

COMMISSIONER'S HANDBOOK

H.U.L.A. LEAGUE GUIDELINES

**FIRST EDITION
May 1999**

**Mahalo to former H.U.L.A. Boards, especially the
1998-1999 Board, for their role in material-
ization of this 1st edition Handbook.**

H.U.L.A. Website: <http://www.hawaiiultimate.com>

Long live ultimate frisbee!

PRELUDE

The following Commissioner's Handbook is a compilation of advice and guidance from former Hawaii Ultimate commissioners. The Handbook is offered in the spirit of assisting commissioners, seasoned and non-seasoned alike, in one of the most important, challenging and arduous roles of Hawaii Ultimate. Similarly, in order to assist your successor and future commissioners, we ask that upon completion of your tenure, you contribute to the development of this Handbook. To facilitate you in your contribution, a copy of this Handbook is on a diskette with your current H.U.L.A. President.

A Note on Spirit of the Game

Spirit of the Game is one of the first items listed in the UPA Rules of Ultimate 9th Edition. As commissioner, it is your duty to help spread the following SOTG gospel:

Spirit of the Game Ultimate has traditionally relied upon a spirit of sportsmanship which places the responsibility for fair play on the player highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of the bond of mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed upon rules of the game, or the basic joy of play. Protection of these vital elements serves to eliminate adverse conduct from the Ultimate field. Such actions as taunting of opposing players, dangerous aggression, intentional fouling, or other "win-at-all-costs" behavior are contrary to the spirit of the game and must be avoided by all players.

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A. Logistics

1. Pick dates and length for your season. This is not as easy as it sounds, and you may consult veteran players to get helpful hints. Consider conflicts with other local and mainland disc events; and holiday seasons. There are some classic periods when league attendance has plummeted historically, including:
 - Early summer when people in academics are finishing up, and many others travel.
 - Thanksgiving can be touch and go.
 - Fall league should finish by early December - lots of people travel for the holidays.
2. Select playing field location(s), and secure permits. Obtaining permits can be difficult and must be done well in advance of the season - 2 months or more if possible. There is a lot of competition from other groups. NOTE: Any contact with the Honolulu Polo Club (WIMANALO fields) should be made through the H.U.L.A. Vice President.
3. Contact City and County of Honolulu, Parks and Recreation. Identify YOURSELF as ultimate league coordinator, and provide your name and phone number as the OFFICIAL contact. Ask for a permit for the length of your season, and see if your desired day & time slot is available. Pick up permit, and bring it weekly to league games. Commonly used fields include:

Kapaolono (Mr. Pak Tam): 733-7370 Kapiolani: 971-2525
UH Manoa: 988-4747 Ala Wai: 973-7266
4. Circulate a sign up sheet at pickup and other disc events 34 weeks prior to our season to develop a league roster. If current players sign up a friend, it is a good idea to check directly with this "friend" before placing them in the draft. Use the phone list from the previous league to help contact additional players. Call no-shows from the previous season to try and get them back into

IMPORTANT: It is the responsibility of the commissioner to obtain a player list from the previous commissioner on diskette, update it for distribution during your league, and pass it on to the new commissioner!! The list should contain name, address, phone, and email.

5. Design a draft. There are many methods to do this; see "Tricks" in section B for a few. Call and facilitate a pre-season captains meeting. If you will use a draft, now is the time. Also, go over and negotiate rules for your league. Some will be mandatory (your choice), some will be agreed upon by the captains. Examples include length of games, time/point caps, picking of new players, half-times, male/female ratio, team colors, etc.
6. Print out and distribute current league rules, guidelines, and game schedule to all players via their captains.
7. Plan an opening day event.- this is an important bonding experience. Providing items such as food, drink, music, shade, and a great venue should be considered. Opening day can either be the first league game, or a hat draw to get people stoked. The latter choice has the advantage of allowing you to finalize your player sign-up list.
8. Bring cones, field permits and other materials as needed to every event. If you can't make it, you must hand these off to one of your captains who have first game. Assign a captain or other person from the last games to pick up the cones, lost and found materials, and rubbish. You could schedule each team to have clean-up responsibility after league games once per season.
9. Organize post season party, and obtain awards. Along with opening day, this is the most important event of the season. Players of the winning team are typically given a trophy (try and make it practical/useful), and each captain should be provided a spirit award for the team member of their choice.
10. Keep books on your league finances. Keep track of all transactions. These include revenue from dues, a running balance, and all saved receipts. YOU can petition the H.U.L.A. Board for additional funds to support league events and activities. H.U.L.A. does not supply alcohol due to liability.

