



Spirit Captains

(Adapted by USA Ultimate from WFDF "Spirit Captain's" job description, with permission. April 2016)

Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among competitors, adherence to the agreed upon rules, or the basic joy of play.

Requirements:

- **The spirit captain must be an active, rostered player**

Responsibilities of the Spirit Captain:

- **Before the Tournament**
 - Know the rules! A big component of Spirit of the Game (SOTG) is knowing and properly implementing the rules. Make sure that your teammates know the rules too!
 - Talk with your team about how to engage in a discussion about calls. Remember to "BE CALM":
 - Breathe.
 - Explain what you think happened.
 - Consider what they think happened.
 - Ask for advice.
 - Listen.
 - Make the Call.
 - Respond to any requests from the Tournament Director or Spirit Director.
- **Before the Game**
 - Meet with the opposing Spirit Captain and Observers a few minutes before the games. Introduce yourself and start off on a friendly note.
 - Did your team have any issues in a previous game that you're focusing in on improving (e.g. fast count on the mark, too much physicality on discs in the air)?
 - Did your team encounter any exemplary teams or strategies that demonstrate Spirit in the highest regard? It's always great to share these things with other teams!
- **During the Game**
 - Be proactive! Communicate with the opposing Spirit Captain as soon as any issues arise. Earlier is better than later, as this can avoid a game going "bad," especially if each team has differing viewpoints or expectations.
 - Encourage your teammates towards positive, spirited, behaviors.

- Take a few minutes to check in with the opposing Spirit Captain and Observers during halftime. Do any issues need to be corrected? Are things going great? Communicate both positive and negative aspects with the Opposing Spirit Captain.
- Aid your teammates in resolving Spirit issues off the field/between points and after games. Sometimes, things get heated in during the game. Make sure to discuss any contentious calls or plays with teammates involved and offer solutions to avoid future problems.
- Work with opposing Spirit Captains to resolve any serious Spirit issues throughout the game. Take a Spirit Timeout, if necessary.
- **After the Game**
 - Help facilitate a Spirit Circle with the opposing team. If for some reason there is not time, due to schedule constraints, at least check in with the opposing team's Spirit Captain to share any quick thoughts and decide if further discussion is needed.
 - Ensure that your team scores your opponent promptly on the five principles of Spirit. Be sure to engage your whole team in this activity, using it as a chance to reflect on the game and on your own team's spirit.
 - Enter or return scores promptly to tournament organizers or scorekeepers at your field. Following each tournament's directions for returning Spirit score sheets is really important for the system to work. This includes after your last game!
 - Keep backup records of all Spirit scores. Take a picture on your phone of the scoring sheet, create a note file in your phone or on a tablet, or write them down in a notebook.
- **After the Tournament**
 - Follow up with teams if necessary.
 - Respond to inquiries from other teams, Tournament Director or Spirit Director.

Spirit Scoring System

[You can download a 4-Games SOTG Scoring-Sheet 2014 on the WFDF website](#)

- There are five principles of Spirit:
 1. Rules knowledge
 2. Avoiding body contact
 3. Fair-mindedness
 4. Positive attitude
 5. Communication
- You can find definitions and examples of these five principles in the [Example Behaviors](#) sheet for guidance on scoring, available on the WFDF website
- Spirit scoring is a **team** effort! Your role is to facilitate scoring with input from your team:
 - Encourage all players to hold up fingers to "vote" for the score they think should be given in each category
 - People with outlying opinions (0's, 4's or maybe 1's and 3's) should speak about why they feel this way. Other players can then adjust their score, and then an average is taken.
 - Please clarify outlying scores of 0 or 4 with **comments**.
- Reminders for your team:
 - **Remember: a "2" is a "Good" score in any category.**

