Ultimate Canada

Mix and Match Curriculum

Stage 3 – Learn to Play Ultimate
STAGE 3: Ages 8-12

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.

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

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**At the Field**

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

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

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

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game format</th>
<th>Team size</th>
<th>Playing field proper</th>
<th>Endzone Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Width</td>
<td>Length</td>
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<td>4v4</td>
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<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer to full document for more information
Learn to Play Ultimate – Mix and Match modules

The Learn to Play Ultimate modules focus on having participants learn general Ultimate skills and develop an understanding of Spirit of the Game and the game of Ultimate in a fun and cooperative environment. Here’s how they work:

1 Choose the modules

We have divided the modules into 4 focus areas. Build your sessions by choosing at least one module from each section.

- Warm up (A) – Get the participants warm and ready to play! Warm up games are interchangeable.
- Throwing (B) – Follow the throwing sessions in order. Feel free to spend more than one session working on the specified skill if participants need more time to work on the throw.
- Skills Drills (C) - Follow the skills drills in order. Similar to throwing sessions, you can choose to work on a skill for more than one session in a row.
- Games (D) – Choose a game to focus on the skills you have been working on in your session. All games can be used interchangeably and can emphasize different skills.

Depending on the length of your program you will be able to cover a different number of core topics for this stage. The following page lists the available modules as well as which ones are considered core topics for this stage of development.

Remember: for this stage, stop running a drill when players are not executing it properly anymore to avoid boredom. Don’t aim for excellence in execution: aim for fun!

2 Adjust session timing

Identify length of time for each module based on your session time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30 minutes</th>
<th>45 minutes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills drill</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1-2 skills/session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td>Play a game every 2-3 sessions</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Play!
## Modules

### Warm up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Line tag (indoors)</td>
<td>p.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Smugglers</td>
<td>p.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>X on the Line</td>
<td>p.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Highlight Reel</td>
<td>p.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Throwing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Backhand &amp; Pancake Catches*</td>
<td>p.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Forehand &amp; Catching Claw*</td>
<td>p.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Throwing &amp; Catching review</td>
<td>p.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Kung Fu Throwing</td>
<td>p.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5-a</td>
<td>Mini Throws Relay</td>
<td>p.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5-b</td>
<td>Stretch Relay</td>
<td>p.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Three Person</td>
<td>p.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Skills Drills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Throwing Relay</td>
<td>p.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Cutting Relay*</td>
<td>p.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Slant Cutting*</td>
<td>p.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Boulder Cutting*</td>
<td>p.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Person Defense*</td>
<td>p.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Lane Cutting</td>
<td>p.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Keep Away</td>
<td>p.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Modified Ultimate</td>
<td>p.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Box Game</td>
<td>p.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>4v4/5v5</td>
<td>p.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Simon Says Ultimate</td>
<td>p.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes core skill
A1

Line Tag (Indoor Gym)

Skills developed:
- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Speed & Stamina

Set-up:
1. Ask for two volunteers to be the chasers. Have them start in the middle of the gym.
2. Have all other participants pick a spot on one of the lines throughout the gym.

How to play:
- On go, chasers may begin running after other participants to tag them. The rules of the game are:
  - All participants (including chasers) can only move along the lines in the gym.
  - You can’t jump from one line to another and must go to where lines intersect in order to go onto a different line.
  - Once tagged by a chaser you must sit down and act as a “blocker” on that line. If a participant runs up to you they must turn around and find another way to travel.
  - Once the majority of participants are tagged, new chasers can be selected and the game starts again.

A2

Smugglers

Skills developed:
- Agility
- Coordination
- Speed & Stamina

Equipment:
- 8 cones
- 8-10 discs
- Pinnies

Set-up:
1. Create a large rectangle with 4 cones. This is the designated playing area.
2. Place one cone on each side of the rectangle to indicate the middle of the playing field.
3. Place one cone at either end of the large rectangle and place half of the discs next to each cone.
4. Divide participants into two teams.

How to play:
- The goal of the game is to have the highest number of discs by your cone at the end of 5 minutes.
Discs may be retrieved from the opposing team by crossing into their territory, taking a disc from their pile, and bringing it back into your territory and adding it to your pile.

