

ULTIMATE PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

EIGHTH EDITION:

The Rules of Ultimate

PREFACE

The purpose of the rules of Ultimate is to provide a guideline which describes the way the game is played. It is assumed that no Ultimate player will intentionally violate the rules; thus there are no harsh penalties for inadvertent infractions, but rather a method for resuming play in a manner which simulates what would most likely have occurred had there been no infraction.

In Ultimate, an intentional foul would be consi-

dered cheating and a gross offense against the spirit of sportsmanship. Often a player is in a position where it is clearly to his/her advantage to foul or commit some violation, but that player is morally bound to abide by the rules. The integrity of Ultimate depends on each player's responsibility to uphold the spirit of the game, and this responsibility should not be taken lightly.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **Description.** Ultimate is a non-contact sport played by two seven-player teams. The object of the game is to score goals. The disc may only be moved by passing, as the thrower is not allowed to take any steps. Any time a pass is incomplete, intercepted, knocked-down, or contacts an out-of-bounds area, a turnover occurs, resulting in an immediate change of possession of the disc. A goal is scored when a player successfully passes the disc to a teammate in the endzone which that team is attacking.
2. **Spirit of the Game.** Ultimate has traditionally relied upon a spirit of sportsmanship which places the responsibility for fair play on the player himself. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of the bond of mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules of the game, or the basic joy of play. Protection of these vital elements serves to eliminate adverse conduct from the Ultimate field. Such actions as taunting of opposing players, dangerous aggression, intentional fouling, or other "win-at-all-costs" behavior are contrary to the spirit of the game and must be avoided by all players.
3. **Captain's Clause.** A game may be played under any variations of the rules agreed upon by the captains of the two teams. In tournament play, such variations are subject to the approval of the tournament director. Such things as length of game, dimensions of the field, and stalling count can easily be altered to suit the level of play.

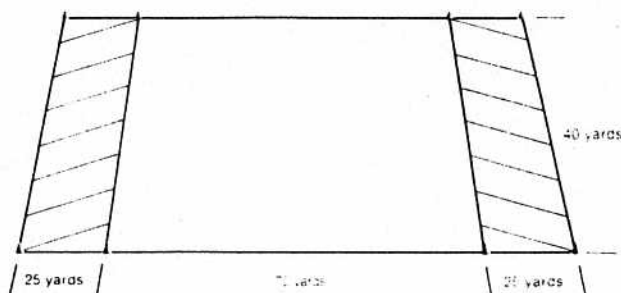
II. CLARIFYING STATEMENTS

1. Phrases:
 - A. A "player" is any of the fourteen (14) persons who are actually participating in the game at any one time.
 - B. To "put the disc into play" means that the thrower establishes a pivot foot and is ready to throw.
 - C. "Where the disc stops" refers to the location where the disc is caught, comes to rest naturally, or where it is stopped from rolling or sliding.

2. There are no scrimmage lines or off-sides (except on throw-offs) in Ultimate.
3. The disc may be passed in any direction.
4. The rolling or sliding disc may be stopped by any player, but it may not be purposefully advanced in any direction. Possession is gained where the disc stops.
5. No defensive player may ever pick up the disc.

III. FIELD OF PLAY

1. The field of play is a rectangular area with dimensions as shown on the accompanying diagram.



2. The playing field may have any surface (although well-trimmed grass is suggested) which is essentially flat, free of obstructions and holes, and affords reasonable player safety.
3. The playing field proper is the playing field excluding the endzones.
4. The goal lines are the lines which separate the playing field proper from the endzones and are part of the playing field proper.

5. The perimeter lines (sidelines and endlines) are not part of the playing fields.
6. The corners of the playing field proper and the endzones are marked by cones made of a brightly colored, flexible material.
7. An additional restraining line is established five (5) meters away from the entire field to ensure that the sidelines remain clear during play.
8. All lines are marked with a non-caustic material and are between two and four inches wide (2" - 4").

IV. EQUIPMENT

1. Any flying disc may be used as long as it is acceptable to both team captains. If the captains cannot agree, the currently accepted disc of the Ultimate Players Association [Wham-O 165g] shall be used.
2. Individual players may wear any soft protective clothing as long as it does not endanger the safety of any other player.
3. Cleats which have any metal exposed are not allowed.
4. Each player must wear a uniform or other clothing that distinguishes him, her from the players on the other team.

