ULTIMATE CANADA
Long-term Athlete Development Model

- Active Start (AS)
- FUNdamentals (FUN)
- Learn to Play (L2P)
- Train to Play (T2P)
- Train to Compete (T2C)
- Learn to Win (L2W)
- Train to Win (T2W)
- Ultimate for Life (U4L)
Active start prepares children for a physically active lifestyle by laying a solid foundation of fundamental movement skills. Playing with discs is a great way to get children active and practice elements of Spirit of the Game (SOTG).

**Goal** - Learn fundamental movements and link them together into play.

**SOTG** - Encourage children to keep a positive attitude during play and experience the basic joy of playing.

**Technical** - Introduce throwing and catching.

**Physical** - Get children running, jumping, twisting and balancing through various activities. Encourage children to participate in many different sports.

**Psychological** - Design activities that help the child feel competent and comfortable! Have fun and build the child’s confidence to try new things.

*At the Park*

**Special rules:** Adults are advised to discontinue play when the child has lost interest.

**Game format:** Simple unstructured play and games that stimulate fun and interest. Eg. Throwing as far, high or as fast as possible and then running to get the disc.

**Equipment:** Soft disc, smaller discs (145g), any additional equipment.

Refer to full document for more information
During this stage, fundamental movement skills are further developed and motor development is emphasized. Children must be provided a well-structured, fun and stimulating environment to develop the ABC’s of athleticism (agility, balance, coordination, and speed), hand-eye coordination and time to experiment with basic Ultimate-specific skills.

**Goal** - Learn all fundamental movement skills and introduce basic Ultimate skills in a fun environment. Develop the athlete first – encourage multi-sport participation.

**SOTG** - Participants develop a basic understanding of SOTG.

**Technical** - Introduce basic throwing and catching skills.

**Tactical** - Engage in small-sided games that emphasize importance of playing as a team.

**Physical** - Introduce flexibility exercises while also developing ABCs of athleticism (agility, balance, coordination & speed) and hand-eye coordination. Encourage children to participate in many sports that build the ABCs.

**Psychological** - Introduce teamwork & cooperation and basic decision-making. Emphasize development of skill and confidence. De-emphasize winning.

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**At the Park**

**Special rules:** All participants get equal time touching the disc. Emphasize non-contact.

**Game format:** Simple unstructured play, challenges and games that stimulate fun and interest in disc sports. All games should allow every participant to touch the disc several times and focus on fundamental skills.

**Equipment:** Soft disc, smaller discs (145g), cleats, cones, any additional equipment for targets and fun games.

**Session length:** 1 hour/week

**Season length:** Schools 1-4 weeks; Clubs 8-12 weeks; Multisport camps 1-5 sessions/week.
**L2P focuses on athletes mastering basic Ultimate skills through training. Structured competition is introduced during this stage to test and refine skills learned in practice. Athletes begin to learn about training elements and mental preparation.**

**Goal** - Learn fundamental movements and link them together in play.

**SOTG** - Encourage children to keep a positive attitude during play and experience the basic joy of playing.

**Technical** - Develop throwing and catching.

**Physical** - Get children running, jumping, twisting and balancing through various activities. Children should be encouraged to play at least three sports, with one being Ultimate.

**Psychological** - Design activities that help the child feel competent and comfortable! Have fun and build the child’s confidence to try new things.

### At the Field

**Competition format:** Participate in one hybrid-event tournament each season (games and skills development).

**Special rules:** Players are introduced to simple rules of Ultimate. All players are selected for teams/programs. No zone played or statistics recorded.

**Game format:** Indoor/outdoor 4v4 or 5v5 games, using standard ultimate rules, with game length based on equal playing time. Coaches may introduce speed-point later in this stage.

**Specialization:** All players should play all positions and have a chance to pull, pick up the disc after a turn over, etc.

**Equipment:** Smaller/lighter discs (145g), shoes/cleats, cones, and uniform/pinnie.

**Recommended training times:** 1 hour/session, 1-2 times/week.

**Season length:** 4-12 weeks.

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<tr>
<th>Game format</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Width</td>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4v4</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>18 m/20 yds</td>
<td>27 m/30 yds</td>
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<tr>
<td>5v5</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>23 m/25 yds</td>
<td>39 m/42 yds</td>
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Refer to full document for more information
Train to Play (T2P)

T2P focuses on preparing the athlete for the demands of the sport both physically and mentally. An increased understanding of tactics and strategies used in Ultimate assists athletes in the continued development and consolidation of skills. It is by the end of this stage that athletes transition from T2P to T2C or Ultimate for Life for more recreational participation in Ultimate.

