



# **USA Ultimate Observer Manual**

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## **USA Ultimate**

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# I Introduction

The most important aspect which differentiates Ultimate from other organized sports is summarized in the following excerpt from the Spirit of the Game section of the Official Rules of Ultimate, 2020/2021 (the “rules”):

**Spirit of the Game** is a set of principles which places the responsibility for fair play on the player. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among competitors, adherence to the agreed upon rules, or the basic joy of play. All players are responsible for knowing, administering, and adhering to the rules. The integrity of Ultimate depends on each player's responsibility to uphold the Spirit of the Game, and this responsibility should remain paramount. It is assumed that no player will intentionally violate the rules; thus there are no harsh penalties for inadvertent infractions, but rather a method for resuming play in a manner that simulates what most likely would have occurred absent the infraction. An intentional infraction is cheating and considered a gross offense against the Spirit of the Game. Players are morally bound to abide by the rules and not gain advantage by knowingly committing an infraction, or calling one where none exists.

It is a tribute to those who play Ultimate that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the mutual obligation to adhere to these principles serves to maintain player compliance with the rules, and to resolve disputes that do arise in contests at virtually all levels of competition. However, it is fairly well-established that some form of third party judging or appeal process is necessary in highly competitive situations where the stakes may be significant or where there is added value to faster-paced play, such as when spectators are present.

Observers have therefore proven useful in a number of capacities. In the heat of competition, the players involved in a play are not always certain about exactly what happened, nor do they always have a clear view of what occurred. Even though they may try their best to make the correct call, it can be difficult for them to know what actually transpired, especially when fatigued in the midst of hard-fought, competitive play. Because observers are not playing, they are better situated to track and evaluate objective limits related to both time and space, such as time limits and line calls. Observers also can help facilitate and speed up the game by supplying an objective perspective to help resolve player disputes that otherwise can drag on and sour the game experience for both players and spectators.

This Manual describes how, as an observer, you are to conduct yourself and be involved in the game, and outlines USA Ultimate-recommended principles and practices for observing. Its purpose is to help ensure consistency and quality in the way that games are observed, both of which are crucial to maximizing the benefit that the observer program can provide to those who play Ultimate.

## ***History of the USA Ultimate Observer Program***

Observers initially were used sparingly, and their role first was envisioned as totally passive. The observer program became somewhat more formalized after the UPA Club Nationals in 1987, when it became evident to many that observers would have to be more active in certain capacities (despite protests from some that doing so was contrary to the Spirit of the Game). With the understanding that observers' roles would be better defined, an official Certified Observers Pool (COP) was established – the program was guided into existence by Robert “Nob” Rauch, and Mark Dixon was appointed the first head of the COP.

In ensuing years, the COP program was refined in response to changes in play and players' expectations. Over time, observers were requested more often at important tournaments, and observer involvement became more active, though not nearly to the level of officials in most sports. USAU continues to examine the ramifications of more active observers and the use of different rule sets for different levels of play

(including the limited use of penalties). As a result of USAU having sanctioned the use of different rule sets for various experimental events, observers' roles have taken a variety of forms. This manual describes the current observer system used in conjunction with the Official Rules of Ultimate, as well as changes to the system when certain experimental rules or roles for the observers are in effect.

In 2005, the UPA Observer Program took on its current structure. A standardized training document was produced in the form of the USAU observer Manual (this document). A training clinic curriculum, based on the standards in the manual, was developed, implemented, and continues to be utilized at clinics around the country. Criteria for certification were developed, which included clinic attendance, testing, and on-field performance evaluation. Regional Observer Coordinator (ROC) positions were created to facilitate scheduling of training clinics and use of observers at USAU events. A standing Observer Committee, headed by a committee chair, was tasked with overseeing the development of the program.

The USA Ultimate Observer Working Group (OWG, formerly the Observer Committee) determines official USAU guidelines for observing, including current standards for USAU competition, as well as training materials and methods. The OWG consists of several active members (including a chairperson and a USAU staff liaison), plus USAU's national division directors. The active members of the OWG are responsible for updating and maintaining this manual and other official observer training materials. They also meet periodically to discuss potential changes to observer roles and practices, and implement any such changes by revising and refining those materials. The OWG oversees and assists in conducting observer training clinics, including "experimental rules" tournaments, where proposed variations on observer roles, protocol, and interaction can be tested and evaluated by players and the OWG.

## ***Board Policies***

The following USAU Policy on Observers and Referees was adopted by the Executive Committee of the UPA's Board of Directors on August 8, 2003:

In line with its previous statements, USAU endorses the use of observers in Ultimate but does not endorse the use of Referees.

The primary difference between observers and referees is that observers shall not make active foul and violation calls of a subjective nature, while Referees are empowered to make any call authorized in the rules, bylaws, officiating guide, or any set of tournament ground rules. Observers are allowed to resolve disputes on foul and violation calls if requested to do so by the players or event organizers. It is permissible but not required for observers to be allowed to make active calls on conduct issues and objective matters in the rules, including but not limited to time violations where the disc is not in play and boundary decisions.

Observers have the responsibility to uphold the Spirit of the Game to the players on the field. While observers can provide a neutral perspective for dispute resolution or calls of an objective nature, the primary responsibility for the integrity of Ultimate and the Spirit of the Game remains with the players.

## **II Principles of Observing**

The overriding principles of observing are outlined in the Observer Code of Conduct:

### ***Observer Code of Conduct***

#### **Spirit of the Game**

As an observer, your fundamental role is to help players uphold the Spirit of the Game. You should assist players in creating an environment that fosters sportsmanship and respect among teammates and opponents, including striving to inform players when their actions during games are inconsistent with the concepts of fair play or mutual respect. Performing this function helps maintain integrity among players familiar with Ultimate and instill in new players the unique spirit with which Ultimate is played.

#### **The Game Belongs to the Players**

Managing and conducting the game is primarily the players' responsibility, and the outcome of a game should be decided by their actions, not those of observers. Your role is not to alter the outcome or dictate the course of a contest, but to assist players in following the rules and to help resolve disputes where necessary. Thus, except where observers are empowered to decide a matter, all calls and play stoppages are initiated by the players. Likewise, if there is a reasonable chance that the players may be able to quickly resolve a dispute on their own, they should be afforded the opportunity to do so before you intervene.

#### **Professionalism**

Approach your role and conduct yourself with the utmost professionalism. This includes treating players, coaches, and spectators with respect, being as prepared as possible – mentally, physically, and with the proper equipment – to perform your duties, and making every effort to position yourself properly and make the best judgments possible at all times. You should also make every attempt to improve your observing skills, both individually and in conjunction with fellow officials, in an effort to do the best job that you can for the players.

### ***Observing Fundamentals***

#### **Rules**

This manual assumes that you know the USAU 2020/21 Rules of Ultimate and any modifications in effect for the game or tournament being observed. It thus contains few references to, or repetitions of, specific rules sections. The purpose of this manual is to serve as a guide beyond the rules: a tool for implementing, not learning, them. It is imperative that you know the rules well and that each ruling be supported by the applicable rule(s). Consulting a rulebook during a game is acceptable, if that is necessary in order to rule correctly. Making a ruling that is not in accordance with the rules is one of the quickest ways to lose the respect that an observer needs. Occasionally, complex game situations arise that test even the most experienced observers, but a thorough understanding of the rules and how to apply them allows you the best chance of properly resolving those situations.

#### **Active and Inactive Calls**

“Active” calls are those for which you are empowered to rule immediately, without player request or initiation. Line calls are active and include in/out-of-bounds, force-out fouls, in/out-of-the-endzone, and offsides. Time limits also are called and announced actively. Finally, you may stop play if appropriate to handle conduct issues. All other calls, such as fouls and violations, are not active; i.e., you do not rule or offer an opinion unless requested or unless the players involved cannot quickly agree on the outcome. Note



that you do not actively call up or down (whether the disc touched the ground before being caught), but be prepared to rule if a dispute arises, as with other inactive calls.

Rule immediately on each active call with a hand signal and simultaneously announce the ruling loudly enough so that impacted players are made aware (this may require yelling in certain situations). While it is the players' responsibility to check the indication, you should do everything possible to minimize confusion and assist the players in knowing the call. After making certain rulings, other hand signals may be appropriate for spectators, sidelines and players not involved in or aware of the matter. Hand signals are described in Appendix 2 – Hand Signals.

Active calls often involve a “play-on” situation, such as indicating that a player is in- or out-of-bounds, or that a catch was made in the central zone (not in the end zone). In such cases, if no other issue requires play to stop, play continues uninterrupted after the call.

As with any call, a ruling on an active call should be made by the observer with the best view (typically, the one closest to the action), and it is important for observers to communicate with each other and make every attempt to avoid issuing conflicting calls. If conflicting calls are made, play stops, and the observer with the best view reigns. If views are roughly equal, resolve the situation as if it is a contested call with no observers present.

For calls that are not active, do not offer an opinion or make a call for the players. If your ruling is necessary, *always* clarify with the players what their call is before ruling. A player's “call” includes both the named infraction and the description of any infractions relevant to the named infraction. In addition, it is not appropriate to say, “no foul, but there was a travel” or the like. Except as discussed below in this manual regarding stalls, strip/foul calls, and dangerous plays, rule only on the call(s) actually made.

### **On-Field Authority**

Depending on the personnel available, you may work with one or more other observers. The roles of the various officials are defined in this manual, in the descriptions of each observing system. Generally, the observer closest to the play will make the ruling. If you cannot make the call, you can consult other observers. It is the responsibility of the closer official to look for signals from the other observer(s) and to indicate to them if conferring is necessary. Long, slow trips to consult with other officials should be kept to a minimum.

