. For them to achieve their standard of play, they seek out-of-state tournaments to meet the other National quality teams, such as Labor Day, Emerald City Classic, and the Colorado Cup. The closest Nationals quality team for both divisions is 1500 km away! Would many UK teams travel three times a season to Europe? And now with the new Triple Crown, all proflight (top 8) US teams are due to travel as much as Doublewide and Showdown.

One of the great differences I have found over the years playing with US teams (on and off since 2000) is that both the level of athleticism and the depth of the team are very high. When playing against a North American team, there is often a mismatch in the middle to bottom of the team rosters. Also, the star players of the US teams are regularly tested



Justin Foord



at a high intensity, which increases the expectation that every game is a hard one. Top US Women's team Fury beats Riot regularly by only two or three points. There is no doubt that in these games every player is working at a high intensity level. The results are remarkably consistent. Justin said that he found GOAT as a team to be calmer than Clapham when it came to bad patches. "They seem to focus more on mentality and finding the right frame of mind in the face of adversity," he said.

There have been numerous games where a UK team plays a high-level US team and trades up until half, after which the US team takes it away to win something like 15-10. Many UK players – and I've even caught myself doing this as well – will pride themselves on hanging with them until half. However, such margins

between US teams are considered a walkover. Whether this is due to the relative depth of the two teams or the consistency of mental toughness is difficult to say. Most likely it is both aspects in different proportions.

The US Nationals format is a brutal one that starts with a 4x4 pool system with the top two in each pool forming two new top pools and the bottom two forming two new bottom pools. The top team from each of the bottom pools play the bottom team from each of the top pools for an extra game – the dreaded last-chance "pre-quarter". The rest of the top is conducted in a straight knockout. Both GOAT and Showdown managed to avoid the pre-quarter and went straight to the quarter-finals. GOAT met the eventual champions, Doublewide, in an exciting game full of momentum swings. Showdown pulled through quarters

with a strong game against Nemesis but lost in the semi-final to eventual champions, Fury.

From our experience, GB's top players can definitely hang with the US players. However, there is no denying that regular hard competition maintains low turnover rates and trains mental toughness. As a competitive player, US Nationals is an immensely stimulating tournament to relish and learn from. There is a feeling that any personal achievement at this level has a very high internal value – some of my proudest Ultimate moments are from this amazing tournament. You just can't get better than performing your best against some of the world's best. Would I spend the money and the time to go and do it all over again? "Hell yeah, Yeehaw..."

Bex Forth



Get your own set of US Nationals cards!
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Back cover: NZ was on D, Fraser Stanton laid out first and got a small touch on it, putting it just beyond the Canadian player's reach.



Marc Seraglia

Fraser Stanton

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