V. LENGTH OF GAME

1. Time.
 - A. Each half lasts for twenty-four (24) minutes of stopped-time.
 - B. Each overtime period lasts for five (5) minutes of stopped-time.
 - C. The clock starts when:
 - (1.) An offensive player gains possession of a throw-off and establishes a pivot foot;
 - (2.) The thrower receives the disc after a check;
 - (3.) The thrower puts the disc into play after it has been out of bounds.
 - D. The clock stops:
 - (1.) After a goal;
 - (2.) At the end of a period of play;
 - (3.) For time-outs;
 - (4.) For injuries;
 - (5.) For fouls and violations;
 - (6.) When the disc contacts an out-of-bounds area.
2. Points.
 - A. A goal is worth one (1) point.
 - B. A game to points lasts until one team scores twenty-one (21) goals with a margin of victory of at least two (2) goals.
 - C. A game with a score of twenty-to-twenty (20-20) goes into overtime, and play continues until a two-goal margin is achieved or one team scores twenty-five (25) goals.
 - D. Halftime occurs when one team reaches eleven (11) goals.
3. Halftime lasts for ten (10) minutes.
4. At the end of the game, the team with the most goals is declared the winner.

VI. TIME-OUTS

1. Each team is permitted three (3) time-outs per half, and one (1) per overtime.
2. Each time-out lasts up to two (2) minutes.
3. The player calling time-out must form a "T" with his/her hands and call "time out" loudly.
4. A time-out may be called by either team after a goal and before the ensuing accepted throw-off.
5. During play, only the thrower may call a time-out while in possession of the disc.
6. Injury time-out:
 - A. An injury time-out can be called by any player.
 - B. If a player had possession when an injury time-out was called, play is restarted by a check back to the thrower who was in possession at the time of the injury.
 - C. If the disc was in the air, play continues until possession is gained.
 - D. An injury time-out is not charged to either team.
7. When play resumes after a time-out taken during play, the following apply:
 - A. The player who had possession puts the disc into play. If the player calling the time-out leaves the field due to injury, the player replacing him/her puts the disc into play.

- B. The disc is put into play at the location where the disc was when the time-out was called.
- C. The play is resumed through the use of a check.

VII. SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Substitutions can be made only:
 - A. After a goal and before the ensuing accepted throw-off;
 - B. Before the beginning of a period of play;
 - C. To replace an injured player(s).
2. If a team replaces an injured player(s), the opposing team has the option of substituting a like number of, or fewer, player.
3. Substitutions other than injury substitutions cannot be made during a time-out taken during play.

VIII. STARTING & RESTARTING PLAY

1. Before a game starts, each team designates one captain to represent that team in disagreements and arbitration.
2. Start of periods of play:
 - A. The captains of the two teams each flip a disc. The captain of one team calls same or different while the discs are in the air. The team winning the flip has the choice of:
 - (1.) Receiving the initial throw-off; or
 - (2.) Selecting which goal they wish to defend initially.
 - B. The team losing the flip is given the remaining choice.
 - C. The second half begins with an automatic reversal of the first choice of the options [see 2-A].
 - D. In a game to time, if overtime periods are needed, the disc flipping procedure is repeated for the first overtime period. Each subsequent overtime period begins with an automatic reversal of the first choice of the options.
3. Throw off:
 - A. Play starts at the beginning of each period of play and after each goal with a throw-off.
 - B. Each time a goal is scored, the teams switch the direction of their attack and the team which scored throws off.
 - C. Positioning prior to the throw-off:
 - (1.) The players on the throwing team are free to move anywhere in their defending endzone, but may not cross the goal line until the disc is released.
 - (2.) The players on the receiving team must stand with one foot on their defending goal line without changing position relative to one another.
 - D. The throw-off may be made only after the thrower and a player on the receiving team raise a hand to signal that team's readiness to begin play.
 - E. The throw-off consists of one player on the throwing team throwing the disc toward the opposite goal line to begin play.
 - F. As soon as the disc is released, all players may move in any direction.
 - G. No player on the throwing team may touch the throw-off in the air before it is touched by a member of the receiving team.
 - H. If a member of the receiving team catches the throw-off on the playing field proper, that player must put the disc into play from that spot.
 - I. If a member of the receiving team touches the disc during flight of the throw-off (whether in- or out-of-bounds) and the receiving team fails to catch it, the team which threw-off gains possession of the disc where it stops.
 - J. If the receiving team allows the throw-off to fall untouched to the ground, and the disc initially lands in-bounds, the receiving team gains possession of the disc where it stops.
 - K. If the throw-off lands out-of-bounds the receiving team, before touching the disc, makes a choice of:
 - (1.) Putting the disc into play at the point where it crossed the perimeter line, or
 - (2.) Requesting a re-throw; to request a re-throw, any member of the receiving team must fully extend one hand above the head and call "Over." Once this re-throw signal is given, that throw-off can no longer be put into play.
4. The Check:
 - A. When play stops, the player who was in possession retains possession.
 - B. All players must come to a stop as quickly as possible when play is halted, and remain in their respective locations until play is restarted.
 - C. The marker restarts play by handing the disc to the thrower.