If you are an observer who is not nearest the play and disagree with a ruling, do not indicate the disagreement verbally or otherwise. After the play, you can privately discuss the ruling with the official who made it. If you are an official who is not making a ruling, avoid giving any affirmative or negative signal (e.g., shaking or nodding your head), because such signals may appear to indicate agreement/disagreement with a player's call or another official's ruling. Have discussions with other officials about potential rulings away from the players, so that they cannot ascertain the decision in advance (and, thus, whether it would be advantageous to request observer intervention). Additionally, if you are a spectator of a game you should guard your commentary about observer rulings to other players and do not wear your observer uniform.

It is often helpful to discuss “non-calls” with other officials during breaks in the action, such as how they saw a particular play, even if the players have agreed amongst themselves without observer intervention. Such consultations can help hone skills and provide an opportunity to see how others view the same situation. Keep these discussions private, however. While there still may be differences in how two people view the same play, such discussions can lead to more consistency among observers.

## **When to Intervene**

As the name implies, observers watch the game – closely. If players can quickly resolve contested calls on their own, you need not rule. However, when a call is made and contested, the nearest observer should be ready to rule if the players cannot agree on an outcome relatively quickly (generally within ~20 seconds). If you as the closest observer did not have a clear view, use this time to quickly confer with other crew members who may have had a better vantage point.

Either player involved in a dispute can request observer intervention; agreement between the players is not required and team captains need not be involved or consulted. If one player requests your intervention and the other player still wants to discuss the matter, you may give them a short time to attempt to work it out themselves if it appears that this extended discussion may be fruitful. If such a discussion initially appears to have promise, but begins to drag on towards the recommended 20 second limit, inform the players that they need to decide quickly or you will rule. If both players come to you immediately without trying to work out a dispute themselves, you should ask them to at least make an attempt. Where it is obvious that the players will not agree, you can simply rule quickly.

In the unlikely event that one or both of the players involved in a play are unable to make or contest a call due to injury (such as a player receiving a concussion after a collision), the observers should automatically step in and resolve any possible calls involved in the part of the play involving the injured players.

## **Observer-Player Interaction**

Make rulings succinctly, without long discussions or explanations. Note that for certain calls, including travels and receiving fouls, it may be necessary for a player involved to clarify what action or part of the play is being called or contested, so that the opponent and you understand the situation. If a player describes a specific type of foul or violation, but names it by something else, (including a different specific foul or violation,) you should rule based on the player’s description. That is, a player should not be penalized for not knowing the specific name of the infraction. A player calling “strip” while describing a foul is calling a foul. After determining the specific nature of the dispute, simply state the ruling, along with which team has possession of the disc and how play will resume, e.g. “No foul. Red’s disc here with the stall count at one.” (One or more hand signals may also be appropriate at this stage – see Appendix 2). Statements such as “I did not see a travel” or “If your arm was here, then that would not have been a foul” tend to create confusion, and give the appearance that the observer was not paying attention or is unsure of the ruling. However, a brief description of the specific action can reinforce your credibility (e.g., “no travel – the foot did not move until after the release”).

After an observer rules, there is no further argument and play resumes according to the ruling *after a check*. By requesting your intervention, a player implicitly agrees that they will abide by your ruling, even if the player disagrees. Do not discuss what would have happened if such and such had occurred, or how you would have ruled on a situation where no ruling was issued. This keeps the game under the players’ control, helps avoid tipping your hand on future rulings, and averts discussion about calls that were not even at issue.

Do not get drawn into player arguments. Converting an argument from one between players to one between an observer and a player is counterproductive to keeping the game moving. Serious verbal or physical abuse is a conduct issue. Do not engage in verbal or physical abuse, even in response to such behavior. Also, stay detached from the players and avoid conduct that may create the appearance that you are biased or otherwise interested in the outcome of a particular play or contest. While the occasional remark or brief conversation may help calm a tense dispute or otherwise facilitate relations with players on the field, avoid actions such as overtly cheering or applauding for a particular team, accepting gifts of food or drink from a team, or excessively conversing with members of one team or “hanging out” on their sideline during breaks.

## **The “Do-Over”**

Players may agree themselves to a “do-over.” Respect this decision regardless of what you would have ruled if consulted. It is not an observer’s place to step in and “render justice.” (See below on “Justice.”)

When you are consulted, it is important that before ruling, you are at least 90% certain that you had the requisite perspective to rule properly. It is your job to ensure that at least one of the crew is in proper position to confidently rule on any particular play or situation. However, if no crew member is sufficiently confident on a ruling, it is preferable to return the disc to the thrower for a do-over than to make an educated (or uneducated) guess, which almost always adversely impacts players’ confidence that rulings are being made correctly. If you are consulted on a play that you did not have a proper view or perspective, quickly check with other crew members who may have seen the play before implementing a do-over. If crew members are repeatedly out of position to properly see plays (whether due to lack of hustle or otherwise), confer and adjust your positions and movements to the extent possible. Players will lose confidence in and respect for a crew that consistently resorts to do-overs in order to resolve contested situations.

## **Player Overrule**

On occasion, a player who believes that a ruling on an active call is incorrect may request that the ruling be reversed, but only to the detriment of their own team; for example, where you rule that a catch was made in-bounds, but another offensive player believes that it was out-of-bounds, resulting in a turnover. In such cases, provided that the person requesting the reversal was both a) a player on the field at the time of the call and b) a member of the team benefiting from the call, you are to reverse your ruling. This may also apply to rulings involving the misconduct system where additional information from the players demonstrates a misconduct foul was incorrectly assessed. After a request for reversal, play restarts with a check.

## **Justice**

Your job is not to render justice. Players sometimes will agree on the “wrong” solution or one that is not supported by the rules (i.e., you may feel that the players’ decision – perhaps returning the disc to the thrower after an uncontested offensive receiving foul – is not supported by what actually occurred). In such cases, do not intervene or suggest an opinion. It is preferable that players settle matters amongst themselves rather than have a non-player make a ruling.

Do not attempt to equalize games or right past wrongs, but make each call based upon what you see and the applicable rules. Do not take into account what may have happened on a previous play or the reputations of the players involved.

## **Use of Replay**

In limited instances, observers may consider video replay evidence when making a ruling. Stoppages may be briefly extended to consider replay evidence, but active play cannot be stopped to do so. For example, referencing a large portable replay monitor or permanent scoreboard screen visible from on-field is appropriate, while leaving the field to view a small monitor would be considered an unacceptable delay. **Any evidence used must be that of official tournament media** (ESPN, Ultiworld, etc.). Replay supplied by a team’s videographer may not be considered unless it is offered to that team’s detriment or both teams agree to its use. Replay should only be considered as part of a ruling where the evidence is conclusive. When two or more observers are involved, the covering observer will make the final determination and announce the final ruling.

## **Consistency and Best Judgment**

Observers should strive to be consistent in their rulings, both within a particular crew and between different

crews at the same tournament. Two neutral parties can see the same play from the same perspective and still come to different conclusions about it. However, players rightfully expect some consistency. Given the same circumstances, rulings should be similar, both from the same observer and from different observers.

There is a tacit assumption that you will use your best judgment in making any call. It often is difficult to be absolutely sure that the call is correct, and there will be occasions where you make an incorrect ruling. There also are times when a proper ruling will not be popular – on most calls the best that you can hope for is that half of the players agree. Among the things that you can do are know the rules thoroughly, know and abide by the guidelines of this manual, expend the utmost effort to be in the best position to make calls, and be fair and respectful to all players and their coaches and fans. There will always be situations where you, much like the umpire or referee in any other sport, are questioned, sometimes rightfully and sometimes not.

## **Professionalism**

Conduct yourself in a professional manner. This includes preparing adequately for the game. Arrive at your field 15 minutes before game time, start the meeting with the captains 10 minutes before game time (see pre-game meeting under Common Situations), and give a 3 minute warning to both teams before game time. Use pre-game time to tend to matters such as surveying the field for debris or obstacles, assuring that sidelines are free of spectators and equipment, and informing players of potentially dangerous equipment issues. Because good observing requires constant running, pre-game warm-up stretching is recommended. Keep extra discs handy (if available), in case the game disc becomes damaged or lands far out-of-bounds.

It is of utmost importance to avoid interfering with players' movements or the flight of the disc. You are an obstacle on the field, and if the disc hits you and is not caught by an offensive player, it is a turnover. Per the USAU Rules Working Group, you as an observer, whether in or out of bounds, are treated as "air" (i.e. as if you were not there) in terms of your potential to impact the flight of the disc or player movement. Be cognizant of where players are and where they may be moving. This requires attention to the weather (especially wind) conditions and the style of defense being played (zone or person), and an awareness of the tendencies and skills of both throwers and receivers. Moving off of the playing field is often necessary to avoid interfering.

Know the game score, time limits, number of timeouts remaining for each team, and how any cap times may affect the game, and periodically remind teams about them (see Time Limits). Be well-groomed and appropriately attired for the particular event (see Equipment). Carry yourself (e.g. posture, activities) professionally while at the field. After games and during any rounds off, do not watch games in your observer uniform. Do not approach players to discuss calls made or not made during the game. You may approach players to discuss misunderstandings displayed relative to the rules of the game. If players approach you, you can answer questions regarding specifics of the game. It is absolutely prohibited for you to officiate in any contest of which the outcome is the subject of any wager in which you have a direct or indirect interest.

## **USAU Observer Media Policy**

1. Don't make statements that could be construed as a criticism of officials, of officials' decisions, or of schools, teams, coaches, or athletes.
2. Don't make statements on anything relating to the teams you have worked or will work. It calls your objectivity into question.
3. Don't make statements regarding calls made by officials in other games, whatever the level. You and your buddies might debate a call you saw on a video via email or in person, but don't debate the call on Facebook, Twitter, or other public forums or social media.
4. Remember, accountability and integrity should always be our guiding principles. Jeopardizing your impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of your actions or posts.

