

TEACHING ULTIMATE - LOWER GRADES

Below are four 30-minute lessons for phys. ed. classes in the lower grades. These lessons teach the very basics of the game of ultimate. Students will develop basic skills and a general understanding of the rules of ultimate. A focus on 'Spirit of the Game' is essential. If students are very young, you may want to substitute an official sized disc with smaller, light-weight discs.

LESSON 1: INTRO TO ULTIMATE

Specific Objectives: Students will demonstrate skills necessary to catch a disc while stationary and while running. Student will demonstrate sportsmanship and an understanding of 'Spirit of the Game'.

Materials Required: One disc per 2 students, whistle, large playing area (like a soccer field), saucer cones.

Delivery and Activity Outline:

Introduction - 5 minutes

Ultimate is rooted in the rule of Spirit of the Game. This foundation focuses on sportsmanship and rules awareness. It is the responsibility of every player to know and understand the rules, and to play by them at all times. There are NO referees or officials, so players on the field make their own calls and officiate themselves. This is the most important and unique aspect of ultimate.

Ultimate is played on a field that is as long as a soccer field and about $\frac{2}{3}$ as wide. There are 2 endzones on either end of the field. To score a point, a player must catch a pass while they are in the endzone. You cannot run with the disc, so once you catch it you must stop. You have 10 seconds to throw the disc to a teammate in order to advance up the field.

Warm-up - 5 min.

Start with a light jog, then work through a series of dynamic stretches for legs and arms.

Catching - 10 min.

The best place to receive the disc is in front of your body. Move your feet in order to try to get your body in front of the disc. Spread your fingers wide and catch the disc with one hand underneath and one hand on top of the disc. Your hands and forearm should make a right angle; your hands should not be pointing in the same direction.

If the disc is above your head, catch the disc with both thumbs pointing down and grabbing the rim of the disc, and your fingers clasping the top of the disc. Your hands should be at 4 and 8 o'clock.

If the disc is below your knees, catch the disc with both thumbs pointing up and clasping the top of the disc, and your fingers grabbing under the rim of the disc. Your hands should be at 4 and 8 o'clock.

Activity - Have students stand in a line behind a point about 10 yards from the teacher. Throw easy passes to the student at the front of the line, having them focus on catching with two hands in the middle of their bodies.

Catching while Running - 10 min.

To get away from the person guarding you, you will have to run. You must learn to catch the disc while running, but you have to stop as soon as you catch it.

Activity- Have students line up about 10 yards to the right of the teacher, with one student about ten yards to the left of the teacher. They will run straight out of the line to the right and the teacher will throw a leading pass to them. Have them focus on running all the way to the disc, then stopping as soon as they catch it. The student that just caught the disc will then run to the student to the left of the teacher and give them a high five and the disc. The student who was there to receive the high five and the disc will then drop off the disc to the teacher and go to the back of the receiving line. Focus on cheering for the person catching the disc.

LESSON 2: THROWING

Specific Objectives: Students will demonstrate skills necessary to throw a backhand. Students will demonstrate skills required to establish and utilize a pivot foot while faking and throwing.

Materials Required: One disc per 2 students, whistle, large playing area.

Delivery and Activity Outline:

Warm-up - 5 min.

Review Catching and Introduce Throwing a Backhand- 10 min.

When you catch the disc, you must immediately stop and set a pivot foot. In ultimate, the pivot foot is the opposite of your throwing hand; so, if you are right handed, your left foot will remain planted, and vice versa.

To throw a backhand, you should grip the disc with your fingers under the rim and your thumb stretched on top of the disc and pressing down on the grip rings. Step forward with your free foot so that your throwing shoulder is facing your target. Keep the disc flat as you pull it from behind you to toward your target, with the back of your hand facing your target. Once your arm is straight and pointing toward your target, flick your wrist and let go, keeping the disc flat as you release. The flatter the disc remains, and the more flick you give it, the further and faster the disc will fly.

Activity- Have students pair up and stand about 10-15 yards apart. Students should walk through the steps of throwing a backhand until they are comfortable enough to put it all together. They should continue to catch with 2 hands. Have them do this until all students have had some success.

Throwing a Forehand - 15 min.

