

# Hodag Disc

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Written and published by the members of UW-Madison Ultimate Frisbee Club to inform others about the club and as a fundraiser for the program.



## What is Ultimate Frisbee? A Brief Explanation of the Game and its Inception.

Ultimate Frisbee is a fast-moving sport that combines elements of soccer, football and basketball. The object of the game is to pass the disc from one player to another until the disc is caught in a football-like end zone. Once a player has caught the disc they may not run with it, and is given only ten seconds to throw the disc to another player. If at any time the disc falls to the ground or is thrown out of bounds it then belongs to the opposing team.

An important aspect of Ultimate is the Spirit of the Game, an honor code by which all competitors play. Because referees or umpires are absent from Ultimate for the most part, players do the refereeing. It is the Spirit of the Game that encourages players to compete with intensity and aggressiveness, but at the same time with fairness and respect.

Ultimate Frisbee was invented by a group of high school students in Maplewood, NJ in 1968. It grew quickly through the college ranks, and the first College National Championship was held in 1984, in Sommerville, MA. Stanford University became the first national champions, beating Glassboro St. in the finals.

Today, Ultimate is played by over 25,000 registered players in 35 countries, not to mention tens of thousands of casual players. The Ultimate Players Association (UPA) is the governing body of teams in the United States, and a similar international version is the World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF). The fall is the season for club (adult) competition, while the college level participates in the spring. To learn more about ultimate in your area, visit the UPA homepage at [www.upa.org](http://www.upa.org)



Players relax between games, from left to right: Eric Gessert, Matt Anderson, Eric Moore, Erich Wolff and Noah Kunin-Goldsmith. Photo by Lee Swingen

## Hodags Anticipate Breakout Spring

With fourteen players set to return from a team that was five points away from an invitation to Nationals, the UW Ultimate team is excited for the 1999-2000 season to begin.

A quick background on ultimate on the college level. The National Collegiate Series separates the country up into eight Regions. Each region is then split into a number of Sections. The UW-Madison is in the Wisconsin Section of the Central Region. The top finishers from Sectional tournaments qualify for the Regional tournament.

As Sectionals winners, the Hodags went to Iowa City, IA to compete in the Central Regionals tournament. The top two finishers from Regionals would advance to Nationals. Despite being seeded higher, the Hodags were defeated by the University of Iowa, 15-10, in the game to go to Nationals. It was an unfortunate ending to a great season.

Despite the loss, the team made many accomplishments. They established themselves as the region's most intense defensive team. They also relied upon a deep bench, which produced an unrelenting attack. Hopefully the Hodags' relative lack in throwing and disc skills will improve with practice and experience.

This year's Hodags will showcase a group of players who are either in their second or third year of playing ultimate. Only four players from the 1998-99 cast are leaving, so the team has a rare opportunity to grow together and form a cohesive unit come springtime. (cont. p.3)

## 1999-2000 Returning Players

Name	Year	Hometown	#
Matt Anderson	Senior	Austin, MN	24
Matt Bruss ©	Senior	Madison	40
Nate Franz	Junior	Madison	25
Erik Gessert	Senior	Madison	29
Bert Kang	Senior	Madison	4
Noah Kunin-Goldsmith	Soph.	Madison	6
Jason Ludden	Soph.	Madison	42
Eric Moore	Senior	Madison	11
Zach Morrison	Soph.	Newton, MA	23
Jonathan O'Connell ©	Junior	Newton, MA	8
Matt Pankratz	Junior	Madison	22
Peter Rank	Soph.	Green Bay	9
Lee Swingen	Senior	LaCrosse	33
Tyler Spindler	Soph.	Middleton	21
Hector Valdivia	Soph.	Middleton	7
Erich Wolff	Senior	Stillwater, MN	37



### New Captain Matt Bruss

Senior Matt Bruss (left) was elected captain of the team after the season ended last spring. Bruss has been playing ultimate at a competitive level for only two years, but has already established himself as one of most terrorizing defenders in the region as well as one of the Hodag's most potent weapons. Remember, on your college MVP ballots, "Bruss" has two s's.

## The Legend of the Hodag



The origin of the Hodag seems to vary depending on who you are asking. From Hodag Ultimate web page:

"In the northern Wisconsin homeland of the Ojibwa people, where pine trees touch the heavens and lakes are as numerous as stars, there arose one day - from the ashes of a burnt ox - a horrifying creature called the Hodag. In the 1800s it was, when immigrant French, Irish and Scandinavian shanty boys worked alongside Paul Bunyan hauling timber from the forest with oxen and chain. At 300 pounds, the Hodag was a fearsome creature with fiery, stinking breath, two fierce horns, four clawed feet and a row of dangerous spikes spanning from head to tail. Brandishing sharp fangs, the beast devoured bulldogs and oxen and terrorized lumberjacks deep in the woods".

From the unofficial Hodag monster web site:  
"Well, that's a long story... To quote the Rhinelander (WI) locals: It's the fiercest, strangest, most frightening monster ever to set razor-sharp claws on this earth, that's all. The Hodag made its first appearance in 1896. Gene Shepard, Rhinelander pioneer and timber cruiser, snapped its picture just before the beast sprang at him from a white pine log. The Hodag is over 7 feet long and 30 inches tall. It has bristly hair and spikes along its backbone and tail. The vise-like jaws will crush anything unlucky enough to get near the Hodag's menacing tusks and needle-sharp claws. You can relax a little (but only a little) because the Hodag chooses to devour white bulldogs exclusively (and only on Sundays)".