### III Observing Systems

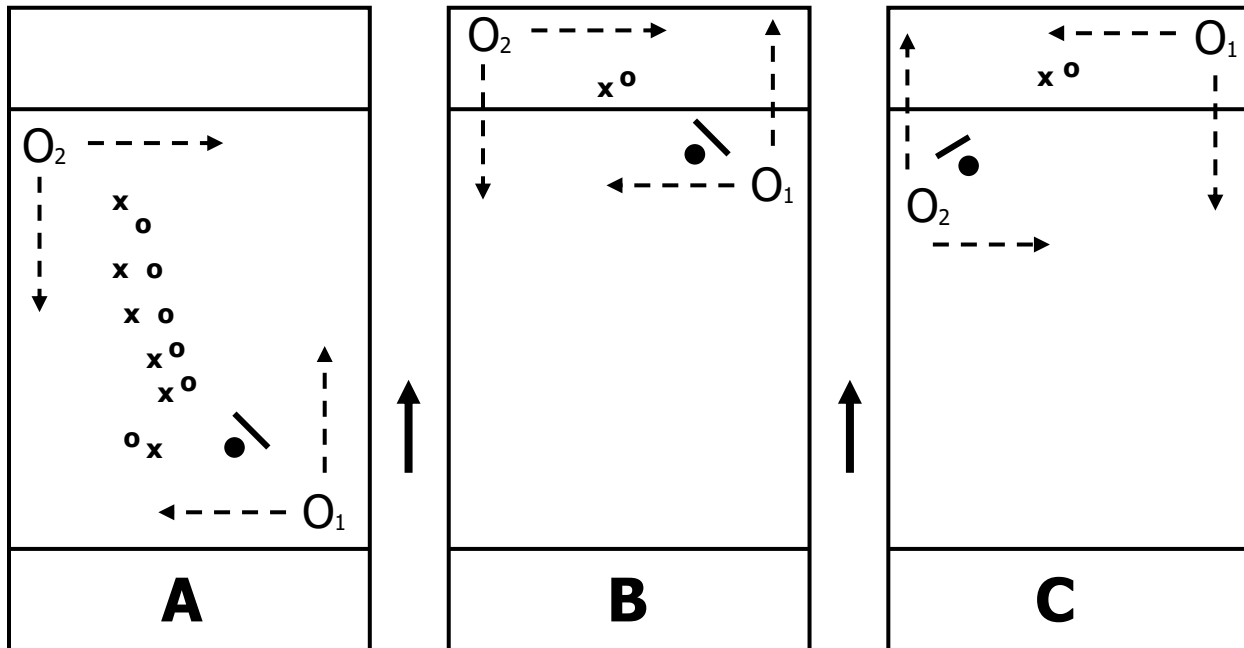
Multiple observing systems have been developed and used over the years. For USAU events, the Two Observer System (TOS) is recommended. However, if sufficient personnel are available (especially for marquee contests), use the Four Observer System, as it provides maximum field coverage.

#### Two-Observer System

Each observer has primary responsibility for one sideline and one goal line. Both observers are responsible for tracking time limits between points, after turnovers, and during timeouts, as well as keeping track of score and any warnings or penalties. Follow the guidelines set out in this section.

**Note:** the term “trail observer” specifies the observer who is generally behind the offense, and the term “downfield observer” refers to the observer closer to the end zone of attack.

As the disc advances, the trail observer (O1 in Figure 1) follows behind the disc and is primarily responsible for thrower and marker fouls, travel calls, stall counts and receiver and defender interactions close to the thrower. The downfield observer (O2 in Figure 1) stays roughly even with the deepest player near the end zone being attacked and has primary responsibility for downfield fouls between receivers and defenders, picks, and goal calls on deep receptions. When the offense nears the goal line for which the downfield observer is responsible, they should be ready to move quickly to cover the back line, but the primary responsibility remains the front goal line. On a turnover, the observers trade roles, with the new trail observer setting up behind the new offense and giving the time warnings to put the disc in play.



**Figure 1.** **A** – Initial positions as offense begins to advance the disc. **B** – When the offense is close to the end zone of attack and O1 has made it to that end of the field; O1 still watches the thrower and marker, but also is in position to call in/out of the end zone. O2 is deeper in the end zone, able to watch the back line. **C** – Observers may swap ends to better cover the front goal line, depending on the location of the disc, as described in more detail below.

When the disc is in the center of the field or near the downfield observer’s sideline, the downfield observer should stay at or very near the front goal line. If the disc is at the trail observer’s corner at the front goal

line, the trail observer should set up out of bounds, covering the front line while the trail observer drops near the back line. A positioning problem can arise if the disc is near the end zone being attacked, but on the sideline covered by the downfield observer (O2 in Figure 1). If O2 watches the back line, neither observer is optimally positioned to call in/out of the end zone on a short pass to the front corner of the end zone, nor is either observer in the best position to watch thrower-marker interactions. In this situation, both observers should be alert for any stoppage of play during which they quickly can trade responsibility for ends (*not sides*) of the field; thus, O2 now is responsible for the bottom end of the field in Figure 1C (and thus the goal line in this situation) and O1 becomes responsible for the top on the diagram end of the field (and thus the back line in this situation). Those positions may be maintained for the rest of the point, or the observers can trade back, depending on how play continues (e.g., a turnover in the end zone may allow the observers to reset to their original positions). This process is recommended for only experienced observers who are comfortable working together.

It is important to remember to cover the front line when the disc is near the end zone of defense in case a potential Callahan is thrown. When the disc is behind the reverse brick (midpoint of the end zone), the downfield observer should cover the front goal line while the trail observer covers the thrower/marker and the back line if necessary. When the disc is in the front half of the end zone of defense, the trail observer is responsible for the front goal line while the downfield observer positions appropriately, generally near the offensive player farthest downfield.

The most difficult situation for two observers to cover on the central zone is when the disc is near the downfield observer’s sideline, and most or all of the players are between the disc and the end zone being attacked. In this case, the trail observer may be unable to stay close enough to the thrower and marker to hear the stall count well, closely watch their interaction, and also be able to get back and see the sideline on a long swing pass in that direction. Meanwhile, the downfield observer cannot get too close to the disc without being out of position to see the action on a long pass downfield. While it is generally not recommended for the trail observer to cross the long axis of the field to the far side, that may be the best option under conditions described above, in order to suitably have coverage of the thrower and marker. This is acceptable, but the trail observer must be prepared to move back quickly towards the initial sideline. In this and similar cases, each observer must constantly be aware of the movements of players, the other observer and the possible path of the disc, and be ready to sprint to new positions whenever necessary.

The following table summarizes observer positioning in the TOS for various game situations.

Situation	Trail Observer (O1)	Downfield Observer (O2)
During Pull	In a mixed game, signal gender ratio to O2 or confirm receiving team’s gender ratio. Watch for offsides on receiving team.	In a mixed game, signal gender ratio to O2 or confirm pulling team’s gender ratio. Watch for offsides on pulling team.
After Pull	Get in position behind the thrower, staying slightly toward your sideline. Note offense and defense (zone, person, etc.) as players set up.	Jog toward midfield to watch catches near your sideline. Note offense and defense (zone, person, etc.) as players set up.
Short passes	Shadow the disc, monitoring stall count and the thrower’s feet; avoid interfering with dump and swing passes. Run toward new receiver (to-be thrower) when disc is released. Be prepared to run deep on a huck, to be in position for watching your sideline in/near far end zone.	Stay near your sideline, roughly even with the deepest receiver. Watch for picks and contact between cutters and defense. Be prepared to run to the end zone on a long pass.
Long Pass	Watch for stall, foul or travel calls and then run downfield. Stop and position just before disc is to be caught.	Run toward the end zone. If the pass is near the far sideline, run across field for better view, avoiding receivers and defenders. Return to original side when O1 is close enough to see their sideline at/near end zone.

Situation	Trail Observer (O1)	Downfield Observer (O2)
Turnover	Check with O2 to see if there are any calls that would negate the turnover. Transition to Downfield Observer role, being ready for a fast break.	Check with O1 to see if there are any calls that would negate the turnover and count down the 20 or 10 seconds, as appropriate.
Person-to-person Sideline Trap	Stand behind thrower and out of the way of dumps. Depending on the wind strength and direction, best position may be behind the thrower, off the field.	If force is toward your sideline, stay off the field, even with the deepest receiver. If force is other way, run to the middle of the field to watch for long hucks or punts down the line.
Flat Zone	Stand further back from thrower and out of the lane for swing passes. Typically, fewer marking fouls occur in a flat zone.	Stay parallel with the deepest receiver. If it is windy, cross-field hucks are less likely.
Trap Zone	Several offensive players may crowd around the disc and marking can be very aggressive. Avoid interfering with dumps. Depending on the wind, best position may be behind the thrower, off the field.	If force is toward your sideline, stay off the field, roughly even with the deepest receiver. If force is other way, run to the middle of the field to watch for long hucks or punts down the line.
Score	Carefully watch thrower's feet for travels, and listen for count and for foul calls both before and during the throw. If no outstanding calls, give "all clear" hand signal to partner. Resolve to "goal" signal if there are no downfield calls either.	Upon completion, watch receiver's feet to see if they are in the end zone and/or in-bounds. Indicate in the end zone/out of bounds as appropriate. Listen for "pick" or "down" calls. Check with O1 for "all clear" signal before resolving to "goal" signal.

### **Four-Observer System**

The Four Observer System (FOS) is generally used in showcase games when sufficient personnel are available, as it offers better coverage of the field. As in the TOS, all observers should keep track of both times and the score. There are three configurations used in the FOS: the pull, standard play, and end zone.