11. IMMEDIATELY after the end of the season, make comments on this document (we wish to constantly upgrade these guidelines) and submit them along with your league financial summary and current player roster to a H.U.L.A. Board member.

B. Tricks of the Trade

1. The commissioner is advised to allow individuals who recruit new players to keep those two individuals on the same team. This may help the new player to stay with the game, and get past intimidating behavior from game fiends.
2. Based on the league sign up, last season's player turnout, and advice from veterans, select the number of teams for your league. As a general rule, you should have 12 people per team, bare bones minimum. Around 15 per team is considerably better, as no-shows/injuries will have less impact on your captain's ability to field a respectable team, week in and week out.
3. Select your captains. These individuals will be the foundation of your league, your major liaison to the players, and facilitators to help your season flow, so pick carefully. Captains must be leaders in spirit, strategy, and responsibility. -In most cases, players with at least a few years experience are recommended. You need to explain to prospective candidates:
 - Responsibilities
 - The need to support you as commissioner
 - That they in turn may become commissioner
4. An important topic to clarify with your captains is how non-drafted players will be placed as they show up during the season. Either set up a fixed rotation by team, or simply retain the right to place them as you see fit. The latter allows you to judge team strength, and place additional players on teams that really need them.
5. Sample draft method #1 - captains pick players directly. In this case, it is recommended that men and women are picked from separate pools. A relatively fair way of assigning draft picks in each round is as follows, assuming 4 teams A-D (add on additional teams using same pattern):

| <u>Pick</u> | <u>Round 1.5, etc.</u> | <u>Rnd 2</u> | <u>Rnd 3</u> | <u>Rnd 4</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1st | A | B | C | D |
| 2nd | B | C | D | A |
| 3rd | C | D | A | B |
| 4th | D | A | B | C |

Sample draft method #2 - commissioner maintains control to promote even distribution of player skill, with a goal of maximum league parity. First, group all players into similarly skilled pools (e.g. six players per pool for a six team league). For example, pool six veteran handlers together, six veteran speedsters together, six newcomers together, etc. Then either pick players out of a hat within each pool (no captain control), or allow your six captains to pick one player per pool using a sequence similar to that shown above - each pool equals one round (moderate captain control). Captains do not pick within the one pool that they were placed in by the commissioner.

Note: A **commonly** used format in past seasons was to use the simple sequence of A, B, C, D in the first round, D, C, B, A in the second, A, B, C, D again in the third, and so forth. History and experience have shown that teams A& D end up as the strongest. This occurs because there is a tremendous advantage to being able to repeatedly pick two players in a row. Use of this method is **VERY STRONGLY DISCOURAGED**, as it leads to lack of team parity - you are essentially favoring two teams to win the league before a single game has been played! Not very fair to all individuals involved.

6. Couples commonly wish to play on the same team, so try and work such requests into your team selection process to the best of your ability. Swapping draft picks is one way to deal with this.
7. Establish league dues and work with captains, otherwise you will get an unpleasant surprise if trying to collect from players individually. One suggestion is that you require CAPTAINS to pay for half of their entire team roster on game day #1, and the other half on game day #3. This places the responsibility of money collection on the captains, and gives you the capital you need to provide a quality league. Tell them their team forfeits if they miss a payment. Accept no partial payments or excuses. Be firm and don't waver at all - the jackals will smell blood and charge. In recent history, dues have been set at \$10 per player.

