

# Air Traffic Control Parent Information

## Introduction

Welcome to Air Traffic Control, a co-ed high school Ultimate team. (Middle school students are also welcome, and we sometimes even have middle-aged players joining us for practice.) Although the team is officially associated with Bitney Prep High School, more than half of our players (and both of our current captains) attend other schools.

## The Ultimate Sport?

(First, **please don't** confuse Ultimate with Disc Golf, which is another great disc sport.) Ultimate is a high-energy, competitive team sport invented by a group of **high school** students from Maplewood, NJ, and the original rules they drafted back in 1968 enshrined a concept known as the "Sprit of the Game" which puts the responsibility for fair play into the hands of the players on the field. The sport remains primarily self-officiated worldwide, even at the highest levels of competition (with the exception of the U.S. professional league). Another thing that distinguishes Ultimate (and which has apparently caught the eye of the International Olympic Committee) is the popularity of the Mixed Division, where men and women play alongside one another. In my view, these two key differences help create a more constructive environment for young athletes to explore both sportsmanship and gender equity/empowerment issues.

## Season

Our team practices **throughout the entire school year** on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45pm - 5:00pm, primarily at the softball fields on the Nevada Union High School campus (out back below the tennis courts). We travel to various scrimmages and tournaments typically in the San Francisco Bay Area, and most of these are single-day events on the weekends.

## Financial Contribution

There is no team membership fee. Each player contributes a modest amount toward tournament/transportation costs (typically \$20-40 per event), and for his/her team jersey (another \$50-60). Team discs are available for \$10 in the Bitney Prep HS office, and it's difficult to master throwing without owning your own disc. However, **financial hardship should never interfere with any student's participation (please contact me directly** if necessary so that I can arrange for the team to cover some or all of these expenses.)

## Parent Support

The most important things you can do to help our team are to ensure that *your* child: 1) attends virtually every practice throughout the year, 2) works on his/her conditioning and skills *outside* of practice, and 3) commits early and then delivers the paperwork & fees *on time* for each tournament. I really appreciate those parents who pool their resources to help get each other's kids to practice on time and pick them up afterward; sharing this responsibility solidifies your connection to the team.

**Please avoid scheduling doctor's visits, etc. on practice days and maintain a family calendar on which tournament dates are recorded as soon as they are announced and then respected as other responsibilities and opportunities arise.** Note that I only register for an event if enough players to field and support a team commit early enough, so maintaining a family calendar will help your child identify any potential conflicts.

In addition, we'd **love** for you to join us at our tournaments! Bitney Prep typically loans us their 14 passenger van, but we sometimes depend on parents to help out with transportation. If you've never been to an Ultimate tournament before, I predict that it will be a transformative experience for you. Parents are also welcome to spectate (or even participate) at our practices.

Finally, please encourage your friends and their kids to join the team. **We're always looking for new players** (even in the spring), but the best time to join is early in the fall when we're bringing a new crop of recruits up to speed.

## Preparing for Practice

All players should arrive at the fields already wearing athletic clothing (shorts!) and be ready to participate (e.g., cleats on) at 3:45pm **sharp**. Each player should bring his/her own water bottle (min. 1 liter) and wear sunscreen every day. Cleats (no metal spikes) are optional, but often make an enormous difference. I also recommend wearing a hat.

## Chalk Talks - Bitney Prep HS, 135 Joerschke Dr. (Room 7)

Winter practices are frequently canceled due to inclement weather. However, we sometimes seize such opportunities to spend time reviewing Ultimate fundamentals in Room 7 at Bitney Prep High School (aka "Chalk Talks"). Although much less fun than actually *playing* Ultimate, I think Chalk Talks are absolutely essential for learning these fundamentals, particularly since most players have very limited prior exposure to the sport (either as participants or spectators). All team members are expected to attend Chalk Talks just like our outdoor practices.

## Team Email List - ATC-Ultimate@GoogleGroups.com

When weather threatens, I prefer to wait until noon on the day of before deciding whether to risk getting a little wet on the fields, holding a Chalk Talk, or canceling practice entirely. (Note that I often have to avoid soggy fields even on a clear day just to protect them from getting torn up.) I post an email to the team distribution list whenever I cancel practice or substitute a Chalk Talk. If you don't receive such an email by 12pm on a given day, you should assume that we'll be practicing at the fields. You can also call the Bitney Prep HS office (477-1235) **after 12pm** to find out, but please **don't** contact me directly just to ask what's going on with practice on a given day.

I typically cancel practice during school holidays, during final exam week, and very occasionally due to unavoidable personal conflicts. In each case I will not only send an email to the team distribution list; I'll also announce these upcoming cancelations at practice (and this is yet another reason not to avoid missing any practices).

I also announce upcoming tournaments and other important team information via the email distribution list. **All parents and players should ensure that I have their current email addresses.** I promise not to clutter your inbox with information of dubious merit.

## Local Ultimate Community - Gold-Country-Ultimate@GoogleGroups.com

Just like most towns in the United States (and the larger cities in other countries), there is a vibrant local Ultimate community existing just below your radar. The best high school players all participate in their local pick-up games and community leagues. There is a pick-up game most Sunday afternoons beginning around 3pm or 4pm at Pioneer Park during the dry months, and in the Nevada Union stadium through much of the winter. In addition, Gold Country Ultimate has organized a popular and super fun Monday Night Summer League for the past 6 years. I encourage you to join the Gold Country email distribution list above (just send me an email requesting to be added) to hear about any pick-up schedule and venue changes, etc.

## More about Ultimate - USAUltimate.org

There's tons more information about the sport at [USAUltimate.org](http://USAUltimate.org), but perhaps you might also enjoy the following two videos:

- Spirit of the Game ([tinyurl.com/atc-spirit](http://tinyurl.com/atc-spirit))
- Best of 2016 World Junior Ultimate Championships ([tinyurl.com/wjuc2016](http://tinyurl.com/wjuc2016))

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