**Goal** - Train the whole Ultimate athlete based on their physical, technical, tactical, mental, cognitive, and emotional development.

**SOTG** - Athletes take responsibility for their actions, respect others and practice conflict resolution.

**Technical** - Develop and consolidate skills learned in previous stages.

**Tactical** - Learn position-specific defensive strategies and basic zone offense (later in stage).

**Physical** - Team and/or individualized fitness program (including exercise, nutrition and rest) is provided. Introduce weight training using body weight and speed training. Athletes should be encouraged to participate in two sports, with one being Ultimate.

**Psychological** - Coach provides personalized expectations based on athlete’s physical capacities and skill level.

### At the Field

**Competition format:** 1-2 league games/week and 1-2 tournaments/season. No more than 2 games in a row during tournaments.

**Special rules:** No zone until later in stage. Modify field size & game length early in stage. Transition to full size field later in stage.

**Game format:** Transition from small-sided to full-field games later in the stage/season.

**Specialization:** Transition from playing multiple positions to focusing on 2-3 positions by end of stage.

**Equipment:** Full-size discs, cleats, cones, uniforms/pinnies.

**Recommended training each week:** 1-2 practices (includes throwing & physical training elements); 2-3 complementary sport/running sessions; 1 throwing session & additional stretching sessions. Sessions range from 30-120 minutes.

**Season length:** 8-16 weeks (combination of indoors and outdoor based on region).

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<td>4v4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7v7</td>
<td>10-14 league</td>
<td>32 m/35 yds</td>
<td>45.7 m/50 yds</td>
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<td>12-16 tourn.</td>
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Refer to full document for more information.
Train to Compete (T2C)

STAGE 5: Ages 15-19

T2C focuses on creating a strong support network to assist the athlete with their development as demands in and outside of Ultimate increase. Athletes at this stage are committed, competitive and focused on their performance at an advanced level. Care must be taken during this stage as elite Ultimate teams begin to express interest in recruiting talented junior players. Support networks must ensure that the long-term interests of the player are protected.

Goal - Perform basic and Ultimate-specific skills under a variety of competition conditions. Build strong support network for athletes to ensure continual development.

SOTG - Athletes/team demonstrate a sophisticated understanding and application of SOTG and rules during training and competition.

Technical - Players demonstrate a high degree of consistency completing throws and catches during competitive play and begin to consolidate cutting and defensive skills.

Tactical - Introduce advanced zone offense and defense strategies.

Physical - Athletes are fit enough to train and compete without injuries or burnout. Athletes enter this stage if they have chosen to specialize in one sport and excel at the highest level of competition possible.

Psychological - Athletes should love the game and thrive on competition.

At the Field

Competition format: All divisions should maintain a 40:60 training to competition ratio. Recommendation to attend 1-2 tournaments per month. Total game play should not exceed 4.5 hours per day.

High school: Max 90 min games, max 2 games back to back, max 3 games per day.

University & club: Max 100 min games, max 3 games per day.

Game format: Full-field games during competition and small-sided games for training.

Specialization: Performing in one position while maintaining others.

Recommended training each week: 2-3 practices;

2-3 complementary training sessions including weight training, sprinting and other sports. Training sessions may be combined together and/or incorporated into practices. Recommendation of at least one rest day which can include throwing and stretching.

Season length: 4-5 months/season with athletes competing in 2-3 seasons/year.

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<tr>
<td>7v7</td>
<td>16-28*</td>
<td>37 m/40 yds</td>
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*16-22 is average team size for national tournaments while a larger roster 18-28 is recommended for international tournaments.

Refer to full document for more information
L2W athletes have a strong understanding of the demands of Ultimate and have experienced play in a competitive environment. Focus shifts to ensuring athletes have additional experience in high-pressure games to develop consistency. Athletes also begin to understand the importance of their involvement within the Ultimate community as a role model for youth.

**Goal** - Integrate higher levels of physical conditioning with execution of advanced Ultimate-specific technical and tactical preparation under competitive conditions.

