



## Coaching Development Program Upgrade Overview

USA Ultimate is currently in the process of a multi-year upgrade to the Coaching Development Program (CDP). It is our belief that while the existing CDP has been an incredibly successful program, given the current landscape of ultimate, there is an opportunity to make some changes to the CDP and to build on its successes going forward. The purpose of this document is to provide some insight to the ultimate community as to why we are upgrading the CDP, what some of these changes will look like and when these changes will occur.

Towards the end of this document is a link to a survey which allows for community input on the content of the new certification levels. There are also links to three opportunities for individuals who would like to have a more direct impact on the shape of the new curriculum and become co-authors of the new curriculum.

Please note this is an overview. Clearly there are details and specifics which have been held out in order to build a digestible sized document.

### History

The Coaching Development Program was developed in 2003 and began certifying coaches in 2004. The program design was headed by Kyle Weisbrod<sup>1</sup>, then the youth director of the Ultimate Players Association. While the CDP was formed within the UPA's Youth Program, it was intended for a broad audience, from middle school to club teams and from new to experienced coaches. At the time of the program's launch, estimates put the number of ultimate coaches in the U.S. at around 250, most of whom were new coaches, and very few of whom had received any formal coach education.

The goals of the program were to build basic (and consistent) coaching standards, to build a "corps" of coaches (the original name of the program was the UPA Coaching Corps.), and to create a community of coaches.

By any measure, this program has been a success. The development of the corps of coaches has helped teams (especially high school and middle school) exist beyond one or two years. It has facilitated teams building a positive culture which outlasts the individual members of the team. It provided coaches with a better knowledge of their professional and ethical responsibilities. It has allowed players to develop in systems where they have received education at every level of their growth as an athlete. And it has been one of the root causes for both the growth of the sport and the advancement of play over the past 13 years.

While the current CDP has been successful, the growth of the sport necessitates updating the program to better serve the needs of the ultimate community. To do this well we have tried to look at the pros and cons of the current system to learn what we can do to make the program better.

Pros of the current CDP system:

- It fosters improved coaching habits for coaches at all levels.
- It brings a wide variety of coaches together in one space and builds community.
- It provides opportunities to instruct coaches in the classroom and on the field.

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<sup>1</sup> Kyle was assisted by many members of the community including Michael Baccarini, Joe Bisignano, Tiina Booth, Barbara "Bubba" Denison, and John Sandahl.



- Since they are used to it, communities have become good at organizing, promoting and hosting these clinics.

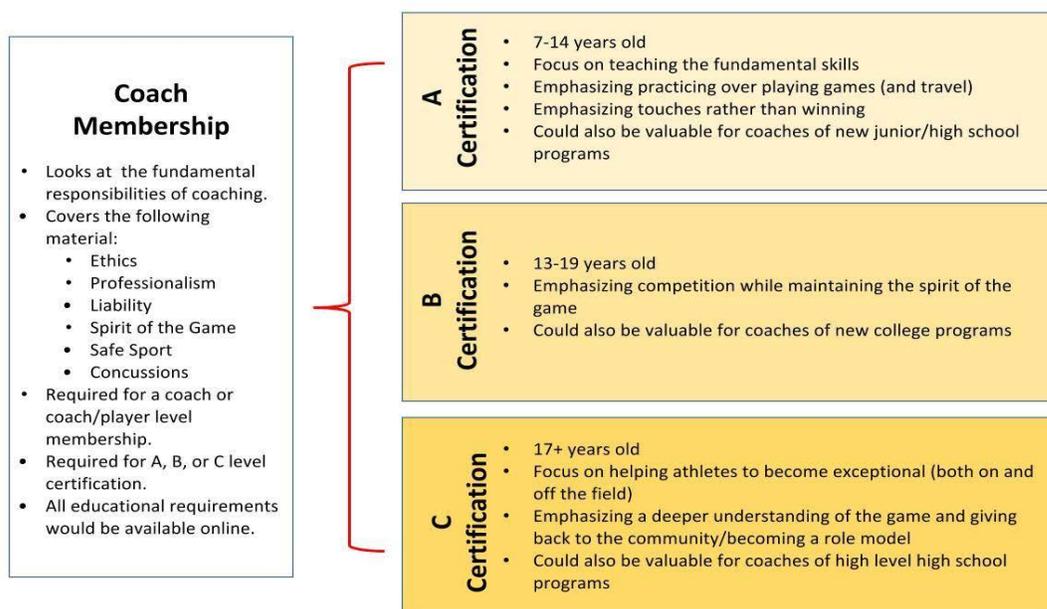
#### Cons of the current CDP system:

- It is relatively cost-intensive to run. Expenses include:
  - Instructor travel arrangements: flight, housing, rental car, per diem, etc.
  - Renting both classroom and gym space which can be expensive and difficult to secure.
  - Providing food and drinks (breakfast, lunch, and snacks).
- It is time consuming (8+ hours).
- It can be challenging to provide a quality educational experience for the diverse levels of coaching experience among the participants.
- The cost mandates a minimum participation level of 10, which can be high for smaller ultimate communities.
- Acquiring a coach level membership is not tied to most of the educational components of the certification program. The current coach membership requirement is a background check.

#### Goals of the upgrade

- Provide coaches with a base level of material that enables them to coach according to professional, ethical, and legal standards.
- Teach individuals material that relates to their coaching situation.
- Create a program that is accessible, affordable and valuable.
- Create a program that encompasses the values of the “American Development Model” (ADM).
  - <http://www.teamusa.org/About-the-USOC/Athlete-Development/American-Development-Model>.

#### General overview of the upgrade



## Explanation with roll out target dates

### Coach Membership (By February/March 2017)

- The most significant change to the coach membership is that we have added some educational requirements to be eligible for a coach or coach/player membership.
- This new educational content is based on the current CDP curriculum. In reworking this curriculum we received feedback from current CDP instructors. Additionally three task forces in different regions of the country made up of current players and coaches provided input.
  - USA Ultimate will create updated content that covers Spirit of the Game, Ethics, Professionalism and Liability. This content will be distributed in the form of four short educational videos.
- The new coach level membership requirements will also cover content produced by the [Center for Disease Control](#) (a training about concussions) and [Safe Sport](#) (a training about Athlete Protection). As with the content created by USA Ultimate, both of these trainings are done as online videos.
- The main goal of this update to the coach level membership is to make sure that anyone who has a coach level membership has a base level of coaching education and to ensure players of all ages have a positive experience in a safe environment.
- All the required educational components will be completed online.
  - Because of the required background check and additional administration, individuals who need to buy a coach level membership will need to allow two weeks from start to finish to become eligible.
- All of the educational components of a coach membership need to only be completed once. Currently there will be no re-certification requirement.

### A, B, and C Certification levels (January 2018)

- Please note the name designations A, B and C will be changed for the final version.

#### General ideas with regard to A, B and C level certification

- The most consistent feedback we received from the current certification system was that the time was too long and it was too expensive, but the face-to-face time was invaluable.
- With this in mind, at all three certification levels:
  - Each clinic will be a maximum of three hours.
  - A coach membership will be required to be able to sign up for the clinic. This means that all participants will have watched the videos and will come into the clinic with some background knowledge, which will allow the clinic to have a more focused discussion.
  - Local communities will have to find individuals who are willing to become instructors.
    - This could be one person who teaches all three levels or multiple teachers; that is up to the local disc organization.
    - USA Ultimate will pay these instructors on a per clinic basis.
  - The entire clinic will take place in a classroom style setting.
  - For communities that do not have the population base to hold a clinic, there will be some online version of the clinics offered. These online clinics will not be for coaches in communities who are hosting certification clinics.
  - Through this system we are able to maintain value, while reducing barriers; keeping the face-to-face, which was so valuable to build communities and allow for discussion, while at the same time eliminating some of the most expensive (in terms of both time and money) aspects of the program.

- The certifications are not sequential. A club coach could become C level certified, without needing an A or B certification, if that is the level that is the most relevant to their coaching situation.
- These certification levels will become mandatory for coaches for some USA Ultimate events (a potential example might be that all U20 YCC teams are required to have a B level certified coach and all assistant coaches who want field access have to be coach members)

#### A Certification

- In terms of the ADM, this certification focuses on stage 2 athletes, “Develop and Challenge.”
- This level certification would be best for elementary, middle and junior high coaches, and possibly, coaches for high school programs which are in their infancy and have no feeder programs.
- The content of this clinic has yet to be finalized, but it will include:
  - Discussion of age specific issues with regards to ethics, professional responsibilities, and Spirit of the Game.
  - Discussion of best practices with this age group.
- A link for the job description and application to co-author this program can be found [here](#).