- If a participant is tagged on the opposing team’s territory they must walk back to their side (as indicated by the middle cones) and try again.
- If a participant is tagged while holding a disc they must give that disc to the chaser and it will be placed back by the cone.
- Count the number of discs on each side after 5 minutes of play.

**X on the Line**

**Equipment:**
- 4 cones

**Skills developed:**
- Agility
- Speed & Stamina

**Set up:**
- Create a rectangle with the 4 cones to designate the playing space.

**How to play:**
- Participants spread out around the gym and start to run around.
- The coach yells out “(a number) on the line”
- Participants get into a line of that many people and put their hand up with they are complete.
- Any participants that were not able to join a line will jog around the outside of the rectangle while the game starts again.
- Slowly players are moved to the outside rectangle. Stop the game when there are ~3 participants left in the middle.

**Highlight Reel**

**Skills developed:**
- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Speed & Stamina

**How to play:**
- Participants will move around, starring in their own sports highlight reel.
- The coach will yell out different commands, each which have their own action:
  - Backhand: players throw a backhand
  - Forehand: player throw a forehand
- Sky: Player jump up to catch a disc
- Game play: Player jog around
- Hard cut: Players take a few steps, plant and cut hard in another direction
- Pause: Players jump up and down until next action
- Rewind: players do previous motion backwards
- Stop: Players freeze
- Fast-forward: Run fast!
B1

Backhand & Pancake Catches

2+ participants

Equipment
- Discs - One per pair/group of three

Lesson:
1. Whole Group Instruction – 3-5 minutes
   - Demonstrate catching (2 hand pancake) and throwing backhand
     o Focus on grip, stance, mechanics & spin (see throwing booklet)

2. Drill
   - Have participants throw/catch in pairs while coaches walk around observing and providing feedback
   - Focus on flat throws and proper G/S/M/S

Continue to next drill once all players have received some feedback regarding their throwing. Ideally provide participant with 1 tip to work on/remember.

B2

Forehand and Catching Claw

2+ participants

Equipment
- Discs - One per pair/group of three

Lesson:
1. Whole Group Instruction – 3-5 minutes
   - Demonstrate catching (claw-high and low) and throwing forehand
     o Focus on grip, stance, mechanics & spin (see throwing booklet)

2. Drill
   - Have participants throw/catch in pairs while coaches walk around observing and providing feedback
   - Focus on flat throws and proper G/S/M/S

Continue to next drill once all players have received some feedback regarding their throwing. Ideally provide participant with 1 tip to work on/remember.
Throwing and Catching Review

2+ participants

Equipment
- Discs - One per pair/group of three

Set-up:
1. Have participants pair up with someone they haven’t already thrown with.

Drill:
1. Pairs will throw in threes – 3 backhands, 3 forehands, 3 backhands...
   - Focus on flat throws and proper G/S/M/S

Continue to next drill once all players have received some feedback regarding their throwing. Ideally provide participant with 1 tip to work on/remember.

Variations:
- Participants that have developed a good grasp of each throw can practice moving from backhand to forehand or vice-versa before throwing.
- Participants can also try faking a forehand or backhand before releasing the forehand throw.
- Participants can take 1 step back from every 3 completed throws.

Kung Fu Throwing

2+ participants

Equipment
- Discs - One per pair/group of three

Skills developed:
- Throwing & Catching
- Faking
- Balance & Coordination

Set-up:
1. Have participants pair up with someone they haven’t already thrown with.

Drill:
1. Participants listen for the coach’s instructions indicating what throws to throw:
   - Throw backhands – pancake catch (30s)
   - Throw forehands – pancake catch (30s)
   - Throw backhands – claw catch (30s)
   - Throw forehands – claw catch (30s)
   - Compass throwing – throw backhands from each of the 4 points on the compass – (north, east, south, west). Throw forehands from the same 4 points. (1 minute)
Stage 3 Mix and Match Curriculum

- Fake a forehand and throw a backhand (1 min)
- Fake a backhand and throw a forehand (1 min)
- Alternate throwing backhands and forehands as softly as possible (1 min)
- Throw whichever throw is weaker (player chooses) (1 min)

Encourage participants to make mistakes and push themselves so that they can learn.

