

Captaining - Overview

1. Captain Responsibilities and Logistics

- Summer League games will be played at Total Sports in Wixom, off Wixom road north of 96. Games are at 7:30 or 9 pm and run for 1.5 hours. There will be no games on Friday, February 3rd, otherwise the season runs from Friday January 20th through March 17th.
- **Game start times must be prompt! We only have the fields for 3 hours, and don't get to play late if we're responsible for starting late.** Encourage your team to show up early. There isn't room for warmup/drills, but your team should be ready on the sideline 10 minutes before the game so we can get our moneys worth out of the fields. Be assured that the next team will kick you off the fields promptly at their start time. Call last point 5 minutes before the end of your time so the other teams have time to set up.

If you are unable to take the field at start time due to a previous user (those darn soccer kids :-)) running late, we can play late by the amount they make us wait, but then we have to have issues with the people who come after us as well, so be prompt if at all possible. If you do start late, make sure to tell the following teams captains what's going on, so they don't get pissed at you, and so they can tell the people coming on after them not to get pissed either. Everyone who uses this field has the same clause in their contract, so it shouldn't be a problem. Try to get the field set up and get 7 on the line within 5-10 minutes of our start time. Start with 6v6 or 5v5 if you have to. (personally I prefer those numbers anyway :-))

- Things to do before the game:
 1. Set up field
 2. Flip for shirt color when necessary (this should be rare, as colors are assigned)
 3. Flip for who will pull/which side (decide if you're having a half and mirroring at half or just playing through, as this will influence who picks what- I advise playing through, but whatever you agree on is fine. If you do have a half, make it short.)
 4. Discuss gender balance- balance gender, but don't do it such that women get 3 times as much playing time as men because there are fewer of them. With \$80/season, play time should be balanced. Match gender between teams by swapping players if at all possible- i.e. if one team has 4 women and the other has 1, swap 1 or 2 over, so that 1 doesn't play 100% of the time and the 4 25% of the time.
 5. Discuss pick-ups
 6. Discuss whether or not zone defenses will be used, don't surprise the other captain who may have new players on their team.
- Rules for games: Play by the 10th edition rules with the three modifications below. For the full rules, see <http://www.upa.org/ultimate/rules/rules.shtml>.
 1. No turnover on dropped pull. Instead, defense gets to set up, then tap the disc in.
 2. No Kick Blocks within 5 feet of thrower
 3. Zone is illegal during first 2 games (or whatever you agree on with the other captain)
- Games are played to time, be that 8 points or 28. Call last point a five minutes before the scheduled end time, don't delay the teams after you.
- Play 7 on each side or whatever makes sense depending on attendance/preference (the fields are a bit narrow, so sometimes 6/side is preferred, especially if attendance is low).
- In game timing is casual, (you don't have to start a delay of game count at every turnover) but keep things moving. Talk to the other captain if they're taking too long talking on the line, getting to the disc, etc.

- No pickups unless your team is low on players (less than 3 subs). Only use if absolutely necessary, ideally from the other team, or then from another time slot. People who haven't paid \$80 for the season aren't allowed to play. Remember, 5v5 is fun too. :-) You must get pickups approved by the other captain. Reconsider pickups at half-time, as new players show up, or any other time that the balance of the game is being affected. Keep the games fair and balanced! Keep in mind that people paid \$80 to play this season, they are entitled to game time before pickups, even if the pickup is another winter league player.
- Cleats are allowed, but in my experience, on this turf, sneakers work fine too. No metal cleats.
- We can play in lightning since it's indoors! No weather or field condition rules. :-) Games are never cancelled for snow storms, though we've condensed down to 1 game if very few players make it through a storm.
- Log Scores/Spirit/Attendance online (see a2ultimate.org for link). If you have trouble with the form, let Tim Berla know (T.BERLA@CGNET.COM). This is a good place to tell us how the season is going, let us know about any spirit or other problems, make suggestions etc. You can also email me (thecat@umich.edu) at any time about anything.