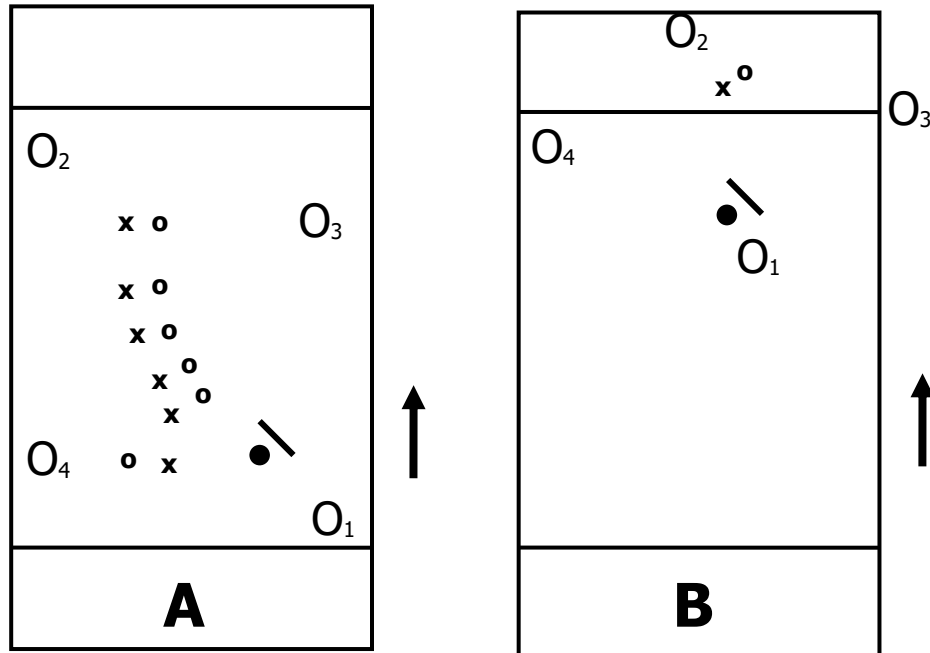
For the pull, the two observers with the receiving team stand on the front goal line, about 5 yards laterally from the outermost player near their respective sidelines. One observer gives verbal time warnings to the receiving team, but both observers give or echo hand signals for time warnings. Once the receiving team has signaled readiness, both observers signal readiness and simultaneously move about 10 yards deep in the end zone to watch for off-sides. The two observers with the pulling team are at the front corners of the end zone watching for off-sides during the pull. One observer gives the verbal time warnings to the pulling team while both observers give or echo hand signals for time warnings.

After the pull, the observers move into the standard configuration, shown in Figure 2A. This consists of two trail observers (O1 and O4) and two downfield observers (O2 and O3). Each observer is responsible for one "quadrant" of the field. When the disc is on O1's side of the field, O1 watches the thrower/marker interaction, while the other trail observer (O4) watches dump and swing cutters and their defenders. As the disc swings to O4's sideline, O1 becomes the trail observer watching dump and swing cuts while O4 watches the thrower/marker interaction. The two downfield observers watch the cutters/defenders near them as well as their respective sidelines, just as they would with the TOS. As with the TOS, if the disc is turned over, the trail and downfield observers switch roles while maintaining their relative positions.

When the disc gets close to the end zone (typically just past the attacking brick mark), all observers move into the end zone configuration, as shown in Figure 2B. This consists of a single trail observer behind the disc while the rest of the crew covers the end zone front and rear lines and the sidelines. The trail observer on the side of the field with the disc as it passes the attacking brick mark becomes the lone trail observer (O1 in this example). This observer moves with the disc, watching the thrower/marker interaction. She or he has no primary sideline or end zone line responsibility, and so can move freely from sideline to sideline.



The other trail observer (O4) is no longer watching the thrower and marker and moves to the front cone on their sideline. Once O4 reaches the front cone, O2 moves to the back line and shifts towards the middle of the field while O3 stays at the front cone on the other side. This provides good coverage of the front goal line and the back line. The end zone configuration is maintained until a point is scored, the disc is turned, or the disc is moved backwards well behind the attacking brick mark.



**Figure 2.** **A** – Standard positions in the Four Observer System. **B** – End zone positioning: O1 watches the thrower and marker, while O4 moves up to watch the front goal line with O3. This allows O2 to drop back and cover the back goal line while still watching the players moving/cutting in the end zone.

Keep in mind that with two observers on each sideline and front line of the end zone, it is possible to signal two opposite outcomes for sideline receptions. In general, the closer observer is the first to signal while the farther observer echoes the call, unless the far observer has a better view of the play. Once a reception is made in the end zone, the observers covering the end zone signals “in the end zone,” and the standard procedure is used to determine and signal if a goal is to be awarded (see Appendix 2 – Hand Signals). All four observers echo any hand signals regarding the goal or calls stopping play (potentially disallowing the goal).

## **IV Best Practices**

### ***Observer Duties***

This section contains lists providing a brief synopsis of observer duties.

#### **Tournament Head Observer**

- Select and recruit the observer crew for a given tournament.
- Ensure that the crew is clear on all of the competition specifics, including any rule or observer system changes.
- Work with the Competition Director and Tournament Director to schedule observers on games.
- Work with the Competition Director and other observers to address any officiating issues which arise during the event (including player misconduct), and communicate any necessary information to the crew.
- Assess the performance of the crew during the event, including fielding specific feedback from teams.
- Report all data back to HQ in a timely manner.

#### **Observers**

- Follow Observer Code of Conduct.
- Ensure the field is conducive to Observing, e.g., cones are properly positioned and sideline chairs, water coolers, and bags are far enough back to give you enough room to move along the sideline as needed and to not pose a danger to players.
- Hold the pre-game meeting.
- Track and announce time between points, for timeouts, after a turnover and half-time. Enforce time limits as described in this manual. Communicate game start times and caps as instructed by event organizer.
- Make active line calls for in and out of bounds, goals, off-sides.
- Make rulings on contested calls (fouls, violations, other disputes) if requested by players or needed to keep game moving.
- Monitor conduct. Enforce sanctions as necessary. Track and report violations and incidents.
- Keep track of score and timeouts.
- Give hand signals where appropriate to communicate calls to players, coaches and spectators.

#### **Experimental Events**

Occasionally some tournaments experiment with changes to specific rules or observer duties. Observers working these events should familiarize themselves with the changes and any resulting consequences these may have for normal observer mechanics. Typical examples of these changes include making some calls active (e.g. travel, up/down, counting the stall), changes in how player misconduct is handled, and changes to rules not related to officiating (e.g. field size, player substitutions).

#### **Equipment**

While your foremost responsibility is to do the job to the best of your ability, it is important (especially in higher profile events) for the image of observers in general as well as for the sport that you are properly equipped and maintain a professional appearance. At a minimum, at least one observer working each game should wear a wristwatch with a stopwatch function and carry a pen or pencil, score card, and misconduct cards. Observers should also have a copy of the rules available for reference when needed. Additionally, follow these guidelines for their attire during games:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Guideline</b>
Shoes	You must wear cleats. Turf shoes are considered cleats, but be sure your cleats are appropriate to the field conditions. Black or black-based is recommended (required for showcase events).
Jersey	You must wear the official jersey of the USAU Observer Program.
Shorts/Pants	You must wear black shorts (pockets are highly recommended). Black, cold-weather pants are permitted when needed.
Socks	Black socks are recommended (and required for showcase events).
Headwear	If headgear is worn, you must wear a black baseball style cap. Black, cold-weather headwear is permitted if necessary due to weather (Head observer must approve for showcase events).
Base Layers and Gloves	If base layers or gloves are worn, black is recommended (and is required for showcase events).
Sunglasses	Sunglasses are allowed but must be at least partially translucent. Media outlets televising or streaming the game can request that observers not wear sunglasses.
Rain Gear	Rain gear is permitted if necessary due to weather, matching colors recommended.
Other Items	Other items such as headbands, wristbands or other decorative items are not permitted.

### ***Common Situations***

Below are points to keep in mind about situations commonly requiring attention and often a ruling. It is important to use your experience as a player to anticipate what may be coming next on the field. For example, if the mark is broken and a receiver is going deep, the observer responsible for that goal line should be running deep as well. If patterns develop (such as a certain handler throwing deep or cross-field to the same receiver repeatedly), be prepared for the situation to recur.

Always be cognizant of staying out of the way of the players to the greatest extent possible. If play is close to a sideline, do not occupy a position that would interfere with the disc going down the line, or if a team is threatening to score and play is on the same side of the field as the observer watching the goal line, do not kneel at or near the cone, where you may be in the way of the players trying to make the play and unable to move out of their way quickly.

### **Pre-game Discussion with Teams**

Arrive at the field early enough to talk with the captains of both teams (preferably together) without interrupting the teams' own pre-game talks or warm-ups. If coaches attend in place of captains, encourage a captain to attend, but do not require it. Introduce yourself and the crew and ask if the teams have played with observers before. Where teams have had experience playing with observers, it likely is sufficient simply to explain that you will be following the typical protocol on active and inactive calls, that penalties can be assessed for repeated off-sides or time-limit violations, that the misconduct system is in effect, and explain any significant differences that may be in effect for the particular game or tournament.

Where one or both teams have not played with observers before, the observer meeting with the captain(s)/coach(es) should at least cover the following points:

- The observers' primary purpose – to assist players in upholding Spirit of the Game by keeping the game moving and intervening where requested or necessary to avoid protracted disputes.
- Introduce the crew, and what their roles and responsibilities are.
- Competition rules – point totals, caps, and timeouts.
- Time limits – You actively track and announce them to the players using hand signals.
- Active calls – for time limits and boundary calls (and others where applicable for the specific game or tournament), you make the call and play generally continues.