Remind participants that practicing all different types of throws is important.

Remind participants that it’s easy to grab a friend/partner and test out different throws.

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**B5-a**

**Mini throws relay**

10+ participants

**Equipment**
- Discs - One per team

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
- Balance & coordination

**Set-up:**
1. Divide participants into teams of 5+ participants.
2. Place a start and end cone for each team ~20 yard apart. Have a pair from each team start at the cone with a disc.

**How to play:**
1. On “go” the first pair from each line will start making small passes (~3 arms lengths apart) back and forth as they move towards the other cone.
2. Once they reach the cone they will turn around and make small passes as they make their way back.
3. Once at the starting cone the next pair of players will go.
4. The race will continue until all participants have traveled to the far cone and back. This may mean that a participant goes twice if there are an odd number of participants in the team.
   - If at any time a disc is dropped, the participants can pick it up and continue.
   - Remind participants that you are not allowed to run with the disc in Ultimate and that participants should practice stopping before they throw a pass.

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**B5-b**

**Stretch Relay**

10+ participants

**Equipment**
- Discs - One per team

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
Set-up:
1. Divide participants into teams of 5+ participants.
2. Place a start and end cone for each team ~30-40 yard apart.

How to play:

- The goal of this game is to throw the disc from the start cone to the end cone and back the fastest.
- Each participant must catch and throw the disc as it travels in both directions.
- Teams can decide how they want to organize themselves (where they will stand)
- If a disc is dropped the closest participant picks it up and continues the relay.

1. On “go” the participant at the start cone will throw to the next participant.
2. The disc will travel to all participants between the start and end zone and then will return back to the start.
3. The first team to complete all the passes and get the disc backs to the start the fastest wins.

Variations:
- Distance: Change the distance between the cones.
- Throws: Change the throw that all players must make – e.g. backhand, forehand, upside down.
- Catches: Change the type of catch used – e.g. one-handed, two-handed, pancake, claw.
- Rules: If the disc drops the team must restart.

Three person 3+ participants

Equipment
- Discs - One per group of three

Skills developed:
- Throwing with a mark
- Faking

Lesson:
1. Whole Group Instruction – 3-5 minutes
   - Explain marking
     - Explain that the mark is trying to stop the thrower from passing the disc to another player.
   - Demonstrate faking
     - Explain that faking allows you to make a throw that the mark is trying to stop.

2. Drill

Set-up:
1. Have participants get into groups of three.
Drill:
1. The thrower and receive stand ~15 yards apart
2. The mark attempts to block the throw to the receiver.
3. The thrower follows their pass and marks the receiver, who is now the thrower.

Variations:
- The mark can force the thrower to throw a specific direction by placing their body to block the opposite throw.
- The mark can add a stall count.
Throwing Relay

8+ participants

Equipment
- Cones – 2 per team
- Discs - 1 per team

Skills developed:
- Throwing & catching
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed

Set-up:
3. Divide players into teams of 4-6 players and have them line up at cone.
4. Place a cone in front of each team 10-15 yards (depending on skill observed in throwing section) from this line. Have one player from each team start at this cone.

How to play:
5. On “go” the first participant of each line will throw to the player at the cone. That player will then throw it back (a).
6. Once the disc is back at the start, the player at the front of the line will run to be at the cone and the player at the cone will run to the back of the line (b).
7. Once all players have had a chance to throw and be at the cone the team will sit down to signal that they have finished.
8. If a disc is dropped or thrown away the closest player can go pick it up and return to the line/cone to continue with the relay – i.e. not all passes need to be 100%.

Variations:
- Distance: Change distance between two cones to increase/decrease difficulty.
- Number of players: Will change how long the relay lasts.
- Throw: Have players throw backhands or forehands. They could throw high or low. They could throw multiple times before changing places.
- Catching: Have participants catch 1-handed of 2-handed. Have participants use their off-hand.
- Movement: Have participants run backwards, skip, crawl, etc.
Cutting Relay

8+ participants

Equipment
- Cones – 6 per team
- Discs – 1 per team (if using variation #3)

Skills developed:
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed

Set up:
1. Set up 6 cones in a zigzag pattern in front of each team about 5m apart with the furthest cone about 5-10m from the first.
2. Divide players into teams of 4-6 and have players get into a line at the sideline.

