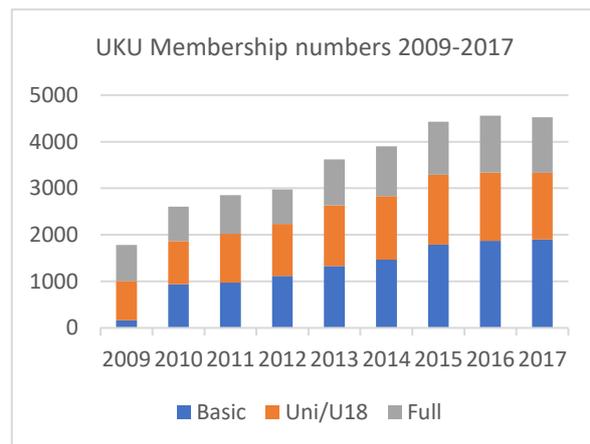


UK Ultimate Strategic Planning 2018-22

Introduction

Welcome to our first documented Strategic Plan. As Ultimate continues to grow worldwide, and in the UK, the board of UK Ultimate (UKU) decided there was a need to provide a more structured outlook on UKU's plans for the sport in this country over the coming years. This document is aimed primarily at our members but is written with other stakeholders in mind too.

UKU has approximately 4500 members, but based on our own experience as well as the Sport England Active Lives survey, the estimated number of people playing ultimate and disc games in England is more than 10x higher. We have seen steady growth in player numbers over recent years, driven mostly by a growing university scene where over 70 institutions have permanent ultimate clubs. However, growth in UKU membership has flattened out in 2016-17, and so we will be putting more emphasis on participation growth in the next few years.



Since 2013, we have described our intention to support the growth of ultimate as *“Ultimate in every school, a coach in every club, a club in every town”*. This was not intended to define an operational objective - but is rather a statement of our long-term vision for the potential scale of the sport in the UK. To date UKU has prioritised event-delivery and financial stability. We are now in a better position to switch attention towards participation growth. Our Strategic Plan 2018-22 therefore leads with programmes to grow participation directly and indirectly.

Looking beyond the UK, the World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) estimates that there are over 7 million people playing disc sports around the world. In 2015, WFDF achieved recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and there is a genuine sense that the sport may have an opportunity to be included in the Olympic Games when they are held in Paris, 2024 or more likely Los Angeles in 2028. We note the potential for substantial impact on our players and organisation if WFDF is successful. Consequently, we will be introducing the idea of being *“Olympics-Ready”* to our sub-committees, projects and general decision-making to ensure that longer-term requirements are kept in view.

Spirit of the Game and self-officiation remain a defining feature of the sport. WFDF's Game Advisor model has been very successful at providing support for players at World Championships without removing their responsibility for making the final decision. We note that organisations such as the IOC, but also e.g. the Youth Sport Trust here in the UK, see great value and potential in our model for governing play. UK Ultimate is wholly committed to self-refereed ultimate and will seek to increase the emphasis we place on Spirit of the Game across our competitions and representative teams.

Strategic Themes 2018-22

We aim to grow the number of players and help make it easier for them to play near where they live. This document provides further commentary on the following main themes.



It is vital that the NGB has a strong financial position, is well-organised, and lives up to its responsibilities in terms of good governance. There are also some critical functions that will always be top priorities alongside our strategic aims.

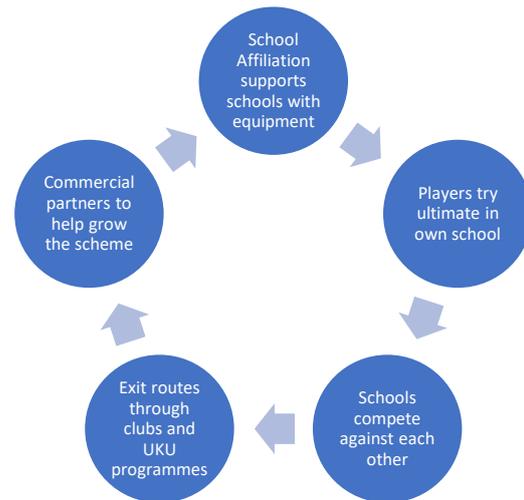
1. Management, support and development of National teams.
2. Competition Management - all UKU events should be run to high standards (facilities, safety) - but the competition structure itself also requires work to be scalable as the number of clubs grow.
3. Promote critical importance of Spirit of the Game and self-officiation as unique and defining feature of the sport at all levels.

