

VULS Annual General Meeting – November 9, 2016

Executive Director's Report

Craig Woods

Strategy

The attached *Strategic Plan Summary* describes the activities we pursued and the metrics we achieved in 2016, the final year of our current 5-year plan.

We exceeded our 5-year goal! Huge congratulations to everyone involved over the past 5 years.

- The estimated number of players in Metro Van is about 10000, so we blew past our goal of 8000. The total is much higher than last year because we have not been counting players in elementary schools, and that number has exploded from zero to over 100 in a few years. Vancouver now has 37 schools with ultimate programs, and Surrey has 45.
- We even met our goal without elementary schools: we estimate 8000 high school & adult players.
- The number of registered VUL members grew 6% to 5367. That is a 49% increase over 2011.

Programs & Services

League Growth

The table below summarizes the size of our leagues (# of teams).

League	2016	2015	2014	2013
Winter Indoor	12	12	8	8
Winter Turf	88	80	68	58
Winter Juniors	4	3	3	pickup
Winter Hat	6	8	8	10
Summer	240 + camp	236 + camp	238 + camp	234 + camp
Summer Juniors	12	12	10	12
Summer Youth Camps	5	1	~	~
Fall Grass	52	58	62	70
Fall Women's	8	8	n/a	n/a
Fall Turf	64	62	52	42
Fall Juniors x2	11	8	8	6

Adult Leagues & Services

Last year we hit capacity for Winter Turf, but the new Empire fields allowed us to expand again this year: Winter grew by 10%, Fall Turf by 8%, and we added the new Winter Parity League.

Summer ultimate continues to be strong in Vancouver. Given the size of the league, there are bound to be different styles of play and approaches to SOTG. At the Captain's Meeting we focused on the importance of safe play and how to effectively manage conflicts at the field, and we saw an increase in comments in game reports of captains having success with those challenges. This is an ongoing learning experience for captains and staff, and our goal is provide the best support possible to help games be fun for all involved.

Some highlights from the Summer Survey:

- Members were quite satisfied with their overall experience playing Summer League. Almost 90% said they had a good or excellent experience.
- For start times, the main challenges with getting to fields on time were distance to fields, traffic, and working late. A slight majority (58%) prefer to leave start times as they are.
- Concern about Spirit was the same as last year: 37% feel it needs improvement. While that did not get any worse, we still have work to do to reduce concerns to levels seen in previous years.
- Members who attended past social events had mainly positive feedback, except that they lacked enough people. As noted under Events below, we are reviewing our approach to social events.

Fall Grass registrations dropped by about 10%, and we've been challenged by unusually poor weather this year. The weather has historically gone in cycles, so we're hoping next year will be better again.

Women's Turf had a solid following, and we're pleased to see little impact on coed teams' ability to find enough women. Over time, we hope the league will help increase the number of women playing overall.

Youth Programs & Services

Our Youth programs continue to grow. We added a new Skills league in the summer, bringing our total number of leagues to 5, and we expanded our week-long Day Camps for younger kids in July.

The Misfit club program ran well again. Over 440 kids attended tryouts. 30 coaches then selected them into 10 teams and a development option. We added a physiotherapist to provide preventative and post-injury care. At CUC in Edmonton, the Misfit Girls team actually beat the BC provincial team to win Gold.

We continue to offer support to Vancouver schools. This year we sponsored new Spirit trophies for the VSB Championships to help promote and encourage spirited play. Ultimate is also starting to explode at the elementary level: over 22 schools in Vancouver now have ultimate programs.

Events

Overall our events were successful in 2016, with a few exceptions.

