

# Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Plan 2012-2015

## Introduction

The executive committee of Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador met on June 9, 2012, in downtown St. John's to set the organization's direction for the next three years. In attendance were: Patrick Snow (president); Rebecca Coffey (secretary); Matthew White (treasurer); Suzy Stever (past –president); Rob Langridge (member at large); Greer Hunt (member at large); Claire Moore-Gibbons (SWURL rep); and Nick Delaney (MAUL rep). Professional facilitator Gina Pecore (Myx Meetings) led the session.

The group's first discussion was a reflection on the organization's growth and milestones since it was formed in 2004. The milestone map that emerged can be found at the end of this report. After creating the map, the group discussed the current environment, identified strategic directions and goals, and concluded the day by setting objectives for the first 12 months of the plan.



Planning session, June 24, 2012: (L-R) Matthew White, Patrick Snow, Rebecca Coffey, Suzy Stever, Claire Moore-Gibbons, Greer Hunt, Rob Langridge, Nick Delaney

## Current environment

Strengths	Restrictions	Opportunities
Open to all – no turning away players, no experience needed	Completely volunteer driven with no paid staff; currently the same people are doing everything - more volunteers are needed	Focus on quality, creating more tiers and more opportunities to compete locally and (inter)nationally
Mix of social and competitive atmosphere	Lack of trained coaches and mentors	Increase number of teams and leagues across the province
Accessible sport – no invitation needed, can sign up as individual or pairs or team	Funds are currently strong but limited in terms of future opportunities	Increase number of school-based teams across the province
Mixed play – men and women can play on same	Playing space – UNL is given low priority on most fields; MQP is currently the only	Host a provincial or regional tournament

team	reliable field; indoor space is expensive	
Built on sportsmanship - respect and fairness are part of the game	Observing PSO status (versus full status as a Provincial Sport Organization); limits UNL's credibility and opportunities	Increase youth membership (though the youth league, non-school specific)
International sport – opportunities to play and compete world-over	Female membership and retention – harder to keep women involved	Create more awareness of sport across the province in specific sectors – among parents, for example
Cheap to play – limited investment needed	Coordination and coaching time availability – current volunteers are not available in 9-5 slot, for example, presenting a problem in working with schools	
Appeals to diverse audience – kids, families, professionals, etc	Lack of general awareness of Ultimate across the province	
Good transition sport when moving out of another sport, such as academic teams		
Easy to organize a game – mostly due to self-refereeing		

## 2012 – 2015 Strategic Directions and Goals

### DIRECTION 1: Strengthen UNL's governance and communication functions

#### Goal 1A: Secure Provincial Sports Organization designation

**Rationale:** Achieving the PSO designation will give the sport of Ultimate, as well as the organization, legitimacy throughout the province. It will also open new opportunities for funding, partnerships, and provincial growth.

#### 2012-2013 Objectives

1. Upon receipt of the NSO (National Sports Organization) designation, expected any day, revise and re-submit UNL's PSO application.
2. Continue to pursue growth and development of UNL membership among youth and in Corner Brook. This is the starting point for provincial growth, an essential element in UNL's application for the PSO designation.

#### Goal 1B: Develop a membership database that collects member, league and volunteer information, takes payments, and facilitates communication between UNL and its membership.

**Rationale:** As member and league numbers grow, data collection and payments will get increasingly time-consuming. Automation will ease the process and require minimum support. A central source of information will also give UNL a direct link to all members.

#### 2012-2013 Objectives

1. Collect / review best practices to select the optimal database tool for UNL.
2. Identify UNL's specific information needs and create an action plan for populating the database (existing and new information).
3. Issue and award an RFP to develop the interface for the database.

#### Goal 1C: Develop key messages to form the foundation for all UNL's communication and marketing efforts.

**Rationale:** UNL (the organization as well as its executive members, core volunteers and organizers), should be aligned on messages about Ultimate in order to encourage participation and grow the sport in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Draft key messages about the organization, focusing on the features and advantages of Ultimate for Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. Produce a generic brochure that can be given to potential members and organizers, and used in start-up kits, as opportunities arise.

