

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.



Hodags Finish 10th in the Nation Nationals brings fantastic, but inconsistent play

The Hodags entered Nationals hoping for a 2-1 Friday finish that would put themselves in a position to make the quarterfinals on Saturday. They finished Friday with two wins and a loss, but in roundabout fashion.

The Hodags knew who they would be playing on the first day of Nationals, in Boise, Idaho. Notre Dame, who they had stomped with mechanical precision earlier in the season. North Carolina State, the reigning national champs who the Hodags had beaten twice previously that spring. And Brown University, the number one team in the nation, who had lost just twice the entire year.

Wisconsin beat Notre Dame badly, 15-8, but came out flat against State to the tune of a 11-4 deficit. They went on to turn the disc over an amazing 32 times, crumbling to a 14-12 loss to State. The Hodags lumbered off the field dismayed, and walked up the hill to face Brown, who had just completed another cakewalk victory.



Sophomore Pete Rank skies vs. a Brown defender as the UW topples the number one seed.



Wisconsin captain Matt Bruss defends Notre Dame sophomore Mike Shiel.

The game started with the teams trading points; the game was tied at 3-3 and 4-4 when Brown began to make a little run. But after a little comeback by the Hodags, it was tied at 6-6, and again at 7-7, and spectators waited for Brown to pull away, the way they always did. But Wisconsin was moving the disc quickly. Then Wei Lu and Tyler Spindler came up with two enormous blocks, and the Brown players began to look at each other in confusion. The Hodags weren't really sure what was happening, but they were in the game at the half.

In the second half, the crowds began to fill the sidelines, excited at the possibility that the goliath might be taken down. The game was tied at 10-10, 11-11, 12-12, 13-13, 14-14 and 15-15. Brownian Motion clenched its teeth, not accustomed to being in such a clost game. College MVPs Fortunat Mueller (1999) and Justin Safdie (2000) pushed their team to finish it, but it Safdie couldn't gather a low pass on the last point, and Brown turned it. Wisconsin moved the disc until Jonathan "Opie" O'Connell threw a pass to Tyler Spindler that started over
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Hodags Finish 10th in Nation

(continued from page 1).

Tyler's head. Somehow, Bryan "Garbage Man" Paradise found himself alone in the end zone next to the disc and called Tyler off before firmly clapping it. 16-15, Wisconsin. The first time in Nationals history that the #1 had been beaten in pool play. The Hodags had the 2-1 start that they wanted.

The Hodags had won the right to play #15 seed Salisbury State on Saturday morning for a shot into quarterfinals. But this time, Wisconsin's Mr. Hyde reared its ugly head. The Hodags dropped disc after disc and made countless errant throws, reverting back to the bumbling bunch they had been in the NC State game. Salisbury accepted the gift and walked away barely fatigued, 15-7, having knocked the UW from the tournament.

Brown went on to win the National Championship, allowing no other team to score more than 10 points on them the rest of the tournament. Salisbury State got crushed in the quarterfinals. Wisconsin boarded the plane having finished 10th, thinking about what they had done, and also about what they could have done.



Beautiful Boise

Top right: Junior Matt Pankratz skies as sophomore Jason Ludden watches.

Left: Senior Matt Anderson works the backfield against Brown.

Right: "Opie" throws the final goal against Brown defender Jeremy Schwartz.



Supporting UW-Madison ultimate

Many thanks to everyone who has helped support the Hodags this year. Your generous donations have helped the team to afford travel, lodging, practice facilities and tournament fees. To make a donation of any amount, please make checks out to:

UW-Madison Ultimate Frisbee Club and send to: Matt Pankratz (treasurer)
122 North Spooner St.
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Contributors: UW Ultimate is an official Recreation Club Sport of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Thanks to Michael Bluhm and Bryan Paradise for their stellar penmanship. Much thanks to pops and Wolfy for the pix. Thanks to Andy Pohl for the Web site. 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 know someone who would like to be added to the subscription list, please email Jonathan O'Connell at jkoconne@students.wisc.edu or call 608.257.7322. Goodbye and good luck to Simon and Bruss. We'll miss you.



Taking Home the Mardi Gras Title

by Bryan Paradise

After an exciting bead gathering night in the Big Easy the Hodags opened their season at the Mardi Gras Tournament in Baton Rouge on March 4th and 5th. Seven victories and a tournament title later, the Hodags were amidst the the top ten in the college rankings.

After an easy 13-2 UW victory in the opening game against Kansas, the Hodags faced Georgia Tech, the team that forced them out of the tournament the previous year. This game featured some intense sidelines and some great individual efforts. Zach Morrison completed the first "World's Greatest" (jumping from inbounds for a disc out-of-bounds, and then throwing a pass to a teammate while in the air) of the season, and captain Matt Bruss shut down GT's top man, Jason Grove. The Hodags cruised to a 13-6



win. What a difference a year makes.

The third game of the day was the Hodags' first game against Iowa since being knocked out of Regionals by the Iowans last spring. Wisconsin came out with high intensity and finished the half without a single turnover, a feat they would not accomplish for the remainder of the season. With a substantial lead at the half, Noah Kunin-Goldsmith came in with defensive block after defensive in the second half as the Hodags destroyed Iowa 15-3.