IX. OUT-OF-BOUNDS

1. Any area not on the playing field is out-of-bounds. The perimeter lines themselves are out-of-bounds.
2. A disc is out-of-bounds when it first contacts an out-of-bounds area or contacts anything which is out-of-bounds.
3. The disc may fly outside a perimeter line and return to the playing field, and defensive players may go out-of-bounds in order to make a play on the disc.
4. A player is out-of-bounds when s/he is contacting an out-of-bounds area. When a player is in the air, his/her in- or out-of-bounds is determined by where s/he last contacted the ground.
5. For a receiver to be considered in-bounds after gaining possession of the disc, the first point of contact with the ground must be completely in-bounds. If any portion of the first point of contact is out-of-bounds, the player is considered out-of-bounds.
6. Should the momentum of a player carry him/her out-of-bounds after making a catch and landing in-bounds, the player is considered in-bounds. The player carries the disc to the point where s/he went out-of-bounds and puts the disc into play at that point.
7. To restart play after the disc has gone out-of-bounds, a member of the team gaining possession of the disc must carry the disc to the point on the playing field where the disc went out-of-bounds, and put the disc into play at that point.
8. The thrower may pivot in- and out-of-bounds, providing that some part of the pivot foot contacts the playing field.

X. ENDZONES

1. If a team gains possession in the endzone which it is defending:
 - A. The player taking possession must make the immediate decision to either:
 - (1.) Put the disc into play from that spot, or
 - (2.) Carry it directly to the closest point on the goal line and put it into play from there. If this option is chosen, the player taking possession may not throw a pass during the approach.
 - B. To fake or pause after gaining possession commits the player to put the disc into play at that point.
2. If, as a result of a pass from a teammate, a player receives the disc in the endzone which they are defending, that player does not have a choice of advancing the disc to the goal line.
3. If a team gains possession in the endzone which it is attacking, the player taking possession must carry the disc directly to the closest point on the goal line and put the disc into play from there.

XI. SCORING

1. A goal is scored when an offensive player completes a pass to a teammate in the endzone which his/her team is attacking.
2. In order for the receiver to be considered in the endzone after gaining possession of the disc, his/her first point of contact with the ground must be completely in the endzone.
3. A player cannot score by running into the endzone with the disc. Should a receiver's momentum carry him/her into the endzone after gaining possession, s/he must carry the disc back to the closest point on the goal line and put the disc into play from there.

XII. TURNOVERS

1. An incomplete, intercepted, knocked-down, or out-of-bounds pass results in a loss of possession.
2. The following actions result in a loss of possession and a check:
 - A. If the marker's count reaches the maximum number;
 - B. If the disc is handed from player to player;
 - C. If the thrower intentionally deflects a pass to him/herself off another player;
 - D. If the thrower catches his/her own throw. However, if the disc is touched by another player during its flight it is considered a complete pass and is not a turnover.

XIII. THE THROWER

1. The thrower is the offensive player in possession of the disc, or the player who has just released the disc.
2. If the disc is on the ground, whether in- or out-of-bounds, any member of the team becoming offense may take possession of the disc. Once an offensive player has picked up the disc, that player is required to put the disc into play.

3. The thrower must establish a pivot foot and may not change that pivot foot until the throw is released.
4. The thrower has the right to pivot in any direction. However, once the marker has established a legal defensive position, the thrower may not pivot into him/her.
5. If the disc is dropped by the thrower without defensive interference, it is considered an incomplete pass.
6. The thrower may throw the disc in any way s/he wishes.