Another suggestion is to have players pay IN ADVANCE in order to get their names listed on the draft. Reminder: the H.U.L.A. Treasurer can assist in league dues collection.

8. Call all time caps as established during your pre-season captains meeting. Advise captains of schedule and field changes. Resolve conflicts **WHEN ASKED** - calmly, quietly, quickly.
9. Alcohol and dogs are not permitted in city parks. We have received multiple warnings from Kapaolono Park. Deal directly with these sensitive issues.
10. Make sure you locate and procure the schlaup and tie from the previous winner (give 'em a big fat kiss), and get them to the post-season party.

FORMER COMMISSIONERS (Partial List)

Get advice and support from past league commissioners, the ones below. They know the trials and tribulations of your job and, as such, are an important resource for you

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Spring League</u> | <u>Fall League</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1994 | Lori Daniels | Anne Baginski |
| 1995 | Maureen Duffy | Johnny '99' Holzach |
| 1996 | Jeff Iversley | Keek Hottendorf |
| 1997 | Wes Rupel | Jon Dusza |
| 1998 | Michael Constantinides | James 'Jim' Teo |
| 1999 | Nancy Faraj | Dave DeBolt |
| 2000 | Scott Todd | Mark Alexander |
| 2001 | Kevin Bartholemew | |

SPIRIT OF THE GAME (SOTG) GUIDELINES

SOTG is one of the first rules listed in the 9th Edition of UPA rules. To uphold this vital concept, some suggestions for the commissioner based on past H.U.L.A. incidents are:

- 1 Direct your captains to keep foul disputes between players involved. If intervention is required, only captains should be involved. Tell other players to move away.
- 2 Exposed blood is a health hazard - times have changed. As a courtesy to other players, any injury that results in an open wound or bleeding must be covered in order for the individual to continue play. Injury substitution should be required while the individual attends to his/her wound(s). There should be a league first aid kit at the field for such situations. There will be no exceptions to this rule. The main objective is to keep as much blood as possible off the fields.
- 3 Physical altercation is not tolerable. The commissioner should decide the consequence of such behavior, ranging from a one point penalty to ejection for the season.
- 4 Stronger, more aggressive participants must never commit a foul which causes physical harm to other players, especially those who are more fragile or are novices. Again, consequence should range from point penalties to game/season ejection.
- 5 Captains will be given a disclaimer of Liability and a description detailing the SOTG. All players must sign a form to uphold the SOTG. The players will then be notified that breach of the SOTG will have consequences that could include but are not limited to:

Sitting out a point

Points assessed against their team

Ejection from game

Multiple game suspension

Expulsion from league

There will be a decision making review panel that consists of the captains, the commissioner, and any H.U.L.A. Board member(s) who witnessed the event. Other witnesses maybe consulted as needed.

CAPTAIN'S CHECKLIST

The following are some tips for making your job effective.

1. Support your commissioner. The commish has a relatively thankless job, and players are always trying to push their own agenda on him/her. When the commish makes a call or a decision, stand by it and ask your team to do so as well.
2. Communicate with your team. Many captains call their players before each game as a reminder, You could employ a phone tree to make this easier.
3. If you wish to provide shirts, ask your team for help.
4. Get cones from the commish and set up fields.
5. Lead by example. Promote spirit of the game; be prompt and field your team on time; follow through with established guidelines (time caps, time outs, etc.); collect team dues as directed by commissioner; go for the schlaup.
6. Help resolve conflicts **WHEN ASKED** - calmly, quietly, quickly. If one of your players displays excessively bad spirit, you should intervene and remove him/her from the situation. For example, assign the person to cover a different member of the other team, or ask him/her to sit down for a few points.
7. Reach out to new players and encourage them. Spend time teaching them the game, always be positive, and perhaps assign one of your veterans to mentor each newcomer.
8. Keep track of the score, or make sure somebody is.
9. **NO MATTER WHAT**, you must give your opponents a cheer at the end of each game.