How to play:
1. On “go”, the first player will run to each of the cones as fast as possible. Once the cutter reaches the last cone they will return through the zigzag and go to the back of the line.
2. Encourage participants to planting and look at the next cone to help make change of direction faster.

Variations:
- Field: change the distance and angles between the cones.
- Running: Have players run to the last cone forwards and return through the cones running backwards.
- Throwing: Add a disc! Have the next player in line throw the disc to the runner as they approach the last cone. The player should throw it back before returning through the cones (b).
Slant Cut

6+ participants

**Equipment**
- Cones – 5 per drill

**Skills developed:**
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed
- Catching & Throwing

**Set up:**
1. Create a square with 4 cones. Place 1 cone for the cutting line.
2. Split the group in two, with half lining up behind the cutting line and half behind the pile of discs (throwing line)

**How to play:**
1. The first cutter from the stack cuts towards the square to receive the disc (a).
2. The thrower throws a backhand to the cutter.
3. Once the player has caught the disc they drop off the disc at the throwing line and return to the cutting line.
4. The next cutter will cut and the same thrower will throw a second pass.
5. Once a player has thrown or cut twice they will switch to the other line.
6. Once all players have throw, switch to forehand.

**Variations:**
- Distance: Change the distance of the throw to make it easier/harder.
- Defense: Add a mark and/or a downfield defender.
- Add another box and cutting line deeper than this one to practice catching, turning downfield and throwing to a continue cutter.

(a) Set up and cutting/throwing pattern
Boulder Cut

6+ participants

Equipment
- Cones – 5 per drill

Skills developed:
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed
- Catching & Throwing

Set up:
1. Create a square with 4 cones. Place 1 cone for the cutting line.
2. Split the group in two, with half lining up behind the cutting line and half behind the pile of discs (throwing line)

How to play:
1. The first cutter from the stack cuts to the far cone, plants, and cuts to the square to receive the disc (a).
2. The thrower throws a backhand to the cutter.
3. Once the player has caught the disc they drop off the disc and return to the cutting line.
4. The next cutter will cut and the same thrower will throw a second pass.
5. Once a player has thrown or cut twice they will switch to the other line.
6. Once all players have throw, switch to forehand.

Variations:
- Distance: Change the distance of the throw to make it easier/harder.
- Defense: Add a mark and/or a downfield defender.
- Add another box and cutting line deeper than this one to practice catching, turning downfield and throwing to a continue cutter.
Person Defense

2+ participants

Equipment
- Cones – 6 per drill

Skills developed:
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed
- Anticipation/Reading movement

Set up:
1. Set up a drill for every 6-10 players. For each drill, create two triangles one inside the other one (a).

(a) Set up

How to play:
1. Two players, one offense and one defense, will participate at a time. The offense starts at one point of the triangle and runs towards one of the other two points of the triangle to touch the cone. They have 5 seconds to get there. The defense tries to beat the offensive player to the same point in the triangle and touch the defensive cone first.
2. The offense will then run to another point on the triangle.
3. After running to a cone 5 times the drill is over.
4. Have a new pair participate in the drill.
5. Ensure that all players have played both offense and defense at least once before moving on to the next drill.

Remind participants to look for signs on the body that tell you where the player is headed next (tip: watch the hips). Anticipate where they will go next!

Variations:
- Distance: Change size of the triangle to adjust the distance players are running.
- Score: Can introduce a point system whereby the defense scores 1 point if the get to the cone before the offense.
Lane Cutting

**Equipment**
- Cones – 5 per drill
- Discs – 2 per drill

**Skills developed:**
- Cutting in space
- Catching & throwing
- Agility, balance, coordination & speed

**Set up:**
1. Create a throwing lane \( \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{3} \) the width of an Ultimate field. Set up one cone for the cutters. Place a stack of discs in the middle of the field.