### **Goal 1D: Refresh UNL's website.**

**Rationale:** *UNL's website is the central hub of information for members but the site's look and feel and navigation structure has not been updated in recent years. A few small revisions and additions could increase the value of the site.*

### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Establish a sub-committee of the Board to review the website, consulting with a sample of members to identify the main points of weakness and most manageable improvement opportunities.
2. Confirm the plan to improve the site and secure any required resources (such as a firm to make design or technical changes).
3. Implement the changes, making plans for further changes in 2013-2014 as needed.

## **DIRECTION 2: Promote the sport of Ultimate and sustainably increase participation across Newfoundland and Labrador.**

### **Goal 2A: Build a self-sustaining UNL youth community**

**Rationale:** *Youth are seen as the player group with the highest growth potential. Through promoting youth membership, UNL is also creating a strong base on future adult players, as well as a wide pool of potential competitive players.*



### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Host an annual summer youth league that is supported by UNL but delivered through existing community youth organizations, such as Max Athletics. Pilot project: 2013.
2. Increase the number of schools that have Ultimate leagues. In 2013, increase the number of junior high teams from six to eight, and the number of senior high teams from four to six.
3. Develop a start-up package tailored to the junior high and high school environment. Inform physical education teachers of the availability of the package for those interested in introducing Ultimate to their curriculum.

### **Goal 2B: Promote and enable self start-up of adult UNL clubs across the province**

**Rationale:** *With no staff and limited volunteers, UNL must foster growth that doesn't place unrealistic demands on the organization. This means communities must be able to access the information and support they need from UNL and then move ahead with starting and sustaining their own clubs.*

### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Develop a self-start UNL package that is flexible and universal enough to work for any region or level of interest (except junior high and high schools, which will have its own start-up package – Goal 2A, Objective 3) . Be ready to distribute by early 2013.
2. Host a provincial adult tournament in St. John's in the summer of 2013. The event will give considerable profile to the sport of Ultimate in the province.

### **Goal 2C: Build a solid base of well-trained volunteers**

**Rationale:** *It will be difficult for the sport to grow and prosper without a committed and well-organized base of trained volunteer coaches, mentors and helpers who can support the development of Ultimate players across the province.*

### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Establish a volunteer coordinator position, to serve as an at-large member on the board of directors. Create a clear and detailed job description for the position, with a focus on activities that support volunteer recruitment, communication and recognition.
2. Initiate NCCP certification for all coaches of school teams (completion not expected in this period).
3. Introduce a system to track volunteer hours for member league teams. Establish criteria for defining volunteer hours. Inform team captains it is their responsibility to report hours.
4. Establish a volunteer recognition program.

### **DIRECTION 3: Increase the quality of the experience for individual Ultimate players.**

#### **Goal 3A: Focus on the development of league captains, ensuring they have ample opportunity to gain NCCP certification.**

**Rationale:** Team captains are the main point of contact for all players and can make or break the player experience. By ensuring team captains are well trained, they can help players access the level of play they are seeking. This will support retention and growth.

##### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Offer Ultimate Level I coaching certification opportunities outside St. John's.
2. Partner with other sports organizations to increase opportunities to offer NCCP training across the province (and lessen the logistical burden).

#### **Goal 3B: Start production of how-to videos.**

**Rationale:** There are a limited number of expert Ultimate players in the province, and limited ability to connect these players to new and developing players across the province. Videos will profile local talent, thereby promoting the sport in the province, and also give new and developing players an easy way to learn skills from a reliable local source.

##### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Secure the required resources: an expert player to demonstrate his/her skills, a video camera, and a YouTube channel.
2. Produce and upload two to three videos.
3. Promote videos to team captains, on UNL's website, and in UNL's promotional materials.

#### **Goal 3C: Seek preliminary ways to support player development at higher levels.**

**Rationale:** This will be the foundation for improving the level of play and increasing exposure of the province's teams outside of the province. It will also increase the exposure of higher-level players to teams across the province, and increase the supply of higher-level coaches.

##### **2012-2013 Objectives**

1. Explore the possibility of a high performance group. Identify best practices for implementing this initiative.
2. Identify and implement a high performance training opportunity, as a pilot project. Use the pilot to assess the effectiveness of, and level of interest in, more advanced player development opportunities.
3. Communicate the opportunities to team captains (for dissemination to team players), through the website, and through the new database when it comes online.