- In the end zone – Two hands pointed toward the ground in the end zone indicates only that the play occurred in the end zone. It does not imply an up or down or goal call.
- Inactive calls – for other calls, it is up to the players; if no call is made, or if one is made, but they agree themselves on a particular outcome (right or wrong), the players’ decision stands.
- Do-overs – there may be instances where no official is in position to confidently rule; in these cases, the disc will get sent back to the thrower, just as players would do absent observers.
- Rulings are final – players need not agree to request observer intervention; if one player requests, then you make a ruling and the ruling is final.
- Misconduct – explain that if players engage in actions that warrant it, misconduct fouls are assessed, and that repeated instances will result in penalties.
- Remind teams to maintain clear sidelines.

Ask if they have questions and respond as appropriate.

### **Time Caps**

Each observer should keep track of time caps, including halftime cap, soft cap, and hard cap. Give captains and/or coaches reminders of upcoming time caps approximately five to ten minutes prior to the time caps. Once the time cap has been reached and the current scoring attempt is completed, confirm with the captains and/or coaches the new halftime target or game total, as appropriate. In accordance with the 2020/21 Rules of Ultimate, only one point is added to the higher score in the case of the soft cap and halftime cap. When a time cap is reached between points, the current scoring attempt has already begun and the point must be played before determining the new halftime target or game total; confirm this procedure with captains and/or coaches before teams signal readiness. Note that the winning score will never exceed the game total and there is no requirement in the rules to win by two in any situation.

### **Time Limits**

Track time limits, including game start-times, time between pulls, half-times, timeouts, and resuming play after turnovers. See Appendix 1 – Guide to Timekeeping for time limits and when to give warnings, and Appendix 2 – Hand Signals for the appropriate hand signals. Make sure that players understand the hand signals for 20 and 10 seconds remaining. A good time for verifying that is in the pre-game discussion (See below). Once a time limit expires, indicate the potential for continuing play with an appropriate announcement.

On turnovers, you as the soon to be trailing observer (who will be behind the disc) call out the warnings once the disc has come to rest and then “in play” at the appropriate time. The marker in position may then initiate a stall count, regardless of whether a thrower is in possession or has established a pivot. Be sure to have a spare disc available in case the offense requests one due to the original disc being difficult to retrieve. To end timeouts, call out the appropriate warnings for the offense to set up, and then announce “offense freeze.” Then call out the appropriate warnings to check the disc into play, and if the disc is not checked into play within the allotted time, announce “offense start when ready.”

In mixed games, the team responsible for deciding the gender ratio for the point has up to 25 seconds to announce their decisions. After marking the goal on your scoresheet, approach the coach or captain for their decision. Do not give time warnings for this limit. If teams are consistently late (or very late for a given point), you may assess a time warning for this infraction, but use good judgement. If both teams are late with their signals and neither is complaining, let teams agree to a slightly relaxed schedule for the decision (check in with both teams to be sure they are comfortable).

Only 85 seconds may elapse between a score and the subsequent pull. The receiving team has up to 55 seconds from the preceding score to declare their line up by having no more than 7 players assume positions on the goal line for the defense to match up and up to 70 seconds to signal readiness (typically, a raised hand). Coaches or other players may still be on the field, but the starting 7 must be clear to the defense (no other players on the line, etc.). The pulling team has up to 85 seconds from the preceding score to pull.

However, if the receiving team has not declared their line up and assumed positions on the goal line by 55 seconds, the pulling team gets 30 seconds from the time they do so. If the receiving team has not signaled readiness within the allotted 70 seconds, the pulling team is permitted 15 seconds after the receiving team does so, regardless of the 85-second maximum. Face the team whose limits are expiring and announce each warning while giving the appropriate hand signal (to aid players who cannot hear and the observer at the far end of the field). When the receiving team has declared their lineup and assumed positions, the observer with the receiving team signals the observer with the pulling team with a laterally extended arm towards the 7 players on the line (See Appendix 2 - Hand Signals). The observer with the pulling team acknowledges the signal by raising their arm and then both observers lower their arms. The observer with the pulling team tells the pulling team that the offense has declared their line. When the receiving team has signaled readiness, face the pulling team with one arm extended straight up, fingers extended parallel to each other, palm facing forward (see Appendix 2 – Hand Signals) and position yourself behind the offense. All offensive substitutions must be made before the receiving team assumes their positions on the goal line and the defensive substitutions must be made before the pulling team signals readiness. Once the pulling team has signaled readiness, neither team may call a timeout. Treat the game start-time and the end of halftime as described above for pulls, but give the teams more advance warning, as described in Appendix 1 – Guide to Timekeeping, so that players are not caught by surprise.

If players on the receiving team do not assume legal positions on the goal line by 55 seconds or signal readiness within 70 seconds, a time violation warning is given. If the pulling team is not in the act of pulling after 85 seconds, a time violation warning is given. Do not give violations for a team being a second or two late, use your judgment. If teams are consistently pushing past the limit, politely ask them to be more punctual. Each team receives one warning per game for violating the time limits for pulls. If a warning is given, make the appropriate hand signal (see Appendix 2 – Hand Signals) and verbally announce it to the team. Restart the clock as soon as the violation is noted on the score sheet. Then the receiving team has no more than 15 seconds to assume positions on the goal line and another 15 seconds to signal readiness, with the pulling team getting an additional 30 seconds to match up and pull, starting from the time the offense assumes their positions. In practice, teams can usually begin play much more quickly after a time violation warning than these limits allow. After a team has received its warning, any further time violation results in assessment of a team time-out, with the resulting time extensions. If a team has no time-outs remaining, the following penalties apply:

- If they are receiving, they begin with the disc at the midpoint of the end zone they are defending, after players set up and a check is performed.

If they are pulling, the receiving team begins with the disc at mid-field, after players set up and a check is performed.

## **Offsides**

With a crew of two or more, offsides is easily monitored. The observer with the receiving team stands 5-10 yards behind the goal line and ~5 yards laterally from the closest player towards the sideline, so that you can simultaneously watch the pull and players' movements. The observer with the pulling team stands at the front cone of the end zone. Until the disc is released, no pulling team player's *foot* may cross the vertical plane of the goal line, and each receiving team player must have a foot on the goal line. Call off-sides for every violation, but it is important to be consistent. Pro-actively give informal verbal warnings to help prevent multiple violations and keep the game moving. As soon as the pull is released, look at the other observer to see if there is an offsides call, and inform the players.

If offsides is called, the observer with the offsides team signals with raised crossed arms (see Appendix 2 – Hand Signals) and loudly announces the call. Do NOT echo an offsides call by the other observer. It is helpful to mentally note the offside player(s) number(s) to announce when asked. It is also helpful to remind the players to keep playing if only the pulling team is offsides.

- If the pulling team is offsides, once the receiving team has let the disc hit the ground untouched, they may signal with a raised arm their intention to take the disc at the brick nearest the endzone they are defending on the first instance (or midfield on any subsequent offsides). Remember these are additional options for the receiving team, and the locations to put the disc into play absent an offsides call are still legal options. The receiving team does not need to wait for the pulling (defending) team to setup, unless the receiving team is also offsides. In that case, play stops, the offense sets up once they take possession of the disc, and the defense matches up and restarts play with a check.
- If the receiving team is offsides, the observer calls and signals offsides. Play stops after the outcome of the pull is decided and the offense has taken the disc to where it is to be put in play. If the offense tries to attempt a pass, remind them that play has stopped and play cannot restart without a defensive check. The offensive players then have 10 seconds to setup and hold their positions, and then the defense has 20 seconds to restart play with a check.
- A dropped pull is a turnover regardless of any offsides violations.

### **Thrower and Marker Fouls**

Marking fouls often are disputed, particularly when the count gets high and there is more frenzied action by both players. If the marker is jumping back and forth to deny all throws, resultant contact typically will be a foul on the marker, as is contact resulting from both the marker and the thrower vying for the same unoccupied position. However, if the marker establishes a legal position, it is a foul on the thrower to pivot into the marker's body. If there is contact between the thrower and a marker's extended arms or legs, this also is typically a foul on the marker and is considered a foul on the thrower only if the marker's extremities were both in legal marking position and completely STATIONARY. For any throw resulting in contact, consider:

- Was the marker in a legal position to begin with?
- Was the contact with the marker's body, or the marker's arms or legs?
- If the contact was with the marker's body, was the marker moving over to prevent the throw, or did the marker already occupy that position before the contact?

Guidance from the USAU Rules Working Group (RWG) is useful in interpreting how to handle some tricky situations, including where the thrower aggressively makes contact with the marker.

1. Any contact with an illegally positioned marker is almost always a foul on the marker.
2. In the case of normal, legitimate, ultimate-related movements of the thrower (pivoting, faking, throwing, etc.), any contact that occurs in the space illegally occupied by the marker is considered "due to the marker setting up an illegal position."
3. For any contact not addressed by 2) above, if the thrower is the primary cause of the contact, it will not be considered "due to the marker setting up an illegal position."

Keep in mind that, in games without an observer, a thrower might call foul and throw the disc downfield anyway, thinking that even if the pass is intercepted or incomplete, the disc will come back to the thrower, whether or not the marker contests the call. With an observer, if the call is contested and you rule no foul, it is a turnover with play resuming where the disc landed or was intercepted.