- The 2015 Christmas Party theme was "Pirate Christmas", with photos and a fun gift exchange.
- We launched a new Spring Equinox tournament in conjunction with BCU. It went well overall, but there were some challenges running a joint event. We'll look to improve for 2017.
- Ultimate Day was very well attended again at Ecole Jules Verne.
- Nighthawks games, Riptide games, and Canucks games were fun social events for members.
- The Captain's Wingding had a good turnout. We did not run any day-time activities and just focused on dinner and a Riptide game. The captains that attended seemed very appreciative.
- Our summer tournament, Babes in Hats, went well again with 12 teams at Winona.
- Attendance at parties and social events has declined over the past few years so we chose to not run a Summer or Fall party this year, and instead formed a committee to determine what to do moving forward. The final report is in progress, but members seem most interested in smaller and more purpose-driven events such as Hat tournaments, casual BBQ's, disc golf, and trivia nights.
- The Beach tournament sold out again, but we did not execute very well and player satisfaction was down. We've done a thorough review and will run a better event next year.
- An opportunity presented itself to work with the BC Lions this fall, so we replace the Turkey Tourney with the BC Place Tourney. It sold out quickly, and garnered lots of positive feedback, especially on social media. We plan to work with BC Lions to see if we can run it again next year.

Annual Awards

Congratulations to all of our Annual Award winners!

- Volunteers of the Year: Alex Chu and Olivier Lessard for their work on Board committees
- Coaches of the Year – Adults: Jen Nicholls and Spud Fleury
- Coaches of the Year – Youth: Mimi Pan and Ted Chu
- Team Spirit: Random Fling, Space Oddities, Dim Sum Warriors, Stallions of Champions
- Team Carbon Flip: The Kangabrewskis
- Individual Spirit: Meghan Mathieson and Lawrence Duong

We also inducted three new members to our Hall of Fame: Brian Gisel, Jeff Malmgren and Art Hawkins. All three played important roles in the growth and evolution of ultimate in Vancouver. Heartfelt thank you's and congratulations to them.

IT Systems

Our website is a critical asset for the society – it runs our all our operations and supports both their management and oversight. In many ways we are a technology company, as we could not function without it. As such, we continue to maintain and invest in the site for members and staff to support the VUL's ongoing health and viability.

At the end of last year, our previous vendor (Pencilneck) went through some structural changes, and our primary contact formed a new company (Codegnostic). We formed a new contract with Codegnostic and have been pleased with the results. Our pace of development was much more consistent compared to last year. In addition, to help us complete a large feature for game scheduling, this fall we engaged a second firm to increase our overall capacity.

At the 2014 AGM, a motion was passed to allow the use of up to \$40,000 from the Capital Fund within the subsequent 24 months “for the purpose of developing significant new website features to support the growth of the VUL.” The purpose of the motion was to use Capital funds on larger one-time features (i.e. “capital investments”) while continuing to use Operating funds for ongoing improvements. Discussion at that AGM focused on features for youth and scheduling. Staff identified a few significant features that met those criteria, including:

- Revisions to the Join, Registration, Consent, and Payment Tracking to better support youth and parents. The website was designed primarily for adults, and needed changes to support youth.
- New Schedule Validation and Schedule Generation features to prevent errors in schedules and reduce the time spent by staff generating schedules.

The total cost of those features exceeds \$40k, so the Board approved Staff’s recommendation to use \$40k from the Capital Fund to cover that work. About 1/3 of the work on those features was completed by Sept 30, and the rest is expected to be complete by January. We considered whether we should ask for an extension on the 24-month period, but the work is in progress and the funds are fully committed, so we believe the spirit and intent of the motion is being met. The costs of those features is fully captured in our 2016 fiscal year, so there will be no impact on the 2017 year.

Community

Field Partners

We continue to have good relationships with the Park Board, School Board, and UBC. Thank you to all captains for being skilled ambassadors when interacting with others at the fields. We also continued to participate in the Vancouver Field Sports Federation, where I sit as President, advocating to the Park Board and City Council for more and better fields for all sports.

