



The Idaho Statesman

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## It's Time For Some ULTIMATE FUN

Dan Kouba

The sport of Ultimate has an identity crisis. In addition to Pat Benson's oft-asked "Do you play with dogs?" (no they do not), the game even took a hit during the writing of this feature.

While interviewing Jessica Hixson, a member of the Greenbacks team and last season's league runner-up (behind Benson's Bears), this reporter asked, "Is that the game that's kind of like golf, but with Frisbees?"

"That would be disc golf. I play Ultimate Frisbee."

Oh, sorry.

The 2004 Boise Ultimate Frisbee Spring League took to the skies April 7th. Seven teams are vying to knock off defending champs, the Bears, and put an end to their incredible juggernaut-like momentum -- the Bears haven't lost a game in what seems like an eternity.

This evening's game between the Greenbacks and the Bears is a rematch of last season's championship battle. Hixson and the other Greenbacks have been anticipating this very game all winter since losing to Benson's Bears.

"I'm excited," said Benson, a multi-time local, national and world championship competitor with a decade's worth of high-intensity Ultimate play. A strapping 6-footer with a football player's build, Benson looks way laidback in his yellow and white "Bad News Bears" replica jerseys, but make no mistake; the guy is 100 percent pure business.

"I'm a competition junkie, and am really looking forward to the battles. I'm stoked to start playing some Ultimate."

With just as many years of Ultimate play, Hixson's passion for the game runs deep, even if her big smile and contagious giggle say otherwise.

"We're just gonna do our best, play really hard D, and give it all we have," the modest Hixson claimed moments before the game.

That's it? No trash talkin'?

"Nope, nope," Hixson replied, proud that she doesn't cross that line. "We'll just play our best, and hope we reach 13 (points) first."

But when informed Benson's team was talkin' it up on the other side (a lie), Hixson had a light-hearted change of plans.

"Hmmm. Yeah? Good. Hmmm. Then they can just eat it (the trash)!"

Let the games begin.

Ultimate is an intense non-contact team sport built on speed and agility. The action is seamless, non-stop, a blend of soccer, rugby and American football. Hand-eye coordination is obviously part of throwing and

catching the 175 gram disc, but a competitor's most potent weapon is speed. Lots and lots of it. If you can run long, hard and fast, Ultimate is your game.

The Spring League teams are formed with friends. Most teams field the maximum seven players on the field, but there are times when the game goes on with smaller numbers. A \$20 fee enters a team into the Boise Ultimate league. The season runs until June with a weekend long tournament to crown a champion.

"The scene can be a little clique-ish," Benson admits, "but the folks are nice and always looking to recruit new players."

Benson says the easiest way to get in good with the regulars is to come out for a Sunday pick-up game.

"Not everyone is into it to be competitive, and the Boise scene is looking for all types of players."

As soon as the June tournament ends, drafting for the Fall League commences, a format used to keep teams evenly matched.

The Bears and Greenbacks went at it like, well, two teams who haven't competed in months. Players from both sides admitted their play wasn't exception. It's what's to be expected this early in the season.

In the games opening moments, the Greenbacks were looking as if they would finally be able to put a stop to the Bears; they appeared a little bit quicker, faster and more intense. Could this be the beginning of the end for da Bears?

Sensing his team was flirting with disaster, on the verge of losing to the less-experienced Greenbacks, Benson dug deep, way deep within his bag of Ultimate experience.

"We really didn't start out that great," Benson after the game, "but our young guns and our women really played well, and carried the team down the stretch.

"I think the wind may have benefitted us a little more. Had it not been as windy, I think the score would have been much closer."

Wind-aided or not, the Bears were too much for Hixson and the Greenbacks, winning easily, again, thirteen to six.

Hat Tournament: Saturday, May 8 Ann Morrison Park

A great way to try Ultimate. Teams will be randomly picked from a pile of names in a hat. All skill levels welcome.

Contact: Mark LaSalle, 363-0708. discfor1 hotmail.com

Women's Clinic Saturday, June 5 Ann Morrison Park

Jessica Hixson will be organizing a women's Ultimate clinic. Various skills and drills will be addressed. All skill levels are invited. Contact: 429-1705. jessicahixsonmsn.com

Ultimate Boise Games Ann Morrison Park, Wednesdays, 6 p.m.

boiseultimate.com

ultimate lingo:

Alligator Catch: Catch made with both hands coming together in a clapping motion on the top and bottom of the disc. Known as a "pancake."

Dump: Person who stands behind the person with the disc so that they can't throw it backwards if there's nobody open up front.

Give 'n Go: Two players pass the disc back and forth repeatedly as they move up the field.

Layout: When someone dives/lays it out to catch or block a disc. Also known as "Go Ho."

Hack: Foul

**Handler:** One of a team's primary throwers, or, in a standard zone offense, one of the three players who swing the disc from one side of the field.

**Hammers:** Upside down throws.

**Hospital Pass:** High, floating pass which brings two or more players together into a collision as they sky for the disc.

**Huck:** A deep throw.

**Pivot Foot:** Stationary foot (left for right handers and right for left handers) that a thrower pivots around in order to throw around the marker.

**Poach:** When your defender is not guarding you, but trying to get the disc from other players who are already being guarded.

**Scoober:** Fast, difficult to intercept throw. Thrown with all wrist and no arm.

**Snack Food:** Long, high throw that passes near one or more defensive players, and is easily intercepted.

**Ulti-Slut:** Player who moves from team to team to team in an effort to play on a better team, or a player who plays on a number of teams.

**Virgin Plastic:** Kind of like a brand new credit card. A disc in mint condition that had never been used or hit pavement.

8 simple rules:

A simple game in concept, the sport of Ultimate Frisbee comes with its own official handbook.

Here are a few simple do's and don't's of the game, basics that should help a beginner get through the first game without looking like a complete idiot.

Rules may vary slightly from one league to the next. For the complete list of official Ultimate rules, visit [ultimatehandbook.com](http://ultimatehandbook.com).

1. After catching a pass, the receiver is allowed a few steps to stop and establish a pivot foot. Three steps seem to be the norm. If the receiver is running while catching the disc, the receiver may throw a pass before coming to a complete stop.
2. The thrower must establish a pivot foot and may not change that pivot foot until the throw is released.
3. A defender within three (3) meters of the pivot foot of the thrower may initiate a stall count. The count consists of the marker calling "stalling" or "counting," and counting at one second intervals from one to ten loud enough for the thrower to hear. If the thrower has not released the disc by "ten," the disc is turned over.
4. If the disc is caught simultaneously by offensive and defensive players, the offense retains possession.
5. Fouls are the result of contact between opposing players. A foul can only be called by the player who has been fouled.
6. No defensive player may touch the disc while it is in possession of the thrower or receiver. If a defensive player touches the disc, the offensive player calls "strip."
7. Only one defender is permitted to guard the thrower.
8. A player cannot score by running into the endzone with the disc. The disc has to be caught for a goal to be scored. A player who shouts "GOOAAALLL!!!" will be asked to leave the premise, banished from the sport forever.