### **Travels**

Watch the thrower's feet and the disc carefully until the disc is released. After the throw, immediately scan downfield, so that if a travel is called, players can be directed back to the positions that they occupied at the time of the call. Pay special attention to defenders who are well away from the receivers who they are supposed to be covering, in case players ask for assistance in re-positioning. Remember that a travel call does not stop play if the thrower does not attempt a pass. The stall count is paused until the thrower sets a

pivot in the correct location and touches the disc to the ground. Do not signal travels that do not stop play. Several situations may prompt travel calls, including:

- Incorrect pivot location – Know the spot where the disc should be put into play and see whether the thrower’s pivot is correctly positioned when releasing the disc.
- Absence of ground touch – A player in possession of a live disc (e.g., walking an out-of-bounds pull to the sideline or brick mark) must touch the disc to the ground to put the disc into play.
- Throwing while running – Count ground contacts as soon as a catch is made (if a player is contacting the ground when catching, the *next* ground contact as the first one), and be careful to see whether the player accelerates or changes direction. If the disc is released before the third ground contact after the catch and there is no acceleration or direction change, it is not a travel.
- Pivot moves during throw – Be in position to see the thrower’s feet and the disc, and note whether the pivot leaves its spot before the disc is released. Note that some players have a very quick throwing motion and first step.
- Throw during a marking foul – Per the USAU Rules Working Group’s interpretation of the 2020/21 Rules of Ultimate, a thrower may legitimately be called for a travel even if the player moves their pivot foot completely or partially as a result of being fouled by the marker.

Remember that, as an observer, you may only rule on calls that are made by the players. As such, ensure you are clear which sort of travel call is being made before issuing a ruling.

### **Fast Count and Contested Stalls**

Listen carefully to the stall count (and monitor with hand counts if necessary) to determine whether the count speed is legal, and listen for acceleration at the end. Although as a general matter, you rule only on the call that is made, in a case where a stall is contested, rule to ensure the correct outcome, whatever the reason for the contest. That is, a stall can be overturned for either the count being too fast or the throw being released before the first utterance of “ten,” regardless of the specific call made by the thrower. Also, a thrower may call fast count for any individual instances of fast counting, even if the marker’s count is consistent, but fast – failure to call prior fast count infractions does not preclude the thrower from calling subsequent fast count infractions. For example, if a marker’s count is fast at 1-2, and is still fast at 7-8, the thrower may call a fast count based on the latter, but may not wait until later in the count to call it on the former.

### **Contested Marking Violations**

A marker may contest a marking violation by calling “violation.” This contest is treated as the call of an offensive violation, and the Continuation Rule applies. In this situation, you may be asked to rule on two calls: (1) whether the marker could claim that play was affected while contesting the call if a completion was thrown, (2) the contest of the marking violation.

1. If the disc is thrown, the Continuation Rule applies. Any turnover will stand (unless another infraction, such as a receiving foul, negates it). If the throw is complete, whether or not the disc is returned to the thrower depends on if the marker assessing the conditions of the marking violation call affected their ability to defend the throw. While the marker, by rule, is the one that determines whether play is affected, the time window for that affect is considered very narrow. Only when a marker has to physically divert their attention away from marking does marking become momentarily affected, such as looking down at the thrower’s feet to evaluate a straddle call or looking behind them to evaluate a double team. Mentally evaluating a fast count is not considered to affect a marker’s ability to defend a throw nor is the act of saying contest. Also consider that if the marker has clearly communicated the contest to the thrower and the thrower continues to play well past this clear communication, 20.F applies and any subsequent completion will be returned to the thrower, provided that the marker invokes this rule and asks you to rule in regard to it.

2. If you overrule the contest (agree with the original marking violation call) and the disc is to remain with the thrower, the stall resumes as if the contest was retracted (stalling 1). If you uphold the contest, the stall resumes at count reached plus 1, or 9 if over 8.

### **Sideline Catches**

Position yourself so you can clearly see the line and the receiver's hands and feet at the same time; if not, first confirm the catch, then immediately look to the feet. Continue to watch carefully for any bobbling which might occur during ground contact related to the catch. If the disc flies close to a boundary line, be sure to watch the take-off foot of any player attempting a "greatest," and watch closely to see which foot (or other body part) makes the first ground contact and when that occurs, relative to the throw.

A force-out foul is an active call when the disc is caught out-of-bounds and you believe it would have been in-bounds except for a force-out foul. When this occurs, play stops and resumes with a check. Note that an in or out call is separate from, and unrelated to, an up or down call. When up or down is not an active observer call, it is the players' responsibility to call up or down, and up or down is not considered when making an in or out call. Possession, however, is considered. If the receiver loses possession and then regains possession, or bobbles the disc for a period before gaining possession, signal according to where the receiver last had full control of a non-spinning disc. If the receiver drops the disc on ground contact, then picks it up again while out-of-bounds, you should signal out-of-bounds.

If you are screened from making an active line call, do not give a verbal or hand signal. If there is no argument among the players, play continues normally. If there is any disagreement about whether the receiver was in or out, such as the receiver's defender stopping and looking back at you, play stops and the situation is treated like a contested in/out call, with the disc being returned to the previous thrower if agreement cannot be reached among the players. In these cases, inform players that the disc is going back because you did not have a clear view of the play.

### **Disc Out of Bounds**

In general, don't move a stopped disc or stop a moving disc. Moving a disc away from sideline gear to distinguish it as the game disc is permitted. Minor movements of a few yards of the disc to mark the spot to put in play are ok as long as no disadvantage is created for either team. Observers do not retrieve discs. If a new disc needs to be inserted into the game, the observers should clearly communicate to the players that a new disc is being used, and the disc should be placed at the equipment line where it crossed. If there are dangerous conditions (trenches, concrete sidewalks, fences, etc.), observers should give players adequate time to safely retrieve the disc. Communicate to the player retrieving in this situation that you are granting additional time. Don't mark a position where the disc went out of bounds with a raised hand, as it resembles a call, instead mark the position with a lowered hand, bean bag, and/or with your foot. Do not place a bean bag along the goal line to mark the lateral position where the disc went out of bounds, rather place it on the end line.

Non-active players, e.g. sideline players, coaches, or fans should generally not interfere with play on the field. However, they may assist with stopping a rolling disc or preventing a flying disc from going too far away from the field of play. If there is any chance of the disc re-entering the field of play while in flight, interference with the game is grounds for a Misconduct Foul. In these exceptional cases, the non-active players should place the disc at the equipment line.

### **Disc Up or Down**

While this is not an active call, it often is the subject of dispute and you may be asked for a ruling. Making this call accurately nearly always requires you to be very close to the disc. If you are uncertain, send the disc back to the thrower. If you make an up or down call after a dispute or request, play restarts with a check. Remember, an in or out call is separate from and unrelated to an up or down call. If up or down is not an active call, it is the players' responsibility to call up or down and up or down should not be considered when making an in or out call.



## Receiving and Defending Hucks

Multiple players may simultaneously be vying for the disc on certain (typically deeper) throws, and when players are chasing a floating disc, one or more of them may trip and multiple fouls may be called. It is especially important for the downfield observer to determine the likely path of the disc, get to the intended area as quickly as possible, and watch approaching receivers and defenders for early interference fouls, such as trips, tackles or blocking out with the elbows. Especially relevant are whether (1) one player is pushing another with their hands, (2) there is an obvious sweep across a player's hands, (3) one player tackles another, or (4) one player uses another to assist in a leap. Unless this sort of activity is taking place, do not rule "boxing out" or similar incidental contact as a foul. Keep in mind that, when adjacent players simultaneously vie for the same position, the contact generally is considered incidental.

If a ruling is requested and no observer has a good view of this type of play (such as due to several players going up at once) or if there are offsetting fouls, the disc is returned to the thrower. On throws into the end zone, get as close to the play as possible without interfering with the players, and always be prepared for the disc to be tipped in another direction until possession is firmly established. Contact initiated by a defender after they touch the disc is not a receiving foul. However, if the end result is dangerous play (e.g., offensive player is hit hard or tackled), or the contact prevented the receiver from making a subsequent play on the disc, a general foul, a receiving foul, or a blocking foul can still result. A general foul after the outcome of the play has been determined would not affect possession, but would result in a stoppage of play and player resetting their positions. Remember that, even if the thrower travels, downfield events can impact possession.

## Strip Fouls

To establish possession, a player must have both sustained contact with and control of a non-spinning disc. If the disc is still spinning, even slightly, or if the receiver does not have sustained contact or control, and the defender knocks it away, it is not a strip. A strip is a type of foul under the rules, and a player calling "strip" is implying that they established possession of the disc and that a foul caused possession to be lost. If a strip call is contested, play stops and restarts with a check after the ruling. If you uphold the call and the strip occurred in the end zone, it is a goal. In some cases, a player may call a strip and they have yet to secure possession of the disc. There are two cases to consider here. The first case is when the foul **described** while discussing the strip does not have to do with hitting the disc itself, but rather about the defender initiating contact with the calling player. In this case, you may uphold the foul call implied within the strip call. However, if the foul happened in the end zone, you will not award a goal, only possession of the disc. The second case is when the only foul described is the defender hitting the disc itself. In this case, the contact would not be a foul because the player did not possess the disc, and therefore you should not uphold the strip call.

## Dangerous Plays

Players have the right to call "dangerous play" when an opponent demonstrates "reckless disregard for the safety of or posing a significant risk of injury to fellow players, or other dangerously aggressive behavior." As with other calls by players, the "dangerous play" call can be contested, and you may be asked to rule in these types of situations. If you agree with the infracted player that the play was dangerous, uphold the call – the play is then resolved as if the player had called an analogous foul.