**How to play:**
1. The cutter cuts towards or away from the thrower trying to receive a pass (a).
2. Once they have finished their cut the cutter joins the throwing line.

**Variations:**
- Size of the lane: Change the width to vary the challenge level.
- If the players are unable to throw the disc on target the coach can throw for the players to allow them to practice their cuts.
- Defenders: Add a defender. The rotation is thrower, defender, cutter.
- Number of players: Widen lane and add another pair – pairs must work together.
- Score: Can introduce a point system whereby the defense scores 1 point if the offensive player does not catch the disc in a set number of stalls (e.g. 5). The offense scores a point when they catch the disc. Once the disc is caught a new pair cycles in.
- Other: Add a stall count.
Keep Away

**Equipment**
- Cones/field markers - 4 per game
- Pinnies – 3-6 per game
- Disc - 1 per game

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
- Person defense

**Set-up:**
5. Divide players into an even number of teams of 3-6 players. Provide pinnies to half of the teams.
6. For every two teams, create a box (a) 20 m x 20 m in size with 4 cones on the corners.

**How to play:**
Teams will play keep away against each other in the box 3 against 3 (a) using the following rules:
- Each point begins with one team holding the disc.
- Movement of the disc: The disc may move in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. No running with the disc.
- Scoring: A team earns 1 point after completing 5 passes in a row. A new point begins with the other team taking possession.
- Change of possession: When a pass is not completed the defense immediately takes possession and is on offense.
- No contact.
- Substitutions: Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score or at coach’s discretion if the points are taking too long.

**Variations:**
- Size of court: The size of the court can be varied based on available space.
- Number of players: Play 4-on-4 or 5-on-5.
- Substitutions: Substitutions can also be done on the fly by tagging a teammate in.
- Score: Vary the difficulty of the game by increasing or decreasing the number of passes needed to score a point.
- Rules: Add a stall count if players are comfortable with the above and are holding on to the disc for too long.
Modified Ultimate  
8+ participants

**Equipment**
- Cones/field markers - 8 per game
- Pinnies – 4-6 per game
- Disc - 1 per game

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
- Cutting
- Person defense
- Field sense

**Set up:**
1. Divide players into an even number of teams of 4-6 players. Provide pinnies to half of the teams.
2. For every two teams, create an ultimate field that is 25 yards long and 15 yards wide. The endzones should be 5 yards long.

**How to play:**
Teams will play a modified game of ultimate using the following rules:
- Each point begins with 4 players from both teams lining up on the front of their respective end zone line. The defense throws (“pulls”) the disc to the offense.
- *Scoring: Teams earn two points for a catch in the endzone and one point when a player touches the disc with their hand while in the endzone but does not catch it. The point is over in either case.*
- Movement of the disc: The disc may move in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. No running with the disc!
- *Change of possession: If a player does not catch the disc but touches it before it hits the ground the team retains possession.*
- Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score or at coach’s discretion if the points are taking too long.

**Variations:**
- Size of field: The size of the field can be varied based on the number of player present and space available.
- Number of players: Generally 4-on-4 gives players a lot of opportunities to touch the disc, which is great at this level. You can make the game 5-on-5 if there are number or space restrictions.
- Substitutions: Substitutions can also be done on the fly by tagging a teammate in.
- Score: Vary the difficulty of the game by increasing or decreasing the number of passes needed to score a point or require that passes must be caught to remain in possession of the disc or to score a point.
- Other: Add a stall count if players are comfortable with the above and are holding on to the disc for too long.
Box game

6+ participants

Equipment:
- Cones/field markers – 8 per game
- Pinnies – 3-6 per game
- Disc – 1 per game

Skills developed:
- Throwing & catching
- Cutting
- Person defense

Set up:
1. Divide players into an even number of teams of 4-6 players. Provide Pinnies to half of the teams.
2. For every two teams, create two boxes, one inside the other (a). The small box should be 1m x 1m and the larger box should be 10 m x 10 m.

