

VULS Annual General Meeting – Nov 15, 2017

Executive Director’s Report

Craig Woods

Strategic Plan

This was the first year of our new 5-year Strategic Plan. With 4 Pillars and 6 Foundations, this plan is both wider and deeper than our last one. It’s a good reflection of the increasing breadth and depth of our membership and our activities, and we have a lot to accomplish over the remaining 4 years!

Pillars – Programs & Services

Adults

Adult players are our largest membership group and our current life-blood. We seek to maximize their satisfaction with our programs & services, and maintain or increase their numbers.

Number of teams in each league:

League	2017	2016	2015	2014
Winter Indoor	12	12	12	8
Winter Turf	94	88	80	68
Winter Hat	6	6	8	8
Winter Parity	4	4	~	~
Winter Hat in New West	8	~	~	~
Summer	238	240	236	238
Summer Camp	4	4	4	4
Summer in Bby / New West	4	~	~	~
Fall Grass	40	52	58	62
Fall Turf	58	64	62	52
Fall Women	12	8	8	~
Fall Open	4	~	~	~
Fall Turf in New West	8	~	~	~
Total teams	490 (+3%)	478	468	440
Total members (adults)	4605 (+3%)	4489	4292	4270

Some highlights and challenges from this year:

- Hosted new leagues in Burnaby & New Westminster for the first time.
- Revised Captains training to improve education & awareness of key issues. This included publishing an extensive online Guide, added a new Test to ensure understanding of basic duties, and expanding the focus in Captains Meetings on spirit, gender equity, and safety.
- Merged the Super Clinic and the Art Hawkins Great Canadian Ultimate Game into one big day.
- Added new Women’s Week in Summer League to highlight women players and their skills.
- Experienced more defaults and forfeits this Summer compared to last year, unfortunately. We’re not sure of the exact cause, but will look to reduce them in 2018.
- Added an Open League in the Fall to complement the Women’s League.
- Launched a new approach to Social Events: we now offer smaller, focused, and more frequent “meet-ups” instead of big annual parties.

From various surveys, we learned:

- The majority of players were satisfied with Summer League: 87% had an Excellent or Good experience vs. 88% in 2016, although the number that said Excellent dropped from 34% to 28%.
- Concern about spirit in Summer increased: 40% felt it needed improvement vs. 37% in 2016.
- Execution of all tournaments improved overall (Equinox, Babes, Beach, BC Place).

We recognized key individuals with our Annual Awards. Congratulations to all winners!

- Volunteers: Kathleen Abuan, Kurtis Stewart
- Coaches: Reanne Bowlby, David Stelck
- Team Carbon Flip: Dim Sum Warriors
- Team Spirit: G-Raff-Attack, Sons & Daughters, Yttierbium, and Dim Sum Warriors.
- Individual Spirit: Clint Sello, Allison Lambert
- Hall of Fame: Krista Willoughby, Mike 'Spud' Fleury, The Flaming Red Sallies (team)

Youth

Youth represent the future of our sport. We continually seek new and improved ways to attract youth to the sport, and ensure they play fun, high-quality, spirited ultimate.

Number of teams (or equivalent) in each program:

League	2017	2016	2015	2014
Winter Skills (U19 & U14)	3	4	3	3
Spring Day Camps	1+	~	~	~
Summer League	13	12	12	10
Summer Skills (U19)	3	3	~	~
Summer Day Camps	10	5	1	~
Fall League	10	8	8	8
Fall Skills (U14 & U14)	4	3	~	~
Misfit club teams	15	12	13	12
Vortex club teams	8	*	*	*
Total teams	63 (+40%)	45	36	25
Total members (youth)	1064 (+20%)	883	731	596

* Vortex has been active for 10+ years – the table just shows data with the VUL.

Highlights from this year:

- Added new elementary (U14) Skills Series in Winter and Fall.
- Our week-long Day Camps continue to grow. From just 2 camps in 2015, we ran 10 in 2017, including new a one over Spring Break.
- Added the Vortex club program. They are based in Surrey and we had very successful first year together. Club ultimate continues to thrive overall, with 530+ kids in Misfit and Vortex combined. Misfit Junior Women won Gold at CUC for the second year in a row, and Vortex Junior Women won Bronze.

In addition to the above:

- We do outreach to schools. We run a variety of clinics for players and teachers, and sponsor spirit trophies for the VSB High School Championships.
- We supported BC Ultimate in hosting new camps for aboriginal players through the Red Fox Healthy Living Society, a non-profit that works with aboriginal and inner-city children and youth.
- We helped Early Recognition Is Critical (E.R.I.C.) connect with local schools to run clinics while teaching youth about cancer symptoms and the importance of an active lifestyle.

Regional Support

We want to play an active role in Metro Vancouver to support both growth and spirit.

This year we were very pleased to host new adult leagues in Burnaby & New West, and to welcome the Vortex Ultimate club program to our family. We also had a few discussions with Surrey Ultimate about how we could support them in the future, and had brief discussions with Maple Ridge and North Shore leagues, as well. The 2018 Ultimate Canada Conference will likely be in Vancouver, and the conference should inject some energy into ultimate programs around Metro Vancouver and beyond.

Leadership

Since 1986, the VUL has built a legacy by being a leader on and off the field. As the largest league in the world, we have a responsibility and opportunity to be a leader in the sport and in our community.