Figure 1: UKU Critical Functions



Expand Schools and Youth Ultimate

Growth of Ultimate in the UK has occurred largely in the University sector. Universities provide a “ready-made sports club” with an annual recruitment fair. Developing competition is relatively easy, because players are automatically aligned with their institution’s team(s) and there are obvious opponents (other universities). The school sector shares these key characteristics, and although there are some different challenges there is mounting evidence that Ultimate is gaining recognition in schools across the UK.



Ultimate is a simple game that lends itself to being adapted and simplified for different environments and to meet the needs of new participants. Furthermore, a mixed sport played without a third-party referee will feel new and different to many staff, pupils and parents – with the potential to spark interesting discussions and create new experiences. UK Ultimate has spent time and energy in recent years developing our relationship with the Youth Sport Trust, and will be continuing to do so as we seek to integrate the sport into the School Games, which provides an excellent opportunity to give the sport added legitimacy within schools and support increasing participation.

School Affiliation

- In two years the School Affiliation scheme has provided over 1000 free discs to schools across the UK, extending Ultimate’s reach in school to over 20,000 students.
- We will extend the scheme to provide free online resources to UKU-Affiliated Schools.
- We aim to engage commercial partners that will enable us to maintain the offer as the network grows.

School's Competition

- Introduce and support school competition that encourage local fixtures or tournaments
- Engage with Youth Sport Trust and local School Games Organisers to develop the inclusion of Ultimate in the School Games

Club Development and Player Pathway

- Support existing and new Ultimate clubs to provide regular playing opportunities to young players
- Develop pathway for young players to provide at least one level of play and/or training between school ultimate and GB Youth squads and that does not require extensive travel

Gender Equity

We aim to have approximately the same number of female and male players in our sport across all levels and age-groups.

Our initial areas of focus will be supporting female leaders, and pushing an increase in general “skills development sessions”. The UKU Women’s sub-committee (representing women playing in both the Women’s and Mixed divisions) has discussed and concluded that in the context of ongoing development of our competition structures, the Women’s division requires more support than Open and Mixed. In practice, for example, this means that we will take a cautious approach to further overlapping of women’s and mixed division events which we know remains problematic for many women’s clubs.

We have seen good growth in the University Women’s division in recent years and we expect this will be crucial to achieving the 50-50 goal. To this end we identify these priorities:

1. Ensuring visible female leadership across all levels of play.
2. Retaining female university players in club competition during holidays, and especially when they graduate.
3. Determining the best model and timing to further engage the Women’s division with the “BUCS league structure” to encourage University Athletic Union’s investment and support for their teams.



UKU Strategic Plan 2018-22

Comments or feedback to admin@ukultimate.com please

Broaden access to Ultimate for adults

Most players in the UK play competitive Ultimate by travelling to tournaments that take place over a weekend. It is well-known that as players' lives change (career, family, etc) many find it increasingly difficult to keep up the time or cost commitments. This approach to competition creates a high barrier for players to become really engaged with the sport, and many would-be ultimate players simply do not have the chance to play on this basis. **We aim to support and encourage an increase in the number and type of locally-focused playing opportunities around the UK with a view to improving access to the sport – primarily for people who do not access Ultimate through weekend tournaments.**



Coach Education

UKU currently delivers three levels of coaching qualification: Foundation Award, Level 1 and Level 2. The Foundation Award is aimed at sports teachers, coaches from other sports and young sports leaders, and provides a 3-hour, inexpensive introduction to teaching Ultimate to beginners. We have also developed a version of the Level 1 award aimed towards teachers/coaches that have not played. We see 200-250 people per year in UKU coach education workshops; approximately half of those are from outside the Ultimate community. As of Dec 2017, a handful of people have completed the Level 2 qualification, with a further twenty in-progress.