Touring Teams

We supported 28 different club teams with practice fields:

- 4 Women: Traffic, Zephyr, Wendigo, SHHippos
- 6 Open: Nighthawks, Furious, Riptide, Blackfish, Refinery, Mio Grape
- 2 Masters: Legion, Pipe Dream
- 4 College: UBC Men and Women
- 12 Youth: 10 with the VUL Misfit program and 2 from BC Ultimate

These teams represented Vancouver around the world including the USAU College Championships, the USAU Championships, and the Canadian Ultimate Championships. Vancouver players also played on Canadian teams at World Ultimate & Guts Championships (WUGC). Results from those events included:

- USAU College: UBC Women 5th (tie)
- USAU Championships: Traffic 6th and Furious 9th
- CUC – Women: SHHippos 2nd, Zephyr 4th, Wedigo 11th
- CUC – Open: Mio Grape 3rd, Blackfish 4th, Refinery 13th
- CUC – Masters: Pipe Dream 6th
- CUC – Girls: Misfit 1st, Mischief 8th, Rolling Thunder 11th
- CUC – Boys: Misfit 6th, Mischief 10th, Rolling Thunder 17th
- WUGC: Men 4th, Women 3rd, Mixed 3rd, Men’s Masters 2nd, Women’s Masters 2nd

Many thanks go out to members of these teams that provide mentorship, clinic instruction, and other volunteer duties on behalf of the VULS to our members.

Professional Ultimate

Two semi-pro teams continue to co-exist in Vancouver – Nighthawks and Riptide – and we renewed our

partnerships with both. Pro ulti offers unique opportunities to increase awareness about our sport.

Sponsors

We renewed our relationships with multiple sponsors this year:

- We continued our partnership with *Red Truck Brewing* for spirit awards team sponsorships.
- We renewed our partnership with *Oddball Workshop* for VUL gear and custom apparel for members. They sponsor the annual Team Spirit Awards (\$500/team).
- We continued our retail partnership with *Rackets & Runners*. R&R is happy with sales from VUL members, and we're happy with sales of over \$3400 in the past year.
- We continue partnerships with our athletic therapy partners: *Insync* and *Jointworks*. They provided gift-certificates or in-kind prizes, articles for the website, and services at tournaments.
- We renewed our partnership with *Evo Car Share* for the Carbon Flip. Evo provided prizes of 75 driving minutes to each member of the Carbon Flip winning team in Summer League.
- We gave away many free *Comedy Mix* tickets to captains, spirited teams and volunteers.

BC Ultimate

We met with BC Ultimate regularly to discuss various topics related to growing ultimate in BC, from events and programs to long-term strategy.

Ultimate Canada

Two staff and one director are attending the Ultimate Canada Conference in Saskatoon this coming weekend (Nov 11-13). We plan to share some of our experiences, and learn from other league and provincial representatives from across Canada.

People

Staff & Coordinators

The VUL's three Managers continued to be passionate and engaged in their roles:

- Craig Kulyk as our Marketing Manager
- Troe Weston as League Manager
- William Arlotta as Youth Manager

As we grow, they each continue to take on increased responsibility every year. It is a honour for me to work with all three of them on a daily basis.

Other coordinators and volunteers played key roles with our various programs:

- Coaching: Mauro Ortiz
- Clinics: Mike "Spud" Fleury has decided to take a break after 15 years as Coordinator. He did an amazing job over that time facilitating 100's of clinics for players of all skill levels, and he did it all with humour, patience, passion for the game, and genuine interest in all participants. He will still help out with clinics, just not as the main coordinator. Please say thanks when you see him.
- Marketing Programs: Rena Kawabata
- Social Media: Allison Lambert
- Youth: Ted Chu, Mimi Pan, Alex Lam and Jon Hayduk for Misfit, plus Chris Shea for Day Camps.
- Rules Coordinator: Bobo Eyrich
- VFSF Delegate: Wendy Lebreton

Countless others contributed their time and energy as mentors, clinic instructors, and event organizers. A special thank you goes to all Captains for organizing their teams and managing games.

Board of Directors

The Directors all worked very hard this year. The amount of Committee work was the most I've seen in my time as ED, and all Directors were diligent in their efforts to ensure the society was well-managed and headed in the right direction. We were blessed to have such dedicated and competent leadership group.