2. Teaching/Coaching Discussion

- Approaches: There are many ways to get a message across
 1. 1 voice at a time – designate one person to do the speaking
 2. 1 concept at a time – don't overload with too much information all at once.
 3. whiteboard & markers, towels & coins, walk-throughs, demonstrations
 4. In winter league you don't have much time to go over strategy, you can't do the usual drills and other teaching techniques. So watch players on the field (especially newer players) and then give them advice when you're both on the sideline. Talk quickly on the line and during points. Email discussions between games are good ideas too.
- Pitfalls: Ways *not* to get a message across
 1. lots of jargon
 2. overload, lots of information all at once (this often comes from other players, for example at halftime when each person has their pet issue they want to talk about, and suddenly you have 15 things you're trying to work on at once.) As captain you may want to focus your team on working on one or two areas of improvement at a time.
 3. zero repetition between games
- Progression: As the season goes by, what a team might learn and when
 1. first game - Offense: the stack. Defense: the force
 2. fifth game: zone defense & offense (when your team is prepared), horizontal stack offense, etc.
- Out of good spirit, warn the other captain if you're throwing zones or other advanced strategies. By all means by the end of the season your players should have seen and tried several different zones and offensive strategies, but don't surprise the other captain, who may be stuck with new players while you're not, with a horizontal stack and 232 zone on the first game.

3. Spirit/Having a good time

- E-mail your team before the first game! Make sure they know about the times/locations/etc. E-mail chatter between games is a good way to foster a growing sense of community. Experience shows that your attendance will be directly proportional to the amount of e-mails you send out between games. We encourage captains to be in contact with their teams via e-mail at least once per week.

- Encourage social activities (visits to the bar, team parties, etc.) after games. This is especially easy at Total Sports since you almost have to walk through the bar to leave the building anyway. :-)
- Inclusion: Everyone plays - encourage frequent subbing (good players tend to stay on forever). Especially in winter league, make sure everyone gets their fair share of game time, they paid for it! A good system is to stay on for 2 or 3 points, then sub out, and thus get a rotation going. Noone should be on for 5 points straight- even you- even if you're losing.
- Balance: winning is nice, but winning should not be defined by points scored alone. A better measure of how good you're doing at captaining is how much your team is enjoying themselves, and how much your newer players are developing skills and an understanding of the game. Winter league is a rec league, we don't track standings- having fun is the priority.
- It's a co-ed league: gender match as best as possible.
- Inclusion- make sure everyone is involved! I have a huge pet peeve against teams that assume their women can't throw, then make it a self-fulfilling prophecy by surrounding a woman with 6 dumps every time she gets the disc, a strategy which always results in a turn-over. A thrower, either gender, however experienced, is only as good as the people cutting for them. As a captain, it's important that you watch to see that no player is getting constantly looked off or ignored. There are often one or two players on a team that perceive someone else as incompetent for whatever reason (perhaps a couple drops early on) and never throw to them, and especially early on in the season such an impression can stick in the entire team's minds. Tell the handlers to throw to everyone, and the cutters to cut for everyone. Give the newbies advice on how to make good cuts, on how to get the disc. They won't be new for long.

4. **Problems**

- The AAUSL organizing committee has the power to suspend/dismiss any player or team for flagrant violation or intentional disregard of League rules, field rules and/or policies set by AAUSL.
- In general anyone who plays unsafely, be it kicking hands or other endangerment (such as major or repeated collisions due to inattentiveness), will be ejected from the game, and if serious enough or repeated, from the league. The range of skill levels and range of sizes of the players involved in these leagues makes it especially important to play responsibly. Please enforce this at the games, and to report any irresponsible players first to their captains (who should then talk to the players), and then to the league organizers. (email: thecat@umich.edu, and/or brianamer@yahoo.com, and/or t.berla@cgnet.com) Fortunately we've never had to kick anyone out of the league, but there have been a few people with spirit or competitiveness issues. All it takes is a couple of quiet conversations and the problem is usually resolved. On the other hand, bad spirit left unchecked brings down the spirit of the entire league as everyone has to suffer through it. So as captains it's your responsibility to at least start the conversation with the player or at least let us know we need to.

5. **Spirit Reports**

- Teams are required to provide spirit scores for their opponents. Teams with consistently low spirit scores will merit attention from the league organizers. Also log game scores and attendance. The game scores will help us with our team balancing system, and help us pick a good match for the final game. Attendance will help us with team sizing and other details. So please let us know how it's going.
- Log Scores/Spirit/Attendance online (see a2ultimate.org for link). If you have trouble with the form, let Tim Berla know (T.BERLA@CGNET.COM).