Some highlights from 2017:

- Launched a new annual Coaching Conference in partnership with Elevate Academy. It was very well received and we plan to run one again in 2018.
- As part of our focus on gender equity, launched the new Gender Balance rule in Summer after a pilot in Fall 2016. Survey feedback indicated 50% in support and 31% neutral about the new rule.
- As part of our focus on inclusivity, we were very pleased to add new support for transgender players through policy changes and website updates. Survey comments included some concerns about the implementation, but were 67% positive and 22% neutral.
- Set a goal to strive towards zero waste at all our events.
- To share exchange knowledge with others, staff and directors are attending the Ultimate Canada Conference in Montreal on Nov 17-19. We will give a presentation about support for transgender players, and we've also organized a separate day of sessions with the other 4 largest leagues.

Foundations – Supporting the Pillars

Spirit

Ensure our programs & services, internal activities, and external relations are in alignment with SOTG.

Game reports and surveys indicate that satisfaction remains high, and most games are fun and spirited. We were pleased to hear reports of new approaches taken in some games after our focus on spirit and safety in the Captains Meetings. That said, concern about spirit in Summer League did increase slightly, so we have more work to do to reverse that trend.

Facilities

Acquire and maintain access to high-quality and cost-effective facilities.

Highlights from this year:

- Continue to have good relationships with Park Board, School Board, and UBC, and participate with the Vancouver Field Sports Federation to advocate for more and better fields for all sports.
- Some of our fields were still experiencing issues after the drought a few summers ago. A few fields were closed this summer and this fall to help them recover for next year.
- Added new field layout marks on Trillium for 5-on-5. We plan to mark all turf fields eventually!
- The Park Board has allocated funds to complete a major grass field upgrade by the end of 2018. Their two short-listed sites are Slocan Park and Montgomery Park. We have expressed an interest in contributing some of our capital funds towards Slocan if that would help Slocan be selected and/or ensure changes would be useful for ultimate. If we wish to allocate capital funds, we would bring a request to a General Meeting; the most likely time would be a special meeting connected to the Winter Captains meeting.

Communications

Effectively engage all stakeholders (internal & external) to provide the information they need.

Our marketing team continues to engage members and the public through email and various social media channels. This fall we started a major review of our marketing and communications strategies to figure out how to better meet our objectives under the new strategic plan.

We continue to invest in our website & league management systems, critical assets of the society. In many ways we are also a technology company, in that all of our operations run through the website, and we own and manage all aspects of it to meet our needs. A few highlights from this year:

- Overhaul of the Join and Registration flows to better support youth players and parents. This was a major change that took many months to complete, as the original site was designed for adults.
- Updates to profiles, registration, rosters, and matchmaker to better support transgender players.
- Many small improvements to administrative features to save staff time.
- Multiple new reports to provide metrics for the new Strategic Plan.

We have occasionally wondered about licencing our web system to other leagues. It's a valuable piece of

technology that could help others, and we could get a return on our investment. In October an opportunity arose with Manitoba Organization of Discs Sports (MODS) to do just that, as they need a new website. We are in discussions about possibly upgrading our site to meet their needs. This would be a major undertaking for 2018, so it needs careful consideration. It would consist of an initial project followed by an ongoing service agreement. The main benefit for us would be many additional features at little or no cost. I am working closely with the Board to ensure we make a prudent decision about this opportunity.

Collaboration

Create mutually-beneficial relationships with external partners to further the aims of the VULS.

In addition to field partners and regional leagues, we work with many other groups. Some highlights:

- Ongoing and regular dialogue with BC Ultimate. Key topics this year included coach development, youth club programs, aboriginal camps, and regional leagues. Two big topics in 2018 will be CUC Mixed in Surrey in August and the Ultimate Canada Conference in November.
- Launched a new partnership with Strange Fellows Brewing. We have been very pleased so far.
- Renewed our successful partnerships with Oddball Workshop, Rackets & Runners, Insync, Jointworks, Vancouver Riptide, as well as Hardbite, Comedy Mix, Friction and Layout. Ended our partnership with Evo as it was no longer meeting our needs.
- Continued to support adult Touring teams with subsidized practice fields. In return, they provide invaluable help with clinics, and started helping with tournaments this fall, as well.
- Early discussions with a few members about supporting “alumni” gatherings in the future.

HR

Ensure we have the structure, people, and processes to support the society and deliver on its objectives.

The biggest HR change this year was the addition of our new Web Systems Manager, Michael Dorsey. He is now responsible for management and development of our website and league systems, and we're very pleased to have him join us. He joins our other three incredibly dedicated managers:

- Craig Kulyk – Marketing Manager
- Troe Weston – League Manager
- William Arlotta – Youth Programs Manager

One key transition this year was converting all five senior staff from contractors to employees. This change was long overdue.

Many other individuals played key roles to keep things running smoothly:

- Marketing: Allison Lambert, Emma Madden-Krasnick, Shawna Zegarra, Julia Wu, Winnie Chick
- Adult programs: Mauro Ortiz, Jennifer Nicholls, Alan Macfarlane, Joanna Ng, Jason Wang, Ivy Sebastian, Katalin Toreky-Paziuk, Shawn Tully, Greg Ellis.
- Youth programs: Alex Lam, Alex Jew, Jon Hayduk, Chris Wakelin, Chris Shea, Paul Dudsdeemaytha, and 80+ coaches.
- Web systems: Steve Tannock, Dana Atwood, Floyd Yamamoto

Countless others contributed their time and energy as mentors, clinic instructors, and event volunteers. As always, a special thank you goes to all captains for organizing their teams and managing games.

Governance

Ensure the organization is governed well through policies and procedures that cover all strategic and fiduciary responsibilities.

The President's Report provides the best summary of Board activity. The directors were very 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.

I'm proud of what the VUL has accomplished this year, and motivated to continue building on our strengths going forward. I'm excited about what the future holds for the VUL and the sport of ultimate.