

WFDF Task Force to Consider its Position on the Spirit of the Game and On- Field Officiation Issues for Ultimate

Interim Report

Background:

On 30 September 2013 WFDF established a Task Force to Consider its Position on the Spirit of the Game and On- Field Officiation Issues for Ultimate:

wfd.org/files/Press_Release_-_WFDF_Task_Force_to_Review_SOTG_and_Self-Officiation_9-30-13.pdf.

It was expected that the task force would come up with an initial written report to the board discussing their definition of the scope of the review and expected target date for a final report by no later than January 31, 2014 with a final recommendation by mid-2014, in time for presentation to the 2014 Congress in Lecco.

Objectives:

The taskforce was given two objectives:

1. Reaffirm WFDF's definition of Spirit of the Game and review, develop and strengthen existing programs in order to promote a clearer and more consistent understanding of how it should be applied; and
2. Answer the question on how does WFDF ensure that Ultimate athletes play a fair game that is also viewable (interesting for spectators in person and on TV/internet to watch).

A key passage of the press release regarding the second objective stated that: "this second question is not the same as "should WFDF adopt Observers." Rather, we want our games to highlight the positive qualities of player control (fair play, personal responsibility, communication) while not allowing the negative potential of player control (misconduct, disorganization, miscommunication) to overshadow or diminish the positives." Having said that, the USAU system of Observers has been developed over the last couple decades and we agree we should not discount the conclusions that have been drawn through this experience until they have been fully considered.

Task Force Members:

Name	Background Roles
Rueben Berg (Chair)	Rules Subcommittee chair, Australia representative
Tiina Booth	Youth and Sports Commission
Will Deaver	Deputy Ultimate chair, US representative
Brian Gisel	Championships Subcommittee chair, Canada representative
Anna Haynes	Athletes' Commission representative
Si Hill	Ultimate Chair, UK representative
Jarna Kalpala	Women in Sport Commission, Finland representative
Makoto Ohi	Japan representative
Nob Rauch	WFDF executive representative
Luis Rodriguez	Youth and Sports Commission, Colombia representative
Valeska Schacht	Women in Sport Commission, Germany representative
Patrick van de Valk	SOTG Subcommittee chair, Portugal representative

Task Force Process:

So far the Task Force has undertaken the following steps:

- Shared background information on all members
- Received an update from the SOTG Committee on the work they are doing
- Watched game footage of key Ultimate games, including non-Observed and Observed games
- Shared information regarding the existing WFDF Officiating systems
- Undertaken an officiating survey on different aspects of the game and how they could be best officiated
- Compiled a pros and cons list for the WFDF and USAU officiating systems
- Undertaken an initial survey on the two task force objectives

The next stage for the Task Force will involve significant dialogue by e-mail, discussion forum and telephone.

Preliminary Task Force Outcomes:

This is a high level summary of the Pros and Cons work the Task Force undertook:

	WFDF Officiating System	USAU Observer System
Pros	Easy, works majority of the time, unique	Can overturn incorrect calls or deliberate cheating while still mostly allowing for player responsibility, better time management
Cons	Can result in awkward game delays, the system does not work if players deliberately cheat	Removes some responsibility to adhere to the moral prerogative, requires additional resources to train and staff

The preliminary results of the officiating survey the Task Force undertook showed that the majority of the Task Force members believe:

- Player should remain solely responsible for making foul/travel/pick calls
- It might assist players if they could ask for advice from a WFDF Official regarding line calls and other on field discussions
- It might help address game management issues if a WFDF Official was empowered to make calls regarding Offside and Time limit penalties
- It might help to eliminate any risks of cheating if WFDF Officials had a more direct relationship with the Tournament Rules Group

Note: The term “Official” does not necessarily equate to the existing WFDF Line Assistant or Time/Score Keeper roles, nor the USAU Observer Role.

As a result of this work, it became clear that WFDF might want to consider some changes to the current Officiating system to enable it to ensure that Ultimate athletes play a fair game that is also viewable, while still maintaining key aspects of Spirit of the Game.

Preliminary Task Force Response to the Objectives:

Objective 1: At this stage the Task Force intends to endorse the work the SOTG Committee are doing around Spirit, especially in the area of education and feedback through the spirit scoring system

Objective 2: At this stage the Task Force intends to recommend that WFDF make some adjustments to the WFDF officiating process (but which could also result in a system that was different to the USAU officiating process)

Note: These preliminary responses may change based on further discussion.

Task Force Recommendation:

In addition to the preliminary responses to the Task Force Objectives, the Task Force would like to recommend that WFDF makes certain incremental changes to the current WFDF Officiating process that could easily be implemented at the WJUC/WUCC 2014 without requiring significant advance notice, while recognizing that anything more than an incremental change would not be able to be implemented in time for the WJUC/WUCC.

The Task Force intends to develop a more detailed list of specific recommendations regarding this, with the main focus being on possible changes that could be made to the WFDF Rules of Ultimate Appendix, and the role and structure of the Tournament Rules Group.

Next Steps:

The next steps for the Task Force will be:

- Initiate a dialogue around these initial background findings and begin the process of discussing alternatives in more detail
- Develop recommendations regarding potential revisions that would be considered for WJUC/WUCC 2014
- Consider the ramifications of increasing Olympic Movement involvement and overall commercial development of the sport (and the demands that sponsors and broadcast partners may make) versus protecting and highlighting the key aspects of how SOTG can be showcased
- Discuss in more detail the work the SOTG Committee are undertaking and make any necessary recommendations
- Discuss how and why any proposed changes to the current WFDF Officiating System would be different from the USAU system
- Determine the specific recommendations regarding any proposed changes to the current WFDF Officiating System
- Determine what educational tools and resources can be developed to assist with the implementation of any proposed changes
- Detail how any proposed changes should be monitored and evaluated to determine its effectiveness and efficiency
- Set a timeline for when any changes should be implemented and reviewed

It is expected that the final Task Force report will be submitted to WFDF by 30 June 2014.