How to play:
Teams will play 3v3 using the following rules:
- Each point begins with the offensive team on the outside of the larger square and a defensive player next to each offensive player.
- Scoring: Teams earn points when they catch (2 points) or touch the disc (1 point) in the smaller square. In either case the point is over. Defense becomes offense.
- Movement of the disc: The disc may move in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. No running with the disc!
- Change of possession: When a pass is not completed the defense immediately takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense. Teams must complete at least 1 pass before attempting to score.
- No contact.
- Substitutions: Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score or at coach’s discretion if the points are taking too long.

Variations:
- Size of court.
- Number of players: Play 4v4.
- Substitutions: Substitutions can also be done on the fly by tagging a teammate in.
- Score: Change the scoring to be 1 point for a catch in the box.
- Rules: Add a stall count if players are comfortable with the above and are holding on to the disc for too long. Also see touch/catch rule in Modified Ultimate.

(a) set up
4v4 / 5v5

8+ participants

**Equipment**
- Cones/field markers - 8 per game
- Pinnies – 4-10 per game
- Disc - 1 per game

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
- Cutting
- Person defense
- Field sense

**Set up:**
1. Divide players into an even number of teams. For 4v4 teams should be 4-8 players; 5v5 requires teams of 5-10 players. Provide pinnies to half of the teams.
2. For every two teams, create an ultimate field (a) with 4 zones on the endzone corners.

**How to play:**
Teams will play a modified game of Ultimate using the following rules:
- Each point begins with 4 or 5 players from both teams lining up on the front of their respective end zone line. The defense throws (“pulls”) the disc to the offense.
- Scoring: Each time the offense completes a pass in the defense’s endzone, the offense scores a point. A new point is initiated after the teams set back up (scoring team remains in the endzone in which they scored).
- Movement of the disc: The disc may move in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. No running with the disc!
- Change of possession: When a pass is not completed, the defense immediately takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense.
- Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score or at coach’s discretion if the points are taking too long.

**Variations:**
- Size of field: The size of the field can be varied based on the number of player present and space available.
- Number of players: Generally 4-on-4 gives players a lot of opportunities to touch the disc, which is great at this level. You can make the game 5-on-5 if there are number or space restrictions.
- Substitutions: Substitutions can also be done on the fly by tagging a teammate in.
- Score: Vary the difficulty of the game by increasing or decreasing the number of passes needed to score a point or require that passes must be caught to remain in possession of the disc or to score a point.
- Other: Add a stall count if players are comfortable with the above and are holding on to the disc for too long.
Simon Says Ultimate

8+ participants

**Equipment**
- Cones/field markers - 8 per game
- Pinnies – 4-10 per game
- Disc - 1 per game

**Skills developed:**
- Throwing & catching
- Cutting
- Person defense
- Field sense

**Set up:**
1. Divide players into an even number of teams. This game can be played 4v4, 5v5, or 6v6. For 4v4 teams should be 4-8 players; 5v5 requires teams of 5-10 players; 6v6 requires teams of 6-12 players. Provide pinnies to half of the teams.
2. For every two teams, create an ultimate field (a) with 4 cones on the endzone corners.

**How to play:**

Teams will play a modified game of Ultimate using the following rules:

- Each point begins with 4, 5 or 6 players (based on team size) from both teams lining up on the front of their respective end zone line. The defense throws (“pulls”) the disc to the offense.
- Scoring: Teams will score according to a rule set out by the coach. For example, “Simon says that each player on the team must touch the disc before a point is awarded” or all throws must be backhands or forehands. Each time the offense meets the objective of the rule and completes a pass in the defense’s endzone, the offense scores a point. A new point is initiated after the teams set back up (scoring team remains in the endzone in which they scored).
- Movement of the disc: The disc may move in any direction by completing a pass to a teammate. No running with the disc!
- Change of possession: When a pass is not completed, the defense immediately takes possession of the disc and becomes the offense.
- Players not in the game may replace players in the game after a score or at coach’s discretion if the points are taking too long.

**Variations:**

- Size of field: The size of the field can be varied based on the number of player present and space available.
- Substitutions: Substitutions can also be done on the fly by tagging a teammate in.
- Score: Vary the difficulty of the game using different rules based on the abilities of the players.
- Other: Add a stall count if players are comfortable with the above and are holding on to the disc for too long.