Remember that a dangerous play occurring when or immediately after the disc is in the air is treated as a receiving foul if either player involved is attempting a play on the disc. However, the calling player may elect to treat the dangerous play as a general foul, if the player determines that the dangerous play was unrelated to the overall play that decided the outcome of the action (17.I.1.b.2). If the calling player has elected to treat the dangerous play call as a receiving foul versus a general foul and that point is contested and brought to you, you need to give large discretion to the calling player's viewpoint and only overrule treating it as a receiving foul if you are certain that the dangerous play was unrelated to the overall play that decided the outcome of the action. For example, suppose there are 3 people making a play on a disc: the

receiver, defender A (dangerous defender), and defender B (non-dangerous defender). If all the players are in near proximity and player B swats away the disc momentarily before A crashes into the receiver, the receiver may rightly elect to treat this dangerous play as a receiving foul even though the non-dangerous defender made the disc unplayable before the dangerous contact. However, if B is a significant distance away from the receiver and A, and B swats the disc away well before A crashes into the receiver, you can rule that the dangerous play should be treated as a general foul. In general, your decision that a dangerous play was unrelated to the overall play will be based on the dangerous play being removed in significant distance or time from the overall play.

Contact need not be severe to call a dangerous play. Even further, contact is not required to call a dangerous play, however the caller must be reasonably certain that contact would have occurred if the caller did not take steps to avoid the contact. A player is not required to hold their position and receive contact in order to call “dangerous play,” but the mere possibility of contact is insufficient to justify a call. If the offending player stops or changes their path such that contact would not have occurred, contact was not “reasonably certain.”

As an example, suppose two players (O and D) are running from opposite directions to make a play on the disc. The offensive player realizes the defender is running without watching where they are going. The offensive player should proceed with the play, but if they recognize that the defender will collide with them, they may bail out of the play to avoid the collision. If the defender proceeds through the space the receiver would have occupied without looking where they are going or in some other reckless manner such that contact would have occurred but for the offensive player bailing out, the offensive player may call dangerous play even if no contact occurs. However, if the offensive player bails out of the play and the defender also stops short with the disc falling between them, the offensive player may not call dangerous play.

Here are some further, non-exhaustive examples of dangerous play:

- significantly colliding with a mostly STATIONARY opponent,
- jumping into a group of mostly STATIONARY players
- diving around or through a player that results in contact with a player’s back or legs,
- running without looking, when there is a likelihood of other players occupying the space into which the player is traveling,
- jumping or otherwise leaving the ground where it is likely that a significant collision will result,
- wild or uncontrolled throwing motions,
- initiating contact with a player’s head,
- initiating contact with an airborne player’s lower body that prevents them from landing on their feet, and
- jumping right in front of a sprinting player in a manner where contact is unavoidable.

You can also deem a play “dangerous” regardless of the specific call or language that a player uses to stop play. In either case (dangerous play called by a player or by you), the offending player should at a minimum be penalized with a Team Misconduct Foul (see Section V) or possibly a Personal Misconduct Foul or Ejection, depending on the egregious nature or severity of the infraction and the potential for injury.

## **Picks**

For a pick call to be legitimate, the defender must be within three meters (approximately 10 feet) of the person they are covering. If necessary, consult another observer who may have been in better position to rule on the call. Because picks often happen away from the disc and the primary cutters, you may not see the play, and in these cases, it is perfectly acceptable to indicate and defer to the standard rules for

continuing play after a pick call. Remember that a picked defender may recover only the relative position lost due to the pick. Even if a pick did occur (and is upheld), you may still rule that the disc stays with the receiver when asked, if you feel that the picked defender could not have made a play on the disc absent the pick.

### **Player Positioning After a Call**

When play stops due to a call, be prepared to help players set up in the appropriate positions before resuming play. If the thrower acknowledges the call and no throw is made, players return to the positions they occupied at the time of the call. If a throw was made and the result of the play stands, players return to the positions they occupied when play stopped (generally, when the pass was caught). However, if a throw was made and the disc is returned to the thrower, players return to the positions they occupied the time of the throw or the time of the call, whichever was earlier.

### **Retracted Calls**

In the 2020/21 Rules of Ultimate, retracted calls may also involve a change to the stall count. It is important to help players restart play properly with a check at the appropriate stall count in these situations. If you are the trail observer addressing the call, confirm whether offense or defense retracted the call and then signal “retracted call” followed by the appropriate stall count. If you are the downfield observer addressing the call, confirm whether offense or defense retracted the call. For a defensive retracted call, signal “retracted call” followed by “stalling 1”; for an offensive retracted call, signal “retracted call” only. In this case, the trail observer should understand that the stall is count reached plus 1, or 9 if over 8.

### **Resolving Multiple Calls**

Occasionally, there will be multiple calls on a given play that need to be resolved. Fouls and violations are generally resolved in reverse chronological order in which they occurred with the stall being determined by the earliest infraction. If an infraction is determined to have not affected the play, it is not resolved and it does not affect the resolution. If you cannot determine the timing of two infractions, they are treated as if they are offsetting calls, with the disc returned to the thrower (if a throw was involved) and the stall resumes at the count reached plus one, with a maximum of six. It should be noted that if there are multiple foul calls by players pursuing an airborne disc, but before either player begins to make an attempt at a catch (reaching for, jumping for, or diving for the disc), those fouls are treated as offsetting regardless of the order in which they occurred. Remember that if you are a downfield observer resolving a call involving a reception, there may be a call at the spot of the throw that changes the overall resolution. For plays involving multiple calls and a throw, do not return the disc to the thrower until all the calls have been resolved.

### **Outcomes of Rulings**

If you uphold a call that is contested (e.g., agree with the thrower that they were fouled on the throw), the outcome of the play is the same as if the call had not been contested. If you uphold the contest (overrule the call), the outcome is the same as if the call was retracted. This includes resuming the stall count according to the 2020/21 Rules of Ultimate for retracted calls (15.A.5.a). After any ruling, players return to the locations that they would occupy under the rules in the absence of observers, depending on the ruling (i.e., whether the call was upheld or considered to have been retracted), and play restarts with a check at the corresponding stall count. Note: the rules allow teams to agree to ignore a specific dictated outcome of the continuation rule if they both agree that an infraction did not affect the play. Observers may not rule to force an outcome outside of the standard continuation rule. Example: if a cutter calls foul before a throwing motion begins, and the thrower, unaware of the call, subsequently throws a completion, the continuation rule dictates that this completion *always* comes back. The offense may not request the observer to rule play was unaffected to force an outcome outside the continuation rule and have the completion stand, only the opponent may agree to this outcome. However, you may be asked to rule whether a defender was affected

by a pick. You may provide a ruling in this case as an unaffected pick ruling would stay within the bounds of the dictated outcome of the continuation rule (a completion would stand).

## Goals

Scoring calls are of the utmost importance. The downfield observer(s) need to stay far enough downfield to be in position for any play at the goal line or back line. When a catch is made near the goal line but in the central zone, verbally call “Not in!” to indicate that play should continue. No hand signal accompanies this call. Remember that when playing with observers, any goal calls by the offense are not valid. When a catch is made in the end zone, continue to watch the entire catch, including any subsequent related actions such as bobbling. Once you have confirmed the receiver has survived ground contact, verbally call “In!” and signal only that the receiver is in the end zone (see Appendix 2 – Hand Signals). Do not signal a goal until it is clear that no call negates the score. Note that when a player is ruled in the end zone (with no outstanding calls), the point is over, even if that player does not realize and throws a subsequent incompleteness. In these cases, you are considered to have “best perspective.” Remember, an in/out call is separate from and unrelated to an up or down call. Since up or down is not an active observer call, it is the players’ responsibility to make that call, and up/down should not be considered when making an in or out call.

## Timeouts

Track the timeouts taken by each team on the score sheet. When a team takes a timeout, inform the team how many timeouts that they have remaining. It is also helpful to inform the teams of this periodically in any event (such as when the end of a half or game is near). If a team with possession of the disc has no timeouts remaining and calls a timeout during play (live disc), play stops, and the marker resumes the stall count with the number last uttered before the call plus three (e.g. If the timeout was called after a stall count of two, play would resume on a stall count of five.) If this results in a stall count of ten or above, this is a turnover. The former thrower should place the disc on the ground, announce “turnover,” and then tap the disc live. There is no effect on possession (the timeout simply is not acknowledged or granted) if the timeout is called during a stoppage in play (dead disc).

To take a timeout during play, the handler must form a T with the disc and should audibly announce “time out”. A player who places the disc on the ground after saying “time out” but not forming a T with the disc has thrown a turnover. Note that players may choose to allow this violation without calling it. If the player in possession of the disc calls a timeout such that the disc is not currently where it is to be put into play (such as walking a disc up the line), the disc should be placed at the location where it is to be put into play. A timeout may be taken during a stoppage.

## Spirit Timeouts

One or both teams’ spirit captain(s) (or captain if a team has no spirit captain) may come to you in the course of the game and indicate that they want to call a spirit timeout. This should not come as a surprise to you. If it looks like there could be an issue developing during the game, check in with the spirit captains to see how things are going from their perspective. Do not put words into their mouths; inquire, but don’t lead. Encourage the spirit captains to talk to one another before an issue escalates. Also remind them that they can use a spirit timeout to prevent issues from escalating, not just for already escalated situations. Observers are only allowed to initiate a spirit timeout in a case where you feel it is necessary and one of the spirit captains agrees. Ideally, the call for the spirit timeout should come from the teams, however there are limited situations where the spirit captains may prefer the call to come from you.

When a spirit timeout is called, you should start your stopwatch. Inform the spirit captains that you can assist them with the timing as it is suggested that spirit circles take no more than five minutes in standard circumstances. However, assuming the event organizer and spirit captains agree, the spirit timeout can extend beyond five minutes. After the spirit timeout is over, you should meet with the spirit captains to confirm the time spent in the spirit timeout so that the appropriate time can be added to the length of the

game. Confirm what the new soft and hard cap times will be so that both teams are aware. Since there may not be horns for the “off schedule” time caps, you will need to pay close attention to your watch to announce when the new cap times are for this game. Note that some tournament directors may have special rules in place disallowing extra time from being added.