XIV. THE MARKER

1. Only one defensive player may guard the thrower at any one time; that player is the marker.
2. The marker may not straddle (*i.e.*, place his/her foot on either side of) the pivot foot of the thrower.
3. There must be at least one disc's diameter between the upper bodies of the thrower and the marker at all times. It is the mutual responsibility of both players to respect each other's position and not encroach into this area once it is established.
4. The marker cannot position his/her arms in such a manner as to restrict the thrower from pivoting.
5. Stalling.
 - A. Once a marker has established a set guarding stance on the thrower, s/he may initiate a count.
 - B. The count consists of the marker calling "Stalling" or "Counting," and counting at one-second intervals from one to twelve (1-12), loudly enough for the thrower to hear.
 - C. If the thrower has not released the disc at the first utterance of the word "twelve" ("12"), a turnover and a check result.
 - D. If the defense decides to switch markers, and if the new marker wishes to initiate a stalling count, s/he must start again from "one" (1).

XV. THE RECEIVER

1. The Receiver is any offensive player either in the act of catching the disc, or not in possession of the disc.
2. Bobbling to gain control of the disc is permitted, but purposeful, controlled bobbling to oneself (*i.e.*, tipping, delaying, guiding, or brushing) in order to advance the disc is considered traveling and is not allowed.
3. The receiver gains possession by demonstrating sustained contact with a non-spinning disc.
4. After catching a pass, the receiver is only allowed the fewest number of steps required to come to a stop and establish a pivot foot.
5. If the receiver is running as s/he catches the disc, the receiver may throw a pass before the third ground contact after catching the disc without coming to a complete stop.
6. If the disc is caught simultaneously by offensive and defensive players, the offense retains possession.
7. If a pass arrives in such a manner that it is unclear whether a catch was made before the disc contacted the ground (grass is considered part of the ground), the player(s) with the best perspective makes the call (usually the receiver).
8. If it is ever unclear whether a receiver was in- or out-of-bounds at the point of making a catch, the player(s) with the best perspective makes the call.
9. If an airborne receiver jumps and makes a catch, and is contacted by a defensive player before landing, and that contact caused the receiver to land out-of-bounds instead of landing in-bounds, the receiver must either call him/herself out-of-bounds, or call a foul on the defensive player.

XVI. FOULS

1. Fouls are the result of physical contact between opposing players. A foul can only be called by the player who has been fouled and must be announced by calling out the word "Foul!" loudly immediately after the foul has occurred.
2. The player initiating contact is guilty of a foul.
3. Throwing Fouls:
 - A. A throwing foul may be called when there is contact between the thrower and the marker.
 - B. Contact occurring during the follow-through (after the disc has been released) is not sufficient grounds for a foul, but should still be avoided whenever possible.
 - C. When a foul is committed by the thrower or the marker, play stops and possession reverts back to the thrower after a check.
 - D. If the thrower is fouled in the act of throwing and the pass is completed, the foul is automatically declined and play continues without interruption.

- E. If the marker is fouled in the act of throwing and the pass is not completed, play continues without interruption.
4. **Catching Fouls:**
- A catching foul may be called when there is contact between opposing players in the process of attempting a catch, interception, or knock-down. A certain amount of incidental contact during or immediately after the catching attempt is often unavoidable and is not a foul.
 - If a player contacts an opponent before the disc arrives and thereby interferes with that opponent's attempt to make a play on the disc, that player has committed a foul.
 - If a player's attempt to make a play on the disc causes significant impact with a legitimately positioned stationary opponent, before or after the disc arrives, that player has committed a foul.
 - Dangerous, aggressive behavior or reckless disregard for the safety of fellow players is always a foul.
 - If a catching foul occurs and is uncontested, the player fouled gains possession at the point of the infraction. If the call is disputed, the disc goes back to the thrower.

XVII. VIOLATIONS

- A violation occurs when a player violates the rules in a manner which does not result in physical contact (e.g., throwing a pass during an approach to the goal line; illegal guarding position by the marker; not establishing a pivot foot after carrying the disc in from out-of-bounds, etc.).
- A violation may be called by any player who recognizes that a violation has occurred. The player must immediately call "violation" or the name of the specific violation loudly.
- Traveling:**
 - The thrower must keep all or part of the pivot foot in contact with a single spot on the field. Should the thrower lose contact with that spot, the thrower has traveled.
 - If the receiver obviously takes more steps than are required to stop after catching a pass, that player has traveled.
 - If a receiver, after receiving a pass on the run, releases a pass after the third ground contact and before coming to a complete stop, that receiver has traveled.
- Strip:**
 - No defensive player may touch the disc while it is in the hands of the thrower. If a defensive player does so, causing the thrower to drop the disc, the thrower calls, "Strip."
 - The thrower then picks up the disc and play continues unaltered from the point where the thrower regained possession.
 - If a count was in progress as the disc was stripped, the count is temporarily halted until the thrower regains possession.
- Double-Team:**
 - Only one marker is permitted to guard the thrower.
 - No other defensive player may establish a position within three (3) meters of the pivot foot of the thrower, unless s/he is guarding another offensive player in that area.
 - Should the thrower recognize a double-team situation, s/he first calls "Double teaming" as a warning. If the defensive team continues to double-team, the thrower calls "Double teaming" again, and it is a violation.

