

# LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS



“There is nothing permanent except change.”

– Heraclitus

**Dr. Tom Crawford**

USA Ultimate Chief Executive Officer

## Where will ultimate be in five years? Ten years? Get ready for unpredictable change, change, change!

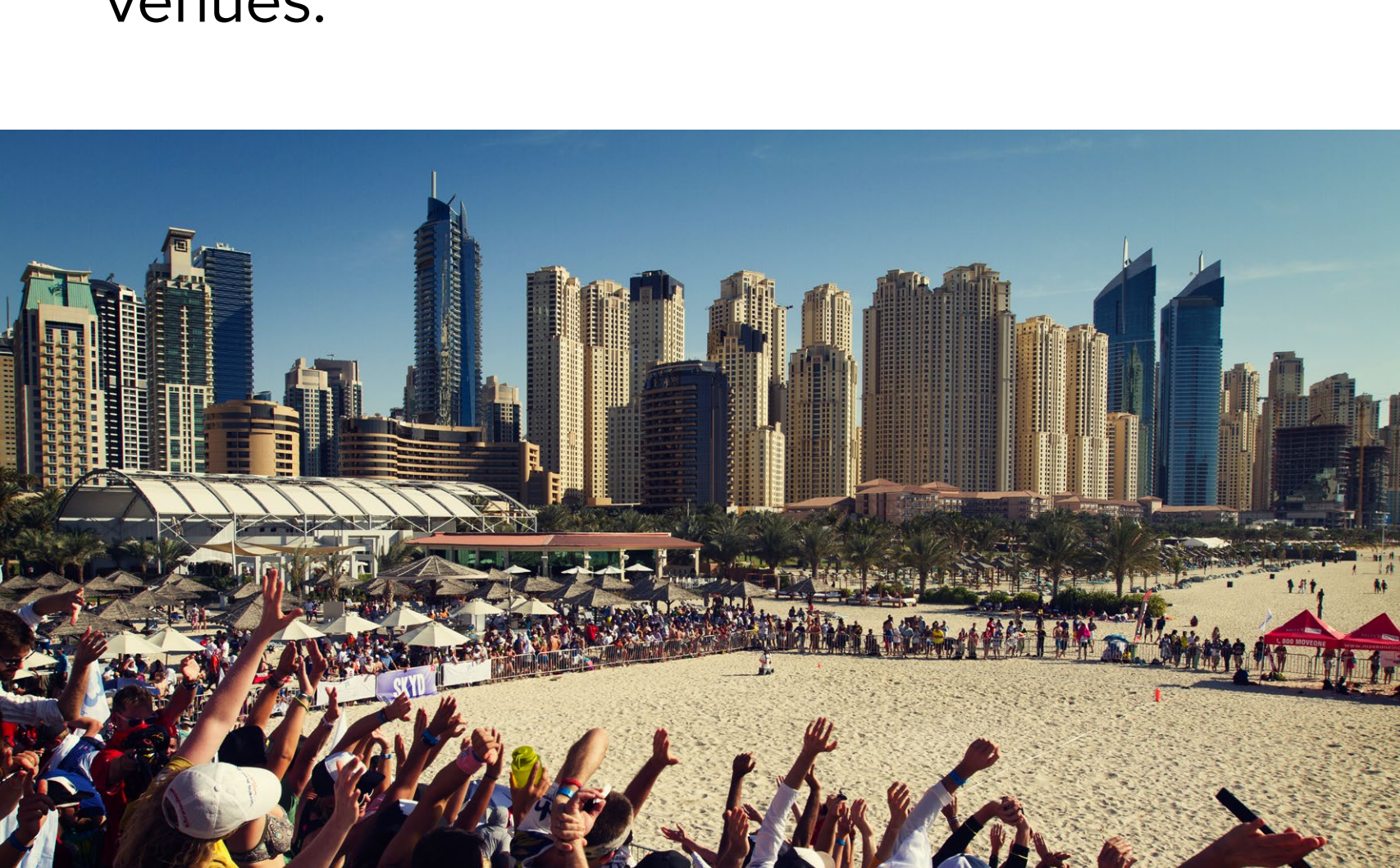
**W**atching and trying to manage the whirlwind of changes occurring in ultimate right now is exhilarating, challenging and always a blast. Well, maybe not always. I believe anyone who thinks they know what this sport will look like in five years is full of malarkey!

Why do I believe the whirlwind of change will continue? Just think about everything that has to get planned into a single year in the future. Grass, beach and indoor seasons and championships. College seasons in the fall and spring, including the addition of a mixed fall season. A vibrant and growing youth club season and championships. All of the international championships that will be hosted and built by WFDF to support these various disciplines. All of this will lead to an even more crowded calendar, and we will have to constantly adjust to maximize the success of all these different playing opportunities.



The international ultimate is calendar is getting more crowded all the time, which hugely affects the domestic calendar. Everyone needs to be ready for change going forward. **Photo: Jolie Lang/UltiPhotos**

The only predictable thing right now is that there will be constant, unpredictable change. For example, 2017 will not look like 2016. We are already taking lots of player input into account and planning on adjusting the 2017 club season schedule in close collaboration with our teams and WFDF. Even now, it is becoming challenging to plan meaningful competitive seasons with all the international events on the calendar, even before additions for an indoor season and new international events. We have to better coordinate schedules and are talking with WFDF to try to achieve this goal. From our perspective, it is really important to be able to plan events multiple years ahead of time, so we can negotiate the best possible deals for venues and develop relationships with local partners. This is really challenging, if not impossible, when we cannot set a clear calendar and stick with it. The venues we need for our events tend to be very popular and get booked well in advance. If we are unable to put out defined bid documents two or three years in advance, we struggle to find good venues.



USA Ultimate is working closely with WFDF as we develop seasons and championships for the beach and indoor divisions, in addition to youth, college, club and masters. **Photo: Get Horizontal**

2017 will also be the first year of our indoor championships, as well the shift to youth club regionals. More change! Add to everything the year's very busy international schedule, which includes the World Games, World Beach Championships, U-23 World Championships and possibly the new and extremely important Association of National Olympic Committees' World Beach Games – our first Olympic competition! Tryouts and training camps, as well as competitive opportunities for the teams to use to develop chemistry in the lead-up to their championships, will be required for all of these teams.

Planning meaningful college and club seasons in and around these events will be a big challenge, and 2017 is a great example of what we'll be organizing for years to come, with even more events and seasons in the calendar. We are currently planning for youth club and high school seasons, two college seasons (fall and spring), an indoor season, a beach season, a club season and a masters/grand masters season, all with their own championships. All these events will need to integrate with the very busy and growing schedule of WFDF's world championships.

The indoor season will obviously fall in the winter months. We are very excited about introducing another new playing opportunity and are working very closely with WFDF on the planning. Particularly with the new relationships we are building with youth serving organizations such as YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and Jewish Community Centers through the Olympic Family, the indoor discipline creates an enormous opportunity for growth at the youth level. Youth growth will feed our newly created state and regional organizations and their affiliates, and our youth club season will continue to grow and thrive – and be busy!

So how will the sport, with all this activity and all the seasons, events and playing opportunities, look in five years? It's really hard to predict. And while the additions and unpredictability create significant challenges, it is just the kind of challenge we love. We are growing and creating many more opportunities for everyone to play this great sport.

So everyone please get ready for change. Change is never easy, and it will disrupt “the way things have been,” but it is coming. So please get ready and help us achieve the best possible competition schedule and landscape, so our sport can continue to grow and thrive!