In the semifinals the Hodags faced the

defending National Champions, North Carolina State. The game was full of intensity shared by both the players on the field and the fans off the field. North Carolina State jumped out to an early 2-0 start, but the Hodags fought back after some emotional, in-your-face play by Hodag rookie Bryan Paradise. The Hodags later took advantage of State with their athletic big men, Pete Rank and Tyler Spindler, cruising to a 15-7 win and the biggest win of the young season.

The championship game was played against fellow Central Region competitor Winona State. In the sweltering Louisiana heat, the depth of the Hodags was the difference. Spirited defense by Robert Wagner and Lee Swingen gave the Hodags enough offensive possessions to outlast Winona State 15-11 for the Mardi Gras title.

Terminus 2000

by Bryan Paradise

After a relaxing spring break in South Carolina the Hodags traveled to Atlanta, which was windy, rainy, and right around forty degrees. The Hodags opened the tournament with two games against Wesleyan College and Duke University. These teams were sorely overmatched by a confident Hodag team and concentrated Hodag effort, which led to finals of 15-3 and 15-5 respectively. The two wins propelled the Hodags to the winners pool, which consisted of NC State and Carleton College.

The Hodags lined up first against NC State first, a team that wanted revenge for an earlier loss at Mardi Gras. The Hodags matched their intensity, refusing to allow the JINX revenge. Eric Moore torched State with constant deep throws, enticing their frustration, and the UW's ferocious team defense finished them off, 15-7.

The final game of the day was a highly anticipated match-up against National Semi-finalist, Central Region powerhouse Carleton College. The game was tight as expected as the wind helped already good defenses limit upwind attacks. The Hodags, despite many wind-aided turnovers, were in the game at half. Behind some amazing grabs from Matt Bruss and Zach Morrison the Hodags found themselves tied 12-12 in a game to thirteen. Time for defense. Nate Franz went into a group of CUT boys, including 6'7" monstrosity Alex Nord, and got the D. Going the other way, where Erich Wolff flew into the end zone and stabbed the disc out of the air for the final point and an undefeated Saturday. It was the first time the UW had beaten Carleton since 1997.

Day two saw more blustering, cold weather. The Hodags started quickly with a layout defensive block by Matt Bruss and an immediate score, but Michigan answered with a quick long goal. Facing tough, big,



Senior Wei Lu breaking the mark at Terminus in Atlanta, GA. (Erich Wolff)

Michigan marks, the Hodags found themselves fighting to get a lead at 13-12. The Hodags would continue to scratch and claw, but were overcome by a veteran-led Michigan team 15-13, ending their 12 game winning streak.

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PLAY ULTIMATE

"Noah Got the Van!!!"

On the road with Michael "Bloomer"

For us, playing ultimate is a passion. We are excited to play at an intercollegiate level, but the fact that we play a "college" sport bares little resemblance to what one normally thinks of when they consider Division 1 athletics. One aspect of our lives as Hodags that polarizes us from the "real" Badgers relates to road trips. Charter jets, meal per diems, trainers who tape ankles? Well, when I win the lottery, the Hodag Jetliner will become reality and we'll have our own team chef. But until then, we'll keep hoping Noah can get the van.

Tournaments are fairly simple. Opie and Bruss decide where we are going. After things get set, Wolffie begins making hotel reservations. The Ritz is out of the question, but Wolffie finds us respectable digs in Comfort Inn-level hotels. I even managed a few free rooms at the Drury in Atlanta, about 45 minutes from the fields.

But hotels are the easy part. Rides are hard. Usually the Monday of the week of a tourney, someone would ask how we were getting to say, Baton Rouge. Opie would scratch his head and look at Bruss, who would look at Wolffie. Then they'd ask who could drive? and one person would raise their hand. So, we'd know we could bring four. By Tuesday, someone had figured out the leaky gas tank and then we knew could have 7 on the line when games began. Then, by around Thursday, Noah would come through with the van.

The next step is driving partners. It starts with music, so there's usually the rap car (Pank can be found here), the hard

rock car (Luskin), and the jam band car (Noah's van). Then you have food preferences: some pack a cooler with road snacks, and Eric Moore can always be counted on for Wheat Thins and Bucky Badger cheese. I think Opie likes to over-indulge at Burger King. The familiar salutation at Wednesday practice is "See you there." Often, it's followed by, "we hope." But we made it through this season breakdown free and I'll ascribe that to good-luck rookies such as myself.

Once on the road, directions in hand (emailed by Wolffie on the day of departure), we drive into the sunet on a Thursday or Friday afternoon. Road games are fun and offer a time to get creative. Some wager on long it will take Opie to fall asleep or how many Mountain Dew's Rob and Bruss consumed on their drive to South Carolina

And overall, the drive there never seems so bad because we look forward to playing. The nature of the return trip depends on the outcome of the tourney, the weather, and how far behind in school we are.

Is there a point to this seemingly nonsensical story? Well, I guess we learned a few lessons on the road this year. The card game Uno offers a nice break during a bye round. Driving through the night really isn't that bad. Opie will sleep most of the drive unless he's behind the wheel (fortunately). Noah's van offers more comfort than any other vehicle in the Hodag entourage. Ultimate isn't cheap after gas, food and lodging. We'll keep doing this sort of thing as long as we can because in the end, when we get back to Madison after a long weekend of road tripping and playing, we all look forward to the next time around