**SOTG** - Athletes/team demonstrate a sophisticated understanding and application of SOTG and rules during training and competition.

**Technical** - Athletes are able to correct and refine advanced offensive and defensive skills themselves.

**Tactical** - Athletes refine field awareness and sound decision-making skills while applying advanced game strategies in a supportive environment.

**Physical** - Focus on increasing quality/intensity and sport/individual specific training.

**Psychological** - Optimal performance of individual becomes the major objective.

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**At the Field**

**Competition format:**
International tournaments: 5-7 days with 1-2 games/day
National tournaments: 6-10 games spread over 3-4 days (max 120 minutes per game)

**Game format:**
Full-field games during competition and small-sided games for training.

**Training:**
Position-specific training based on periodized annual plan. Training combines 1-3 weight, 1-3 speed/agility, 2+ throwing, and stretching sessions (30-60 mins/session) each week with focus shifting depending on training phase. Athletes train ~6 days/week including 1-3 practices/week to balance training type and rest. Training sessions may be combined together and/or incorporated into practices. Consult strength & conditioning specialist for program development.

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The athlete has reached the pinnacle point in their excellence pathway and is able to execute a wide variety of advanced skills and tactics under pressure in high-level national and international competition. Athletes develop successful mentoring relationships within the Ultimate community as a role model for youth and begin to transition into new roles – coach, observer, administrator or Ultimate for Life player.

**Goal** - Refine Ultimate skills, physical condition, mental capabilities and understanding of strategies as they evolve. Exhibit Spirit of the Game during high-level international competition.

**SOTG** - Athletes understand the subtle differences of rules and SOTG at WFDF competitions.

**Technical** – Focus on consolidation and refinement of skills.

**Tactical** – Athletes develop ability to apply and adapt to advanced game strategies.

**Physical** – Athletes demonstrate superior fitness level that allows them to excel during competition and training while avoiding and/or preventing injuries and burnout.

**Psychological** - Athletes are mentally focused and continually pursue excellence as they aim to become a world-class athlete representing Canada at international competitions.

**At the Field**

**Competition format:**
- International tournaments: 5-7 days with 1-2 games/day
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*World Games (WFDF) limits teams to 13 players.

**Training:**
- Position-specific training based on periodized annual plan. Training combines 1-3 weight, 1-3 speed/agility, 2+ throwing, and stretching sessions (30-60 mins/session) each week with focus shifting depending on training phase. Athletes train ~6 days/week including 1-3 practices/week to balance training type and rest. Training sessions may be combined together and/or incorporated into practices. Consult strength & conditioning specialist for program development.

Refer to full document for more information
The Ultimate for Life stage represents 90% of Ultimate players in Canada. Players enter this stage at a variety of ages to engage in recreational activity in a fun and social atmosphere while also maintaining a level of fitness. Transfer of knowledge is a key component of this stage, as trained Ultimate players can remain active as players while also sharing their expertise as coaches, mentors, volunteers and administrators.

**Goal** - Provide opportunities at each level to be involved at any capacity.

**SOTG** – Based on experience, knowledge and understanding of rules and SOTG differ.

**Technical** - Athletes learn new skills or refine skills that have already been acquired.

**Tactical** - Basic tactics are sufficient to play and enjoy the game at a recreational level.

**Physical** – Ultimate becomes a part of the individual’s physical training plan.

**Psychological** - The focus is on having fun, being part of the team and stress release as part of physical part of physical activity.

### At the Field

**Competition format:** From 4v4 to 7v7, games are played indoors and outdoors.

**Special Rules:** Adjusted based on competition and game format.

**Game format:** Game time should run 60-90 minutes based on schedule and fitness level. Games are played indoor/outdoor as 4v4, 5v5, 6v6, or 7v7. Variations in the game are encouraged at this stage so that facility availability is maximized and games are modified to meet the needs of the athletes.

**Specialization:** Participants are encouraged to try all positions.

**Equipment:** Cleats or running shoes, disc(s), jerseys/pinnies and cones.

**Recommended training times:** Varies on the player’s interest in preparing for play. Attending games early to practice throwing and physically prepare is recommended.

**Season length:** Year round – based on league dates. In colder climates Ultimate should be played indoors during the winter season.

Refer to full document for more information