To throw a Forehand (Flick), hold the disc so the rim of the disc is between your middle finger and ring finger, with your thumb reaching around the disc and pressing on the grip rings. If you make a peace sign with the fingers under the disc, your middle finger along the inside of the rim, you will have more stability when holding the disc. This throw comes from the same side of your body as your throwing arm, with the front of your arm facing your target. Step out to the side with your free foot so that your chest is facing your target. Keep the disc flat by keeping your elbow close to your hip. Your arm should not move much during this throw. Cock your wrist back and then 'flick' your wrist forward, letting the disc spin off the tip of your middle finger toward your target.

Activity - Have students pair up and stand 10-15 yards apart and throw forehands to each other. Students should walk through the steps of throwing a forehand until they are comfortable enough to put it all together. They should continue to catch with 2 hands. Have them do this until all students have had some success.

Activity- With their partners, have them run around the field, completing passes back and forth. Have them focus on stopping as soon as they catch the disc, establishing a pivot foot, and throwing a backhand.

LESSON 3: TURNOVERS

Specific Objectives: Students will demonstrate an understanding of possession rules. Students will develop the skills necessary to make controlled cuts to get open for the disc.

Materials Required: Set of cones, whistle, about one disc per 3 or 4 students, large playing area.

Delivery and Activity Outline:

Review Mechanics of Pivoting and Throwing- 5 min.

- *Can you run with the disc?* No
- *What foot should be your pivot foot?* Left if right-handed, right if left-handed
- *What is the proper grip for a backhand?* Have a student try to demonstrate it to the class.
- *Which way should you step when throwing a backhand?* Toward your target so your throwing shoulder is facing them.
- *What is the proper grip for a forehand?* Have a student try to demonstrate it to the class.
- *Which way should you step when throwing a forehand?* Perpendicular to your target so your chest is facing them.
- *At what angle should you release the disc so it flies straight to your target?* Flat
- *How should you catch the disc?* Have student try to demonstrate the 3 two-handed catching techniques for the class. ALWAYS TWO HANDS

5 Ways to Turnover the Disc - 5 min.

A turnover is when the team that threw the disc loses possession of the disc and the other team gains possession of the disc. (Possession refers to which team gets to throw the disc.) A turnover can happen in 5 ways.

- 1. The thrower makes a bad pass and it hits the ground, or the receiver drops the disc.*
- 2. The receiver catches the disc out of bounds.*
- 3. Someone on defense knocks the disc to the ground.*
- 4. Someone on defense catches the disc.*
- 5. The thrower does not release the disc before the marker counts to 10.*

In all of these instances, the team that was on defense can take the disc from where the disc rests, where the disc crossed to out-of-bounds, or where the stall down occurred.

Give demonstrations of each of these instances so it is very clear what happens in each case. Students will tend to believe that whoever touched the disc last does not get to pick up the disc, so clarify that defense can just knock the disc out of the air and pick it right up to start play.

So... it is very important that you get far away from your defender so your thrower has a clear throw between them and you, with no defenders in the way! The only way to do this is to run hard and strategically.

Warm-up - 5 min.

Practicing Turnovers - 15 min.

Activity - Set up a few large square playing areas and split the students up into groups of 3 or 4. In these squares, they will play a game of keep away against the other team. Remind them that you cannot run with the disc, you have 10 seconds to throw it, the turnover rules discussed earlier (as they occur in Ultimate) apply in this game, and you cannot be within touching distance of the person throwing the disc. The team with the highest consecutive number of passes wins. They can play a few different teams for fun.

LESSON 4: DEFENSE AND GAME PLAY

Specific Outcomes: Students will demonstrate an understanding of person-on-person defence. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic rules of the game.

Materials Required: One set of cones, one disc per 4 or 5 students, pinnies, whiteboard, whistle, large playing area.

Delivery and Activity Outline:

Warm-up - 5 min.

The Marker and the Upfield Defender - 10 min.

The marker is the defender guarding the person with the disc. The marker must count the stalls out loud while the thrower has the disc. The counts should be one second apart. If the marker is counting too fast, the thrower calls 'fast count' and the marker goes back one number in their count and continues counting. The thrower has until the marker reaches ten to throw the disc or it is a turnover. The marker cannot touch the thrower in any way and must be about an arms-length away from the thrower. If the marker gets too close and touches the thrower, the count starts back at 0.

Activity - Have students get into groups of three. One student will start as the thrower, one as the marker, and one as the receiver about 10 yards down the field from the pair. State that the force throughout this exercise is to one side of the field. The marker will set up facing the force side. The thrower will pivot and make the available pass to the receiver. Once the receiver catches the disc, the thrower runs to become the marker, the receiver is now the thrower, and the marker is now the receiver. Students will cycle through the drill as follows: throw, mark, receive, throw, mark receive, etc, being sure to set a force to the same side of the field throughout the drill, regardless of which direction the thrower is facing.