Our community desperately needs a bigger workforce of active coaches at all levels. We will continue to develop the content and quality of CPD opportunities for our developing and lead coaches, noting the importance of supporting coaches with their skills and knowledge of e.g. communication, safeguarding young people, team-selection or first-aid, as much as the technicalities of e.g. zone defence or breaking the mark.



Goals:

Increase the number of people – especially women – going through UKU coaching courses and becoming active, registered coaches

Work with partners to increase the depth and quality of content available – as well as other opportunities for dialogue and exchange of ideas within the ultimate coaching community.

Good quality coaching is fundamental to most of our other goals: engaging with schools, developing young players, growing the number of female players, successful national teams, and a strong focus on Spirit of the Game.

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Manage & Develop National Teams

Whilst most of the Great Britain squads did not enjoy the level of success they aspired to in 2016-17, WCBU 2017 went well, and GBR was ranked 3rd in the WFDF Official World Rankings at end 2017. The national teams, and the players that compete in the teams, are always high priority for UK Ultimate.

Many of the administrative and financial elements of GB teams are managed centrally, but the running a Great Britain team (as player or coach/manager) always raises new challenges. We will continue to grow the support for team-leaders with admin and finance, but we recognise that there is a desire and need that UKU provides more structure for the development pathways of players and coaches. **Learning from successes and mistakes of recent years, we will continue to integrate the training and development of players in all the youth squads (incl. U24).**



Competing for GB Ultimate is expensive. It is unlikely this will change during the next five years, but we will continue to seek commercial partners for any or all the GB squads, with the first target to raise approx. £10k/year to cover the costs of the support teams (coaches, medical, etc) that travel with each team to the international events.

Competition and Events

Every year UKU coordinates approx. 50 events across our various national competitions. In 2013 we took the decision to take direct control of UKU events. This was done to increase our ability to control the quality of events, and to re-invest profits back into the sport. This approach indirectly enabled us the time to bid to host the WFDF events in 2015-16, gave us sufficient reserves to hire a full-time Administrator, and allows us to make a loss on some individual events where necessary.

Event quality: arrangements at the event itself, but also making event administration (entering, paying, etc) as efficient as possible will continue to be a focus.

There will need to be substantial ongoing changes to the Competition Structure over the next 4-5 years – at least at club level. The UKU Tour has been a successful model for 20 years but needs to adapt to cope with the growth in teams. The current structure is also rather inflexible to changes in the calendar that are imposed by international events.



Governance & Financial Management

The running of UK Ultimate is overseen by the elected board of directors. The organisation currently employs 5 full-time, and 2 part-time members of staff, but still relies very heavily on volunteers working in sub-committees working across all areas of UKU’s responsibilities.

Sport England published “A Code for Sports Governance” in 2016 as part of an ongoing drive to support National Governing Bodies of sport implement better standards of governance. UKU was already compliant with Tier 1 of this code – which is adequate for current size of organisation and likely funding levels we might seek in the next few years. UKU will continue to work on improving governance, in particular addressing issues of diversity across UKU committees and other UKU roles.

We will set out a plan to develop governance procedures, working towards compliance with the Code’s Tier 3 in the longer term.

Communication

We are updating the www.ukultimate.com website in 2018 and recognise the need for increased communication with members about ongoing projects providing opportunities for input before decisions are finalised.

Finances

UKU’s income is based on event entry fees, UKU individual membership and coach education course fees, providing a reasonably stable business model for maintaining its main functions. Following successfully hosting WU23s and WUGC, the organisation has also built up a financial surplus that can be used to invest in the sport without a need for an immediate return. This is a change in approach for the UKU, which to date has invested in the development of the sport where that investment showed a direct route to revenue growth. Although the need for an immediate return or self-funding mechanism of the UKU activities is no longer as strong, the organisation does not want to unduly pressure and erode the financial reserves, but rather invest in the sport with a longer time horizon for the return on that investment.

We will be seeking to grow income in the following areas over the next 4-5 years:

- Grants and donations
- Commercial partnerships and sponsorship
- Product sales (discs and GB supporters gear)

Whilst membership fees, event entry fees and coaching course fees will increase to keep pace with increasing associated costs, we aim that the organisation’s income should generally increase only as a result of adding more members and competitions, or by introducing the new sources of revenue identified above.