No matter who you listen to, the city of Rhinelander adopted the Hodag as its city symbol and mascot of its school system. The UW-Madison Ultimate team began using the mascot sometime in the 1980s, and since then many a jersey has been designed with various depictions of the beast. For a better overview of the Hodag, take a peak at Kurt Daniel Kortenhof's book "Long Live The Hodag!".

**Contributors:** UW Ultimate is an official Recreation Club Sport of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is a non-profit organization. Mostly, the officers of the team create the newsletter, as most of our other players are too lazy to help. Captains: Jonathan "Opie" O'Connell and Matt Bruss, along with Erich Wolff, Matt Pankratz and Eric Moore (yeah right). Much thanks to Brendan Sylvander for the pix. Also thanks to Ken Molnar and everyone at Recreation Sports for their un-ending dedication to UW Ultimate. If you have questions or comments, or would like to add someone to the subscription list, please email Jonathan O'Connell at [jkoconn@students.wisc.edu](mailto:jkoconn@students.wisc.edu) or call 608.257.7322.

## Breakout Spring (cont.)

One of the most valuable gains from last year was the experience players received from playing in big games. During the late winter and early spring, college ultimate teams play in various tournaments to prepare for Sectionals and Regionals. For the first week of their spring break, the Hodags went down to Gainesville, FL and repeated as champions in the Frostbreaker XVI tournament by defeating the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, 14-7. At The Great Lakes Open at Oberlin College, the Hodags played with newfound poise in a 15-8 win over the University of Iowa. Hopefully the Hodags can build upon the big game experience they have gained and help new, young players to contribute.

This year, the Hodags have already begun inviting new players to learn the game and find out about the club. Players of all levels are welcomed to practice with the Hodags throughout the month of September. After that, players will have an opportunity to try out for the team. The Hodags will decide their final squad of between 20 and 24 players by middle to late October. Look for the new Hodags in the next issue.

## Canadian Money May be Worthless, but... An Interview with the Coach

Simon MacNair became coach of the Hodags this past winter. Simon grew up in Vancouver, BC and now spends his time as a Mathematics Teaching Assistant at the UW, playing for the Madison-area club team, and enduring infinite mockery of his Canadian roots.

### Why did you choose to become coach of the Hodags?

Originally, it was my intent to play during the 1999 season. Unfortunately, a change in the eligibility rules in January ended my college career. From that point, staying on to coach was an easy decision. The '99 Hodags were a talented, but inexperienced team who would certainly benefit from outside help. The main reason I decided to stay, though, was the great enthusiasm and team chemistry last year. It was a refreshing change from some of the other teams I've been involved with.

### What was the best/most rewarding moment from last season?

I think winning the Oberlin tournament was the highlight of last season. Just to see some of the hard work put in by a young team payoff with victories over quality opposition was very rewarding.

### Why do you think Ultimate is such a worthwhile sport?

I think that because Ultimate is a relatively new sport and it is not played at a varsity or professional level, it has certain traits not shared by more established sports. First, players of widely different body types and athleticism can become very skilled through hard work. Also, new strategies can be invented and used successfully, so teams from various parts of the country and outside the U.S. have significantly different styles of play. It is also a sport which most players take up in college and can reach the top levels of play within 2-3 years, as opposed to some skill sports where all of the top players started at a very young age. So I would say that the accessibility of ultimate and the diversity of styles keep the sport exciting and make it worthwhile.

### Who is the biggest freak on the team and why?

Well, I did a road trip with Hector and Tyler once, so I've seen some fairly odd behavior. Wearing a one-piece high school cheerleader's outfit to practice is very unusual, though. Brendon gets my vote.

### What is the dumbest/funniest thing that you saw out of one of your players this year?

The funniest thing I saw on the field this year was definitely "Opie" telling on the Oberlin player who threatened to hurt him. I don't think the observer (official) had any idea what to do, since giving out game misconducts based on players threatening to hurt each other is not covered by the rules.

### How far do you think the team can go this upcoming season?

I think this spring's college team will be the best defensive squad ever from Wisconsin. The team has a great deal of speed and athleticism, which is now complemented by some experience. Certainly, the Hodags will be capable of playing with any team in the country next year. What will determine how far the team goes is the depth of skilled offensive players.



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## Return Address:

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## PLAY ULTIMATE



Junior Nate Franz, playing in a summer tournament

### Supporting UW-Madison Ultimate

Unlike other college sports, ultimate is not funded solely by the university. UW players must pay expenses for travel, lodging, practice facilities and tournament fees. And with the UW scheduled to attend tournaments in North Carolina, Louisiana and California this year, the program needs all the financial help it can get. To make a donation of any amount, please make checks out to Matt Pankratz (Hodag Treasurer) and send to:

120 N. Orchard #1  
Madison, WI 53715

Thanks for your support.

### Hodag Gear!

All profits from the sales of Hodag gear go to the program. Make checks payable to Matt Pankratz (Hodag treasurer) and send with address and phone # to:

Matt Pankratz  
120 N. Orchard #1  
Madison, WI 53715

Black baseball cap with white Hodag symbol and "Hodag Disc" across back	12.00
Black knit skully with white Hodag symbol	8.00
Midwesterns '99 long-sleeve shirt (baby blue, black or white) M-L-XL	12.00
Midwesterns '99 short-sleeve shirt (black or white) M-L-XL	8.00
Midwesterns shirt back design at left). Thanks for your support.	