XVIII. POSITIONING

- It is the responsibility of all players to avoid contact in any way possible. Violent impact with legitimately positioned opponents constitutes harmful endangerment, a foul, and must be strictly avoided.
- Every player (excluding the thrower) is entitled to occupy any position on the field not occupied by any opposing player, provided that s/he does not cause personal contact in taking such a position.
- Picks:**
 - No player may establish a position, or move in such a manner, so as to obstruct the movement of any player on the opposing team; to do so is a "pick."
 - In the event of a pick, the obstructed player must immediately call "Pick" loudly; play stops and is resumed after a check.
- When the disc is in the air, players must play the disc, not the opponent.
- The Principle of Verticality:** All players have the right to the space immediately above them. Thus, a player cannot prevent an opponent from making an attempt on a pass by placing his/her arms above an opponent. Should

contact occur, the player restricting the vertical area is responsible.

- A player who has jumped is entitled to land at the same spot without hindrance by opponents. S/he may also land at another spot provided the landing spot was not already occupied at the time of take-off and that the direct path between the take-off and landing spot was not already occupied.

XIX. CLARIFYING STATEMENTS ON FOULS, VIOLATIONS & PICKS

- Cardinal Rule:** Whenever an infringement of the rules or a time-out occurs, play is halted and the disc is put back into play at the point of the last possession before play was stopped. (Note exceptions under Turnovers [XII], Strip [XVII-4], and Catching Foul [XVI-4].)
- Play on rule:**
 - If a foul, violation, or pick is called while the disc is in the air, the play is always completed.
 - If the team which made the call gains possession as a result of that pass (e.g., an incomplete pass following a traveling violation, or offensive foul), play continues unaltered.
 - It is the responsibility of the player who made the call to call out "Play on" to indicate that this rule has been invoked.
- If there is ever a failure to come to an agreement over any call, the disc reverts back to the thrower after a check.
- If offsetting catching fouls are called by offensive and defensive players on the same play, the disc reverts back to the thrower after a check.
- Any time the marker's count is interrupted by the call of a foul, violation, pick, or time-out, the count is resumed as follows:
 - If the call is against the defense, the count is reset to zero (0).
 - If the call is against the offense, the count continues from the point at which it was stopped, except the thrower is given a minimum of five (5) seconds (e.g., count at ten [10], reset to seven [7]).
- When play resumes after a time out, the stall count is continued from where it was when time-out was called. The marker must initiate the count by calling "Stalling" or "Counting."
- If the marker counts too fast, the thrower may call "too fast." Play stops and is resumed with two seconds subtracted from the current count.

XX. OBSERVERS

- Before the game, the captains may decide to select up to six (6) experienced non-players to act as Observers. In this role, their job is to carefully watch the action of the game. They do not actively call any fouls, violations, picks, or line calls.
- When a dispute arises concerning a foul, violation, pick, line call, or an interpretation of the rules which cannot be resolved by the players involved or their captains, the observers may be called upon by the captains to make the call.
 - The observer with the best view of the play makes the call. If the observers so choose, they may discuss the play among themselves before rendering a decision.
 - By calling in the observers, the teams agree to abide by the observer's decision.

XXI. ETIQUETTE

- If a foul is committed and not called, the player who commits the foul should inform the infractioned player of the foul.
- It is the responsibility of both teams to minimize the time taken between each goal and the ensuing throw-off.
- If the receiving team wishes to have an out-of-bounds throw-off re-thrown, they should give the re-throw signal as soon as possible.
- It is a violation against the spirit of the game for a defensive player to call for a pass from the thrower.
- Should a dispute or confusion arise on the field, it should be common practice to stop play, and resume play with a check when the matter is resolved.
- In the case where a novice player commits a violation out of sincere ignorance of the rules, it is common practice to stop play and explain the violation.

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