#### B Certification

- In terms of the ADM, this certification focuses on stage 3 athletes, “Train & Compete.”
- This level certification would be best for high school coaches, and possibly coaches for high level junior high programs, or college programs which are in their infancy and have a tendency to have teams made up of players with little ultimate experience.
- The content of this clinic has yet to be finalized, but it will include:
  - Discussion of age specific issues with regards to ethics, professional responsibilities, and Spirit of the Game.
  - Discussion of best practices with this age group.
- A link for the job description and application to co-author this program can be found [here](#).

#### C Certification

- In terms of the ADM, this certification focuses on stage 4 athletes, “Excel for high performance.”
- This level certification would be best for college and club coaches, maybe also coaches for elite high school programs.
- The content of this clinic has yet to be finalized, but it will include:
  - Discussion of age specific issues with regards to ethics, professional responsibilities, and Spirit of the Game.
  - Discussion of best practices with this age group.
- A link for the job description and application to co-author this program can be found [here](#).

We hope that this information helps explain the exciting changes coming soon to the USA Ultimate CDP. We will send out another communication in February/March when the new coach membership educational requirements are live. In the meantime, we have created an FAQ below to provide some more information. If you are qualified and interested in helping to write the clinic curricula, please click on the job description/application links above. If you are interested in contributing ideas and content for the curricula, please fill out the survey below.

Thanks to all coaches and organizers who have helped make the CDP a success to this point and those whom have already contributed to this upgrade. We look forward to working with you through these exciting and important changes for the program and the sport. Any questions or comments can be sent to Dan Raabe, [dan@hq.usultimate.org](mailto:dan@hq.usultimate.org).

A link for a survey regarding the clinic content for each certification level can be found [here](#).

## FAQ

### What about coach certification for 2017?

- For 2017, coach membership requirements will change, while coach certification will continue under the current system.

### Where will the new coach membership requirements be located on the USA Ultimate website?

- Once the new requirements are live there will be a link on the homepage of your USA Ultimate account, located directly below the Membership Button.

### What if you already bought a coach membership in 2017?

- Your coach membership will be valid for 2017, but in 2018 you will need to have completed the new educational requirements.
- If you already have a 2017 coach membership it will be possible to complete the educational requirements in 2017 so that you may purchase a coach membership in 2018. Be sure to download and keep the “Certificates of Completion” from both the CDC and SafeSport.

### What about members who have a lifetime membership?

- USA Ultimate members whom have purchased a lifetime membership, will not have to purchase an additional coach membership, but they will have to complete the educational requirements.

### Will there be anything to address issues of the lack women and diversity in the current coaching ranks?

- Yes. We will be looking to continue the [Women's Coaching Development program](#) as well as working to build new programs.

### Is the background check still required for a coach membership and certification?

- Yes. You must have a background check to get a coach membership and you must have coach membership to get a coach certification.
- Background checks will still be done through the National Center For Safety Initiatives (NCSI), the country's leading resource for background screening services for nonprofit and youth serving organizations.
- Both the duration and cost of a background check is set by NCSI and so it should not be affected by this program update.

### Will the price of the coach or coach/player membership go up?

- Not due to this program update. As with all memberships, coach-level membership prices may go up in the future.

### How will coaches recertify?

- This is still under discussion. We are exploring the feasibility of having coaches receive Professional Development credits for attending approved coaching seminars, attending approved conferences, or for running a GUM or Learn to Play clinic.

### How much will certification and re-certification cost?

- This is still under consideration. As has been mentioned above one of the goals was to try to reduce barriers as much as possible.

### What supplemental material will coaches receive when attending a clinic?

- As with re-certification this is also still under consideration. We are currently working with partners in the ultimate community to produce supplemental materials and expect to offer incentives that add value to becoming a USA Ultimate-Certified Coach.

### What about coaches who are already certified?

- Coaches who are currently Level I or Ethics certified will keep those certifications. During this transition time period, Level I or Ethics certifications will fulfill any event's Level A, B, or C requirements.
- Once a coach's Level I or Ethics certification has expired, he/she will not be able to renew it, instead they will now need to take an A, B, or C level certification.

**What if I already took the CDC or SafeSport course, but did not keep the certificate?**

- Both sites offer the option of "reprinting" the certificate. Otherwise you will have to take the course again. You must have your certificate of completion to be eligible for a coach membership.

**Can I help to create the curriculum that will be used at the A, B, or C level clinics?**

- Yes. A link for the job description and application to co-author these programs can be [here](#) for A certification, [here](#) for B certification, and [here](#) for C Certification

**Can I provide feedback regarding the curriculum content that will be used at the A, B, or C level clinics?**

- Yes. A link for a survey regarding the clinic content for each certification level can be found [here](#)