

WFDF ULTIMATE CHAIR REPORT – Congress 2017

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General Update

2016 Events

The major WFDF Ultimate event that occurred in the past year was the 2016 World Ultimate and Guts Championship in London. This event was attended by 114 teams from 36 countries, which was the largest World Championship in WFDF history. Our events are growing to the point of capacity for Tournament Organizing Committees to be able to host them, and while the size and scope of our events do present a number of logistical issues, we are also becoming more visible to potential host cities as a serious event with a significant economic impact. Size and growth of events is a trend that will take up much of WFDF's focus in the coming years.

The interest in sending teams to WFDF events is coming from several changes we are seeing with our member federations. First, WFDF is adding member countries at a steady pace, and these new countries tend to be more developed than new members were 10 years ago, meaning that they are sending teams to WFDF events sooner. We are also seeing a general trend of small countries that have not sent teams to WFDF events in the past now being interested in having teams attend at least 1 event per year. Finally, and possibly most significantly, WFDF is seeing a growth in interest from the mid-sized federations. Countries that sent 1 team in the past are sending 2-3, countries that used to send 2-3 are sending 4-5 and are attending multiple events. Between these 3 factors, we have seen a dramatic increase in demand for spots at all WFDF events.

2017 Championship Appendix

On January 1st, 2017 the WFDF board at the recommendation of the Ultimate Committee introduced our updated Championship Appendix. While most of the changes were minor adjustments, there were a few changes of note.

A new Gender Ratio rule was created for Mixed Divisions, moving away from "Offense Chooses", which was the original rule, created to encourage gender equity. The new "End Zone Chooses" rule creates a situation where each team gets an equal chance to determine the gender ratio over the course of a game. This change was quickly adopted by Australia and Canada and preliminary indications are that the rule increases the frequency of points with a 4 female and 3 male ratio. An automatic gender ratio rule was also created and will be used at the World Games. This rule ensures that all games will have an equal number of points played with each ratio (within 1 point). There have been discussions within the Ultimate Committee to recommend that this automatic rule be used for the 2020 WUGC.



The 2017 Appendix also acknowledged the creation of the World Ultimate Masters Club Championships, which will have its inaugural event in 2018. Rules were created to help allocate bids for this event, and work was also done on defining additional age eligibility categories. Again on the theme of growth, we are seeing increased demand for Masters divisions, which we will need to accommodate in the coming years.

A small change worth mentioning is to the definition of a “small ultimate country” in terms of roster eligibility. WFDF had previously defined a small country as one with less than 300 registered players, and this designation came with additional roster flexibility for “National” team events. This has been adjusted to look at the total players per gender for Men’s and Women’s teams. If a country has less than 150 players of either gender they are granted the increased flexibility for Men’s or Women’s teams as appropriate.

A large addition to the Championships Appendix was the documentation of a number of rules that were spread out among other sources or items around scheduling events that could be described as “unwritten” rules. These were in the area of how Seeding is determined, how Pools structures are set up, Schedule parameters and game cancellation criteria – coming on the heels of some difficult decisions made in London. Following WUGC we also have added a stipulation to future bids that a minimum number of turf fields be available on the final days of an event so playoffs in all divisions can be completed.

Lastly, there was significant work done on the formalization of a role we have created at major events, the WFDF Tournament Technical Director. This role is filled by a WFDF official or designate for all WFDF events. The TTD has a number of roles at an event, and is the final arbiter of the “competition” side of the event.

Upcoming WFDF Events

The Event Manager report summarizes upcoming events on the WFDF calendar. Looking further out, WFDF is currently accepting bids for events in the 2019 and 2020 timeframe. For 2020, it is the recommendation of the Ultimate Committee that Masters divisions be split off from WUGC to form their own event, as is being done in 2018 with WMUCC. Without this move WFDF would be unable to consider additional Masters division or allow more teams to enter current Masters divisions.

This change will take some pressure off the size of WUGC, but considering the growth in demand we are seeing from WFDF member countries to participate in events we can not be sure that even in 2020 with just 3 divisions that we will be able to continue the tradition of allowing all countries to attend Worlds. The Ultimate

Committee is currently discussing possible qualification systems which could be implemented to limit future WUGC events in terms of the # of teams/countries attending in each division.

American Masters Games – Vancouver

In what is our first small step towards having ultimate involved in more multi-sport events, ultimate was entered into the 2017 American Masters Games. A total of 6 teams, 3 Men's and 3 Women's, played a double round robin over a weekend in Vancouver. Good news was that everyone got a medal. This first small step is sure to be followed by other bigger events in the future, with increased ultimate participation.

Game Advisors

The WFDF Game Advisor program has transitioned from a pilot in 2014/2015 and a full-fledged program in 2016/2017. A GA Task force has been formed to help with the development of the program. This task force consists of Greg Connelly (USA), Rueben Berg (AUS), Liam Kelly (GBR) and Sheillah Quintos (CAN).

The Task force has created a GA Training manual and process for training new advisors, has created a database of current WFDF GAs, and most importantly has started the process of training new GAs around the globe to meet future demand for use at WFDF and eventually non-WFDF events. The task force has set a goal of having 100 certified Game Advisers by the end of 2018, with 25% of these being female.

Training sessions in 2017 have included clinics at TEP in Colombia and Flower Bowl in Vancouver. There is another clinic planned to run at AOUC in Manila in August. Game Advisers are also being trained in Australia, where they are in use at National level events already. There is also an opportunity to connect with a new USAU college mixed series of tournaments currently being planned for the Fall of 2017. Plans are TBD.

In 2018 the task force will look to hold a clinic in Central/Eastern USA or Canada as well as in Europe.

The need for GAs will increase dramatically in 2018, with WFDF planning on covering 4 events (WU24 – Perth AUS, WUCC - Cincinnati USA, WMUCC – Winnipeg CAN, WJUC – Waterloo CAN)

Other Items

Work is continuing to bring WFDF and USAU rules together with an eye to a final convergence of the rule sets in the future. There are

some easy items and some larger more difficult issues, but I'm confident that we will see the creation of a single unified rule set in the near future.

For the rest of 2017 and into 2018 the Ultimate Committee will be looking at a number of issues other than those already documented in this report. These include looking at bid allocation processes for Regional events, discussing issues around "Club" vs "National" events and how we can best position our World events around these two different kinds of rosters as well as taking a look at standardizing age eligibility limits for current and future (older) divisions with Beach and USAU rules.

Conclusion

WFDF continues to grow not only in the number of member federations, but in the number of and size of events we host. At any given time we are engaged with between 5-10 events in the bidding, planning, delivery or wrap up stages. This creates tremendous demand on our staff and working committees. With WUCC in 2018 we are coming to the end of the first 4-year cycle where we have had a full time Event Manager in place to help run our events. We are now at the point where we need to start looking at an increase of staff to manage the workload for the next 4-year cycle, with current events growing and the addition of new events such as Continental Beach events, World Masters Championships, as well as increased participation in multi-sport events.