

Text & design: Paul Hurt (paulhurt@phmm.com) Photos: Jonathan Hope

What is Ultimate?

Ultimate is a fast-moving team sport enjoyed by thousands the world over. Comparisons can be made with other team games such as soccer or basketball, but the truth is it's unlike any other sport. There are no referees. The rules are simple, but the strategies are complex. And it's played with a flying disc **1**.

To compete at the highest level, Ultimate players must possess a degree of speed, stamina and agility that is matched in few other sports. Yet it's simple for newcomers to pickup, and provision is made for competition at all levels of ability. Grab a disc and discover why many believe this is the Ultimate team sport.

1 Many people call it a "Frisbee."

Ultimate players call it a disc ("Frisbee" is the trademarked name for one particular brand of flying disc). The disc is part of what makes Ultimate so unique – a skilful player can make the disc fly straight or in a curve, hover in mid-air or drop like a stone.

2 You can have as many players as you like in your squad, but only seven can be on the pitch at any one time. An unlimited number of substitutions can be made at the end of every point.

3 The player holding the disc has ten seconds to pass it to a teammate. The defender marking the player with the disc counts to ten out loud (the "stall count") and if the disc has not been released on "ten" the defender takes possession.

4 You can throw the disc to any member of your team anywhere on the pitch. There is no "offside" in Ultimate.

5 A change of possession (or "turnover") will typically occur when: i) the disc touches the ground after a bad pass; ii) the receiver drops the disc; iii) a member of the defending team

catches the disc or knocks it to the ground; iv) the receiver catches the disc but is outside the playing area when he or she catches it.

6 Finals of major tournaments are typically played to 19 points, and tight games often last about two hours. Other matches are frequently played to a lesser number of points, or with a time limit, to reduce the game length.

+ Only one defender can mark the player with the disc – it's a foul to have more than one defender within 3 metres of the thrower.

+ Each point begins with the two teams standing on opposite end-zone lines. The team with the disc throws it as far down the pitch as they can, and the other team then takes possession where it lands.

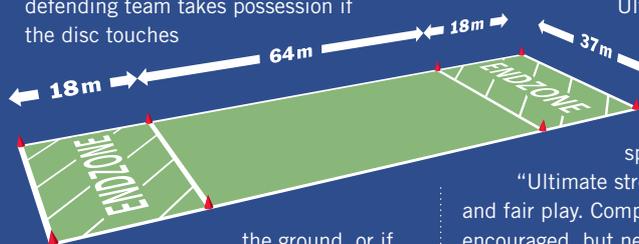
+ After a team has scored a point, they keep hold of the disc and wait while the opposition walks back to the other end of the pitch. The team that scored then throws off to start the next point.

+ Ultimate can also be played in a sports hall or gym, usually five-a-side. Many countries have an "indoor season" during the winter months.

Basic rules

Ultimate is a game for two teams of seven players **2**, played on a pitch of comparable size to a soccer field. The last 18 metres at each end of the pitch are the "endzones". A goal is scored by passing the disc to a member of your team standing (or more likely running!) in the endzone your team is attacking.

Players cannot run with the disc. When a player catches the disc, he or she must come to a stop **3**. A team can therefore only move the disc upfield by throwing it from player to player **4**. The defending team takes possession if the disc touches



the ground, or if they make an interception by catching the disc or knocking it to the ground in mid-flight **5**.

The winner is the first team to score a set number of points **6** with a lead of two points or more.

Spirit

Ultimate is a non-contact sport — most contact between players can be deemed a foul. But there are no referees. Players make their own foul calls, and it is the responsibility of all players to settle disputes fairly, according to the guidelines laid down in the rules of Ultimate. This is part of "The Spirit of the Game", a central philosophy behind Ultimate that largely eliminates the gamesmanship and "off the ball" incidents that can spoil other sports.

"Ultimate stresses sportsmanship and fair play. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play." (WFDF Rules of Disc Sports)

Check out these websites for more information:

www.ukultimate.com

The UK Ultimate Association

www.ultimatehandbook.com

Much more on how to play Ultimate

www.utilinks.com

Links to events worldwide and other Ultimate resources

www.upa.org

The Ultimate Players Association

