

A LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS

USA Ultimate Update from Feb. 22-23 Board of Directors Meeting

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A MESSAGE FROM
USA ULTIMATE'S CEO
ON ULTIMATE HAPPENINGS
IN THE U.S.

Wow, can it already be 2014? Here we go on another exciting year for the sport of ultimate in the U.S.! Over the weekend of February 22-23, we held our first Board of Directors meeting of the year, and I wanted to share some of the big strategic decisions that were made which will impact our plans going forward.

As we continue to evolve as both an organization and a sport, we took some time to reflect on the elements of ultimate that are valued, not only by our community, but also by important external groups such as the International Olympic Committee and, based on our initial discussions with them, held in high regard by the United States Olympic Committee. They include our unique hybrid observer/self-officiating model which keeps athletes in control of the game and reinforces Spirit of the Game as a critical element of the sport. The Olympic family sees it as a great reflection of Olympic ideals, while ESPN views it as a unique and entertaining aspect of the game.

Our commitment to gender equity and having our sport played at its highest level by mixed teams is a very attractive and unique element of our sport. The Olympic movement is very committed to gender equality and both ESPN and the Olympic family are intrigued by the mixed division.

So with these great fundamentals in place and attracting both attention and favorable reactions, the discussion shifted to how we continue to advance the sport: *our mission*.

BUILD NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

With exposure and growth as major goals, the Board directed the headquarters staff to finalize some ongoing research in order to develop and implement a plan for building a strong national infrastructure. In the years ahead, USA Ultimate will expand its Affiliate Program by forming close working/business relationships with local and regional disc organizations throughout the country to drive the growth and scalability of our sport. The goal is to grow into a “community of communities,” so we have a delivery mechanism at the local level for all of our programs. These local organizations will become an official part of USA Ultimate while teams in the various regions will also become an integral part of these local organizations. Imagine a national infrastructure where local organizations support the teams; the teams help their local organizations with clinics, coaching and mentoring; and USA Ultimate helps the local organizations stabilize, grow and thrive as 501(c)(3)s. This type of structure will catalyze ultimate’s growth while reinforcing and reinvigorating the community aspect of our mission. Once the model is finalized and approved by the Board, organizations will be invited to apply to become the official local USA Ultimate organization for their area. These first steps toward building this network of relationships have already started with the USA Ultimate Affiliate Program, and we look forward to continuing to build on that foundation throughout the country.



SHIFT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The Board established an important goal of being able to hold our National Championships in major ultimate cities and markets. Thus, the Triple Crown Tour season and series will be shifting into the summer over the next two years, so the National Championships can be hosted by cities like Seattle, Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Denver and Minneapolis, just to name a few. This shift will also increase the likelihood of significantly growing the viewership of, and interest in, our sport by casual sports fans who, in the fall, are focused on college football, MLB playoffs, NASCAR and the start of the NFL, NHL and NBA seasons. As we begin this shift, we will communicate and work closely with team and event organizers to ensure a transition that is well-planned and doesn't catch anyone by surprise.

U.S. NATIONAL TEAMS



As the world becomes more competitive and works to catch us, an inevitable outcome of worldwide growth, we will begin examining options to field "All-Star" teams to represent the United States at the WFDF World Ultimate and Guts Championships, similar to how we currently select teams for the World Games, U-23 and Junior World Championships. Not only will this allow us to stay competitive and challenge for the gold medal every time, it will also align us with common practices in the Olympic world and family. It will also make our international teams truly United States National Teams, with the entire community engaged in support of the teams and athletes.

USA ULTIMATE FOUNDATION

Finally, as announced earlier, a major outcome of the meeting was the decision to create the USA Ultimate Foundation. The Foundation will allow us to solicit and raise funds in support of our programs and special initiatives, such as support for our national teams and athletes, scholarship programs for disadvantaged youth, gender equity initiatives such as creating more opportunities for girls to play ultimate, and financial support for our state and local affiliates.

This development also aligns us with the best practices of most other national governing bodies, almost all of whom have a Foundation. Many great things happen as a result of Foundation resources. For example, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, with over \$60 million in assets, helps build fields across the U.S. and helped thousands of children in disadvantaged communities experience soccer in well-coached after-school programs. Another great example is the USA Hockey Foundation. With \$30 million in assets, each year the Foundation provides hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to USA Hockey's affiliates all over the U.S., to help them flourish and grow.

The future of ultimate is very bright, and we have an exciting plan to continue to advance the sport through character, community and competition. Everyone's welcome on this exciting journey!

