

VULS 2019 Annual General Meeting – Jan 29, 2020

Executive Director’s Report

Craig Woods

Strategic Plan

This was the year #3 of our current 5-year Strategic Plan.

As Brett highlighted, we continue to make progress on our four Pillars (youth, adults, regional, leadership) and strengthen our six Foundations (spirit, facilities, communication, collaboration, HR, governance)

Pillars – Programs & Services

Youth

Our goal with the Youth pillar is to attract more youth to the sport while ensuring they play fun, safe, and spirited ultimate. Led by William Arlotta and supported by Craig Kulyk, our youth activities continued to do well in 2019.

Program stats:

League	Metric	2019	2018	2017	2016
Skills Series (U19 & U14)	individuals	308	267	141	128
Day Camps (spring & summer)	individuals	192	156	159	75
Leagues (summer & fall)	teams	15	20	23	21
Misfit club (Vancouver)	teams	10	12	10	10
Vortex club (Surrey & area)	teams	10	10	8	6
Reign club (Richmond)	teams	3	4	~	~
Total players		1490	1519	1110	907

Some highlights:

- Weekly Skills Series and week-long Day Camps continued to grow.
- Both Summer and Fall leagues shrunk in size slightly. We hope to rebound in 2020.
- The 3 Club programs were basically the same size. At CUC, Misfit’s Eclipse Open won Gold, and the Vortex Women won Bronze!
- Hosted the third-annual Vancouver Coaching Conference in partnership with Elevate Ultimate.
- Continued outreach to schools, including:
 - Clinics for players and teachers;
 - Support for elementary tournaments;
 - Sponsored Spirit trophies for the Vancouver High School Championships;
 - Provided TD’s for regional qualifiers for High School Provincials;
 - Delivered 100’s discs to schools across Vancouver.
- Engaged a large and dedicated team of people to run all of these programs, including 20 Coordinators and ~100 coaches and instructors!

Adults

Most of the VUL’s focus is adult ultimate. Our goals here are to maximize member satisfaction, while maintaining or increasing the number of people involved as players, coaches, and volunteers.

Led by Katie Berezan and supported by Craig Kulyk, our adult programs ran quite well this year.

Number of teams by program:

League	2019	2018	2017	2016
Winter Turf	92	94	94	88
Winter other leagues (x3)	20	20	22	22
Winter regional (New West)	6	6	6	~
Summer (including Camp)	232	230	242	244
Summer regional (Surrey & Bby)	20	22	~	~
Fall Grass	40	32	40	52
Fall Turf (x3)	72	74	72	72
Fall regional (Surrey)	4	6	8	~
Total teams	488 (+1%)	484 (- 1%)	490 (+3%)	478
Total players	4962 (+5%)	4737 (+1%)	4672 (+2%)	4579

For league stats:

- 488 teams across all programs almost matches our 2017 record of 490 teams.
- The number of adult players grew a healthy 5% to almost 5000!
- Summer League stabilized after dropped a bit in 2018.
- Fall Grass league bounced back, up from 32 to 40 teams.
- Fall & Winter Turf leagues continue to be strong.
- All 4 tournaments were successful: Equinox, Shades, Beach, and Undercover.

Other highlights:

- Adopted a new approach for game times that we hope will make real progress on reducing 'ultimate time'.
- Replaced the Spirit Tie with "Spirit Standouts" – spirited players recognized after every game.
- Started "Community Spotlight" articles to highlight special members of our community.
- From the 1300 responses to our Summer survey, 89% said they had an Excellent or Good experience in Summer League.
- Our advocacy helped the Park Board select Slocan Park for major field upgrades.
- Adopted a new Code of Conduct for members and guests. While misconduct is rare in the ultimate community, this new Code will better allow us to take action if needed.

On a somber note, we were very sad to lose a long-time member of our community, Martin Lintag. He passed away on April 21 after a battle with two rare forms of leukaemia. Marty played on Black Huck Down and The Dolphins, and he is greatly missed by his team-mates, friends, and family.

We recognized special contributions from past and present members at our Awards Banquet in October.

- Volunteers of the Year: Kelly Wunderlich, Alex Van
- Coaches of the Year: Mike Fun, Anja Haman
- Carbon Flip award: Absolute Zeroes
- Team Spirit awards: Talk Nerdy to Me, Dark Side of the Disc, Dim Sum Warriors, Rain City UC
- Individual Spirit Awards: Wesley Chan, Doris Chang
- Hall of Fame Inductees: Liam Robinson, Rosse Lapper

Regional Support

Our goal with this pillar is to develop viable leagues in Greater Vancouver, either by supporting others or by running them ourselves.

- We continued to run adult leagues in Surrey, Burnaby, and New West. In 2018 we ran the Surrey league on a trial basis, and this year we were pleased to confirm with their Board that we will run it indefinitely.
- We ran a youth club program in Richmond for a second year in 2019.

We will continue to look for ways to support or run programs throughout Greater Vancouver in the future.

