



VANCOUVER ULTIMATE LEAGUE

VUL Team Captain Success Checklist

1. Identify and Communicate your team goals.

It is important for Captains and team leaders to set what the goal(s) of the team will be, even for the most recreational and casual of teams. This ensures that people don't join the team under false expectations. While the VUL hopes that each team's first goal is to have fun and be safe, teams can prioritise their goals however they wish.

Some good items to set your goals around can include

- Safety
- Enjoyment of the game/team (does everyone feel respected on the team? Does everyone feel engaged during the game?)
- Playing Time (some want as much as possible, some want to rest a lot between points)
- Skill Development/Practice
- Competitiveness (Do better players get to play more, or do all players play equally, regardless of game results)
- Spirit of the Game (SOTG)

Establishing these goals will help inform what type, and how many players should be recruited.

- Do you have a team of people who are looking to play as many points as possible? Then you probably don't want a large number of players showing up each game.
- Are you a team that will have a bunch of people away at various points throughout the season? Then a larger roster is probably a good idea.

- Are you a highly competitive team looking to win at the highest divisions? Then recruiting a brand new player probably isn't going to make anyone enjoy their time.
- Are you a beginner team looking to socialise and develop your skills at your own pace? Then recruiting a touring-team level player who might dominate the game is probably a bad idea.

If your goals are communicated and understood by everyone on the team, and role-modelled by the team leadership then you will have a lot less difficulty with players feeling like they didn't get what they thought they were signing up for.

2. Have a Team Meeting before the start of the season

This can be a great way to get the players on your team to get to know each other before the first game. Even better you do it at one of our [dining/drink sponsor locations](#) where you can receive VUL membership discounts!

Some great discussion topics at the meeting can be:

- Team Goals (See #1)
- SOTG, and what it means for your team. (See #3)
- Safe play (See #4)
- Inclusive play (See #5)
- Delegation (See #7)

3. Make sure your team understands SOTG, and how it is applied before, during, and after games.

This includes:

- [Knowing the rules and what is and is not a foul](#)
- [Knowing how to call and contest a foul](#)
- [Having respectful discussions around fouls and contests](#)
- [Captains and team leaders knowing about the Captain's Clause](#)

Because Ultimate is played without any officials, it is even more important for all players to know and understand the rules and how they are used on the field.

4. Ensure your team plays safe

This is a recreational league, even at the highest divisions, and no one wants to get hurt and then potentially have to miss work, or school. It is the responsibility of the Captain to ensure that their team is playing by the rules as safely as possible. Here is a [great article from Ultiworld](#) about Dangerous Plays that all players should be familiar with, no matter your experience. Here are some videos that highlight some dangerous plays that you can show to your team.

- [Dangerous Play 1](#)
- [Dangerous Play 2](#)
- [Dangerous Play Avoided 1](#)
- [Dangerous Play with discussion](#) (Observer Ruling in this instance is Incorrect)

5. Ensure your team is inclusive, both internally and with opposing teams

The VUL is proud to support the participation of transgender and gender non-binary players in all of its programs.

Players in the VUL are able to choose how they participate based on their gender identity at that time, regardless of sex characteristics or where they may be in any transition between genders. We trust and will rely on Spirit of the Game to avoid any abuse of this approach by a player merely to gain a competitive advantage on the field.

It is imperative that all players respect the gender identity of all players at all times, and not call out perceived issues such as “that person doesn’t look like they are male-matching” or similar questioning of someone’s gender identity.

As this can be a challenging topic to discuss for some people, the VUL has some resources such as our [Transgender Inclusivity information](#), a [Glossary of terms](#) that may be new or not completely understood to you, and [an FAQ](#) for common questions that people have

Being inclusive internally

Being inclusive internally is another great way to create engagement and enjoyment amongst your team. This can start with everyone sharing their preferred pronouns at your first meeting/game, and avoiding using gendered language in general communication (IE, “Let’s go guys!”)

Being inclusive during game play means that everyone on your team is being thrown to, has a chance to throw the disc, and play active defensive roles. Playing Ultimate without the opportunity to touch the disc or impact game play is not an engaging experience and can result in people not showing up for games consistently.

6. Know where to find your field permits and what to do if there is a field booking conflict.

Vancouver fields are in high demand and constantly in use. However, not all groups have permits to use those fields. All City of Vancouver fields are First-Come First-Serve (FCFS), unless you have a permit. The VUL buys permits from the City to ensure our members get priority access to the fields. As a Captain, it is very helpful to know where to find the permits, as it can avoid arguments and conflicts with other groups who are using the fields.

You can find all current VUL field permits on our [Field Guide Page](#).

- Without a direct link, you can find the Field guide page under the Games Tab - > Fields -> Field Guide
- Please note that you must be **signed in to your MyVUL account** to access this page
- Some of the permits include 100s of individual bookings, and can be difficult to find. Unfortunately, this is the only way we can display the official permits from the City of Vancouver, so give yourself some time to find these permits ahead of time if possible.

Unfortunately there are some groups who use these fields who do not respect the rules and will attempt to intimidate rightful, permitted users (like you) from kicking their group off the field. If you come across this issue, please remain calm, show them the permit, and if that still doesn't solve the issue, call 3-1-1 to request a park ranger to come resolve the dispute. If you ever feel physically unsafe, skip calling 3-1-1, and call 9-1-1 instead for an emergency response.

7. Delegate

Many captains, especially newer captains, feel that being the captain means doing everything yourself. This mentality causes a lot of captains to burn out as it places all of the stress of running the team on one person. We highly recommend delegating key aspects of running the team to other people on the team. For example:

- Have someone who is really experienced or has coached before? Have them be in charge of running practices, or deciding on field strategy

- Is someone on your team really connected to the Ultimate community here in Vancouver? Have them be in charge of recruiting subs if needed. (See #8 below)
- Is there someone on your team that isn't super interested in the on-the-field stuff, but like the social aspect of the sport? Have them organise some team socials.

The second bonus of delegation on top of reducing the stress on you, the Captain, is that it gets other members of the team more engaged and involved, which can really help your team stay together for a long period of time.

8. Create a Sub-List

Finding subs for games is one of the most stressful and frustrating parts of being a captain. Ask your team if they know anyone who is willing to sub, and create a list of those people to reach out to if you are going to be short on players that week. Also be aware of the VUL resources of the [Match-Maker system](#), and the [Looking for Players/Teams Forum](#)