- **“Good” total scoring is between 8-13.**
- **Please use the Example Behaviors matrix on the back of the scoring sheet to help determine a team’s score in each category.**
- Fun games after the game is over are great but should not contribute to the Spirit score.
- Do **not** give lower Spirit scores out of retaliation or prejudice (e.g. Based on previous encounters with this team, or hearsay or reputation). Encourage your teammates to justify scores with the example behaviors sheet!
- Make sure to follow tournament directions and hand in your spirit score sheets promptly. This aids in stat keeping and also allowing the tournament organizers to be aware of issues that arise.
- Follow-up from Spirit Scoring
 - Scores and comments will be posted after the tournament, and may be posted during the event if resources are available.
 - If your team receives low scores (6 or lower), high scores (over 14), or 0s or 4s in several categories or over multiple games, expect some follow-up with a Spirit Director from the tournament. We want to help resolve any repetitive issues or highlight great examples.
 - If a team has several low scores and doesn’t improve, or has a particularly low score, the Spirit Director will address with the team and USA Ultimate competition staff will be informed.
 - A team that consistently give scores 15 or higher will be contacted by the Spirit Director, as that is considered a non-standard (unusually high) score and usually indicates that the scoring system is not being accurately employed.

Spirit Circles

- Spirit Circles are an example of a post-game spirit activity that teams can use to communicate with each other.
- Spirit Circles are intended to be held after the last point of a game ends. Both teams come together (usually near midfield) in a circle and link arms around each other, typically intermingling with opposing players.
- They are an opportunity to address Spirit issues, discuss game situations and/or complement the other team on a great game.
 - Be open, honest and candid, but not abusive.
 - Use this as an opportunity to learn and educate, if necessary.
 - Use this as an opportunity to share ideas or highlight great demonstrations of Spirit.
- Spirit Captains should take the leadership role, helping to create an opportunity for conversation to occur. Although the team will not have done its Spirit Scoring yet, a Spirit Captain should have a pretty good sense of how things went and can help provide space for others to speak as well to convey their experiences. The Spirit Circle communication may help inform the Spirit Scoring process.
- Immediately after the Spirit Circle is a great time for Captains and Spirit Captains to meet briefly and share impressions of the game, to help advise one another on what went well and opportunities for future improvement.

Spirit Timeouts

If both teams' Spirit Captains believe that either or both teams are failing to follow the Spirit of the Game (SOTG) and the game has reached a point where they consider it dangerous or simply a game that is no fun to play, they may call a "Spirit Timeout."

A Spirit Timeout can be called if all of the following conditions have been met:

- All other options have been attempted (i.e. both Spirit Captains met to discuss adjustments and one or both teams are not adapting)
- Both teams' Spirit Captains agree.
- Play is stopped or teams are between points.
- Note: In games with Observers, Spirit timeouts cannot be called directly by Spirit Captain. Instead, the Spirit Captains should be communicating with the Observers as well as each other throughout the game. Observers should continue to use their normal processes to deal with issues that arise in a game, including pausing the game to address concerns or issues with either team. Observers can call a spirit timeout if they feel it is appropriate, or if it is requested by both spirit captains.

During the Spirit Timeout:

- The Spirit Timeout will be capped at 3 minutes.
- Neither team may engage in tactical discussions.
- Spirit timeouts can function in one of two ways, as determined together by the Spirit Captains:
 1. Two circles will be formed:
 - a. The two opposing Team Captains and Spirit Captains shall meet on-field to discuss all current issues with adherence to SOTG, determine actions to rectify those issues, and then convey the agreement to the larger Spirit Circle.
 - b. All remaining members of both teams will form one "Spirit Circle" in the middle of the field with both teams.
 2. All team members of both teams will form one "Spirit Circle". The conversation will then be led by each team's Spirit Captain.
- SOTG stoppages **do not** affect time-outs available.
- By default, Spirit Timeouts **do not** affect caps.
 - There is always the option for the tournament director to allow the cap to be extended. This should occur through communication between the Spirit Captains and the tournament director. Teams should not do this on their own without consulting the tournament director.
- After the timeout is over, teams can set up and game restarts as after a normal time-out.