The upfield defenders are the players guarding the other team's players that don't have the disc. Each player is assigned a specific player from the other team to guard every time they are on defence. It is important that each offensive player is guarded by one player on defence.

Rules of the game - 15 min.

To start the game or a point, the teams line up on opposing endzone lines. One team 'pulls' the disc from behind the endzone line (like a kick-off in football) and the receiving team runs up to pick up the disc and set up their play. If a player attempts to catch the pull and drops the disc, it is a turnover and the pulling team takes the disc from there, so let the disc drop first. Play continues, using the turnover rules, until one team catches the disc in their endzone. When a team scores, they remain in the endzone they scored in and set up to pull from there. The other team must walk to the other endzone to receive the pull. When a member of the receiving team raises their hand to signal readiness the pulling team may pull the disc.

Activity - Split up students into 4 even teams. Give two teams pinnies and set up two games. Remind students that the number one rule is spirit of the game. All players are responsible for knowing the rules and not intentionally breaking the rules at any time. For younger groups, make the field much shorter so they have a better chance of scoring.

After every ultimate game, the two opposing teams mingle and play a spirit game. This is just a fun and silly game that allows the teams to do something fun with no real competition.

Activity - Spirit Game (See Below)

For consecutive lessons, allow them some time to review their basic skills, then start up a few games. Always finish a game with a short spirit game. Here are more ideas of spirit games:

Look Down, Look Up - All players stand in a tight circle. There is one caller. Players look down when the caller says, "Look down." When the caller says, "Look up," the players must look directly at someone else in the circle. If you are looking at a person who happens to be making eye contact with you, both parties must die a dramatic and painful fake death and are considered 'out'. This continues until there are two players left standing. They then play Bear, Ninja, Cowboy (described below) for the championship.

Memory - The spirit players from each team are the Guessers (they play this game against each other), using the rest of the players as the 'Cards'. Without the Guessers seeing, the players that are Cards must pick a partner and decide on an action they will each perform when called on. All Cards then sit in a grid formation. One Guesser must call on two Cards. If the Cards perform the same action, they then stand behind the Guesser and the Guesser gets to pick again. If the Cards do not match, the other Guesser gets to pick. You must use your memory to pick the proper pairs. The Guesser with the most Cards at the end of the game wins.

BANG! - There is one person in the middle of a circle of players. We will call this person the 'Shotgun'. The Shotgun spins, stops, points like a gun at a player in the circle, and says, "Bang!" The person they are pointing at must duck before the players on either side of them turn and try to shoot them. If the player fails to duck before their neighbors shoot them, they are out. If the player ducks successfully, but the neighbors shoot at different times, the neighbor who shot last is out. This continues until there are two players left. They then play Bear, Ninja, Cowboy for the championship.

Princess, Cowboy, Hot Dog - This game has one caller. The caller will shout 'Princess' 'Cowboy' or 'Spoon'. Princess is when one person jumps into the other's arms like a bride. Cowboy is when one player drops onto all fours and another hops on their back like they are riding them like a horse. Hot Dog is when 3 players all lie down beside each other like bun, weiner, bun. It is a race between all players to not be the last to assume the called position. Last people done, or incorrect positions are eliminated.

Bear, Ninja, Cowboy - This is Ultimate's version of "Rock, Paper, Scissors." When performing each action, you must fully embody your character. This is key. Bear is hands up with claws extended, roaring. Bear mauls the Ninja for the win. Ninja is crossed arms in front of the face, one foot raised, saying "hiya." Ninja kicks the guns out of the Cowboy's hand for the win. Cowboy is two handguns shooting, saying "bang, bang, bang." Cowboy shoots the Bear for the win. To begin the game, players stand back to back. A caller calls off three paces, at the end of which they turn and take character.

Biggest Fan - Playing 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' each time you lose you become a fan of the person that beat you. You then follow behind them and cheer them on. If they lose, they follow who beat them and you follow suit. The person who never loses wins and has all the fans at the end.

Lawn Chair Disc Golf - Set up two lawn chairs approximately 15 meters apart facing each other. Stand next to your lawn chair taking turns trying to land the disc on the seat of the other chair. Play to 5 or 10.