Leadership

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

Activities this year included:

- Article to promote numerous ways to find and retain women, crowdsourced from VUL captains.
- Started acknowledging at major events that we operate on unceded lands of local First Nations.
- Sent 3 directors and 2 staff to the Ultimate Canada Conference to exchange knowledge with other leagues, and facilitated the third annual “C6” gathering of the 6 largest Canadian leagues.
- Responded to multiple requests from other leagues for help with inclusivity and gender equity.

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 overall satisfaction remains high, with most games being fun and spirited. That said, there are still more incidents and injuries than we'd like. We will continue to look for ways to improve spirit and player safety.

Facilities

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

We continue to have good relationships with Park Board and School Board, and participate with the Vancouver Field Sports Federation to advocate for more and better fields (where I am President).

Communications

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

Led by Craig Kulyk, our marketing team engaged members and the public through all of our channels. Some statistics from last year:

- Email: sent almost 150 newsletters to current and past members.
- Facebook: grew # of reactions by 36% to 13370.
- Instagram: increased followers by 25% to 3873
- Twitter: stable at 1019 followers for @vul, and up to 751 for @vulgames.

Led by Michael Dorsey, our web team continues to enhance our website and league management system. Some highlights include:

- Added “Invoices” and “My Family” to My Account for players and parents.
- Allow players to provide Emergency and Medical info, viewable by captains.
- Switched payment processors to save money and add support for Visa Debit.
- Ability to subscribe to your team’s schedule (view in your calendar).
- Many updates to staff features to save time and keep costs down.

Collaboration

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

Some highlights:

- Continued to support adult Touring teams with practice fields.
- Renewed all of our valued partnerships: BE Ultimate, VC Ultimate, Strange Fellows Brewing, Soccerwest, Insync, and Jointworks.
- Maintained ongoing dialogue with BC Ultimate re. growing ultimate in BC. We will support them to host the second-ever BC Leagues conference in Kelowna this March.

HR

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

The VUL is blessed to have many talented individuals who contribute to our success. Almost 200 people contributed their time and energy to the VUL last year as directors, managers, coordinators, mentors, coaches, instructors, event helpers, and committee volunteers. In addition, a special thank you to all captains for organizing and leading their teams on and off the field. For our management team in particular:

Michael Dorsey, Web Systems Manager, has been with us over 2 years now. He's a pleasure to work with and I'm so glad he joined our team. He's brought rigorous process and high quality to how we design, build, and maintain our website and league management tools.

William Arlotta, Youth Programs Manager, has been involved with youth ultimate for over 25 years! Will and I first worked together on the Board of the BC Disc Sport Society 15 years ago, and I'm pleased to be working with him still. His depth of experience, focus on excellence, and ability to manage a large team is very valuable to the VUL.

Katie Berezan, League Manager, is starting her second full year, and we're all very glad she joined our team, as well. The LM role is a challenging one, as you need strong technical *and* people skills, but Katie has both of those skill-sets in spades. Craig often remarked last year how much he enjoyed the discussions they had to together. The VUL is lucky to have her with us.

Lastly, I wanted to acknowledge the incredible contributions of Craig Kulyk, our Marketing Manager for the past 8 years. He was always thoughtful, respectful, and worked extremely well with other people both inside and outside the VUL. He helped us grow significantly in size & reach, while also ensuring we stayed true to our core values. He led many special initiatives to improve the lives of our members and the greater ultimate community. When I reflect on my interactions with him, Craig's ability to truly connect with people - to see them, relate to them, and care for them - stands out to me as one of his most treasured gifts. He was well-loved by everyone who knew him, and all of us at the VUL miss him deeply. His positive impact on the VUL and those around him is immeasurable.

Governance

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

Brett provided a good summary of Board activity in his report. As I say most years, all directors were passionate and diligent in their efforts to ensure the society was managed well last year. VUL members are fortunate to have such a dedicated and competent leadership group, and we should be proud that the VUL continues to attract quality candidates to the Board.

Brett thanked the retiring directors in his report. I would echo his comments about Audrey and Rob – their contributions were invaluable, and I will very much miss having both of them on the Board. I'd like to also acknowledge the other directors:

- Lisa and Ken are both are up for re-election as their terms are ending. Lisa's legal experience and measured approach served us very well this year, and Ken's tenacity and accounting expertise served us very well over his two-year term.
- Trisha, Sarah, and Christa continue to step up in many ways on the board and committees, utilizing their varied skills sets to lead us forward.
- Last, but definitely not least, I'd like to thank Brett for his service. The President's role can be challenging one, but Brett has filled it well. He's taken a steady, measured, and professional approach to leading this group of leaders, and I will definitely miss having him on the board.

In closing, this year has reminded me of how important it is to treasure, acknowledge, and spend time with the important people in our lives. In person, with real connection, as Craig Kulyk often did. I'm so honoured to play my part with this wonderful organization, proud of what we accomplished last year, and looking forward to continuing to spread the joy of ultimate in the future.