### **Observer Stoppages**

You have the authority to stop active play in certain situations, in order to deal with significant conduct issues or safety issues, and to extend stoppages of play or time limits between points to handle disputes or other administrative matters. If you stop active play for a dangerous situation while the thrower is in the act of throwing or the disc is in the air, play is restarted from the time of the throw (stall at count reached plus 1, not to exceed 6) unless both teams agree that the outcome of the play was unaffected by the dangerous situation. If both teams agree to the outcome, play restarts with a check from the time the outcome of the play was determined. If a player asks to stop play due to a damaged disc, then that is the player’s right, but you should inspect the disc to determine that it is creased, cracked, torn, deeply gouged, or punctured, and not merely warped. If the disc is still suitable for play, remind the player of the Rule and play should restart according to 15.A.5.a.7 with the same disc.

In the event that a player is bleeding or has an open wound, you should call an injury timeout for that player. This is an issue of player safety. This does not force the bleeding player to take a sub if they can get the wound effectively covered in 70 seconds. Please refer to rule 7.C.7 for detailed procedures around making sure that a wound is effectively covered.

### **Lightning Delays**

When a lightning delay is announced, the disc is immediately ruled dead at the first utterance of the announcement, whether it be verbal or 3 (or more) horn blasts. If announced during a pass, the disc is returned to the thrower regardless of the outcome of the pass. Place the disc on the ground, make a mental note of its placement, and seek shelter. When Tournament Staff announce that it is safe for games to continue, play will resume as if offense had called a timeout, except the stall will come in at the count reached +1 or 6 if over 5. In addition, observers and captains can discuss enforcing their own lightning delay prior to an official signal. If, prior to an official signal from the Tournament Staff, an observer notices lightning or notices an indication of lightning (like a facility monitoring system siren), the observer should stop play immediately, and play stops and restarts according to the above procedure.

## **V Player Misconduct System**

The conduct system described here is for use at all USAU Series events. You are empowered to sanction teams or individual players who commit deliberate or dangerous infractions, demonstrate patterns of repeated violations, or otherwise show disregard for the Spirit of the Game.

The highest USAU Authority in attendance controls the implementation of the conduct system at USAU tournaments – and is, in descending order: Executive Director, Championship Director, National Director for the relevant division, USAU Event Coordinator, Tournament Director. Tournament directors at other events also may utilize the system, if a majority of team spokespersons approve it before play begins.

This conduct system does not supersede or restrict the function or use of the Tournament Rules Group (TRG) or the USAU Conduct Committee. Both of these avenues are always available for resolving conduct disputes, including the specific cases addressed by the procedures described below. The TRG remains the official mechanism for processing complaints filed with USAU while a tournament is in progress.

For the purposes of this system, “player” means any person on the roster of a team competing in a particular tournament, as well as coaches, managers, trainers and others considered as partisans for the team, including significant others, parents and fans.

### ***Components of the Misconduct System***

#### **Technical Foul**

A Technical Foul can be assessed against a team for minor conduct violations that do not affect the competitiveness of the game. The first two Technical Fouls issued to a team are noted as warnings on the score sheet, but with no associated penalty. A third or subsequent Technical Fouls for a team in a single game results in a Misconduct Penalty against that team. There is no limit to the number of Technical Fouls or Misconduct Penalties a team can accrue during a game. Technical Fouls do not carry over beyond the game in which they are issued.

#### **Team Misconduct Foul (Blue Card)**

A Team Misconduct Foul (TMF) can be assessed against a team for unsportsmanlike conduct by one or more of its players. The TMF can be assessed regardless of whether the infringed team makes any call. Repeated minor infractions should be addressed using TMFs only if the infringed team is calling the infractions or issues a complaint. The first two TMFs issued to a team are noted as warnings on the score sheet, but with no associated penalty. A third or subsequent TMF for a team in a single game results in a Misconduct Penalty against that team. There is no limit to the number of TMFs or Misconduct Penalties a team can accrue during a game. TMFs do not carry over beyond the game in which they are issued.

#### **Personal Misconduct Foul (Yellow Card)**

A Personal Misconduct Foul (PMF) can be assessed against a specific player for particularly egregious conduct or a pattern of such behavior. A PMF is a formal warning for unacceptable behavior and puts the player on notice that any further such actions will result in ejection from the game.

A player who receives a second PMF during a single game is ejected for the remainder of that game. If this occurs in the second half of the game, the ejection remains in effect for the first half of the team’s next game. A player who receives three PMFs during a tournament is suspended for the remainder of the tournament. Assessment of a PMF is non-reviewable for the duration of the game, although it may be appealed to the TRG after the game.

One TMF is automatically assessed against a team whenever one of its players receives a PMF.

## **Ejection (Red Card)**

A player may be ejected from a game for particularly egregious conduct or a pattern of such behavior. Any player who intentionally strikes an opposing player, or a coach, spectator, observer, shall be immediately ejected from the game. Any player who strikes in retaliation also shall be ejected. No formal or informal warning is necessary before you eject a player, and an ejection need not be preceded by a TMF or PMF.

If an ejection occurs during the second half of the game, the ejection remains in effect for the first half of the player's team's next game. If a player receives more than one ejection in a tournament, that player is suspended for the rest of the tournament, and a formal complaint may be filed with USAU. An ejection is non-reviewable for the duration of the game, although it may be appealed to the TRG after the game.

One TMF is automatically assessed against a team whenever one of its players is ejected.

## **Game Forfeiture**

If five PMFs are assessed against players on a single team during a game, that team forfeits the game. For this purpose, an ejection is equivalent to two PMFs. For example, if three or more players on a single team are ejected, that team forfeits the game. If the situation arises where both teams would be required to forfeit the game due to multiple player ejections, the Competition Director shall convene the TRG and determine the appropriate outcome based on competition considerations.

## ***Behavior Warranting Sanctions***

### **Poor Sportsmanship**

When a team demonstrates a pattern of poor sportsmanship or disregard for the rules, by committing intentional, repeated or flagrant infractions, issue a TMF. If such a pattern is demonstrated by a single player, issue a PMF to that player.

Behavior warranting such sanctions includes deliberate fouling, dangerous play, taunting, fighting, swearing directed at an observer or opponent, repeated marking fouls, deliberate fast counting or double-teaming, making unwarranted calls or contests, or other blatant disregard of the rules. Any flagrant foul does not require a pattern to result in a TMF or PMF. Likewise, a single particularly violent "harmful endangerment" infraction can be grounds for a PMF or an ejection, at the discretion of the observer who witnesses the incident. Finally, a single particularly egregious demonstration of disregard for the rules (such as an intentional infraction or clearly unfounded call) can be grounds for a TMF.

### **Battery**

Intentionally striking another player with a part of the body, a disc or anything else, or any clear attempt to do so, warrants an ejection. This includes, but is not limited to: punching or kicking, or attempting to punch or kick, someone; spiking, or attempting to spike, a disc on someone; and spitting on someone, or spitting at someone but missing. If a player spikes the disc without intending to hit another player, and it does hit an opposing player, you may assess a TMF or PMF.

### **Swearing**

At your discretion, TMF or PMF may be assessed for swearing if directed at an opposing player or coach, or any spectator, or observer. Technical fouls will be issued for general, undirected swearing in accordance with any specific written guidelines for a given tournament.

### **Deliberate Fouling**

A TMF or PMF may be assessed for a particularly hard, dangerous or deliberate foul, at your discretion.

## **Pushing/Shoving**

A TMF or PMF may be assessed for unwarranted aggressive (e.g. shoving) or dangerous (e.g. tripping) behavior, at your discretion.

## **Taunting**

Repeated or prolonged taunting, or any verbal abuse of players, fans or USAU officials, warrants a TMF or PMF, depending on the severity of the offense. In determining which sanction is appropriate, consider whether there appears to be an attempt to intimidate or otherwise gain an advantage over the opponent by such actions, and also the intensity level of the game. Walking away from an incident while jawing or mocking is different than aggressively moving toward the other team's sideline or being in an opponent's face. The former is a case of disrespect, and should be discouraged, possibly with a TMF; the latter is verbal assault and may warrant harsher sanctions. There is a difference between saying that a call is (expletive) and that the player or official making the call is (expletive), the latter being more likely to warrant a PMF than a TMF.

## **Sideline Encroachment**

If, after being warned, players on a team continue to crowd the sideline, you may issue a Technical Foul. If the player's encroachment interferes with play or an observer's ability to make a call, a TMF should be issued.

Any other behavior described by Article X of the USAU Bylaws may warrant a TMF at your discretion. Finally, any behavior that would warrant the issuance of a TMF, but which occurs in a game without observers, can result in sanctions upon a complaint filed to the TRG.

## **Implementation**

Any observer may assess a Technical Foul, TMF, PMF or ejection. The infraction must have been witnessed by at least one official. For PMFs and ejections, you may stop play to rectify an unsafe situation (such as you perceiving a contact is escalating to a fight), but if the infractioned team has an advantage, you may allow play to continue momentarily (perhaps a thrower has an open cutter downfield or in the endzone) until the advantage has passed; for the purpose of continuation the situation should be treated like an injury called at the time of the infraction (or the stoppage if you allow play to momentarily continue). Technical fouls and TMFs should be assessed at the next stoppage of play after the infraction. During the stoppage, signal the infraction (hand signal or card as appropriate), inform the player(s), captains, and coaches of both teams of the sanction, record it on the score sheet, and assess any penalties at that point.

## **Personal Misconduct Fouls and Ejections**

Notify the Tournament Head Observer and Competition Director of any PMFs or ejections immediately after the game in which they occur. Observers should be informed every time a previously sanctioned player (PMF or ejection) is on the roster of a team competing in their game.

An ejected player must immediately leave the general area where their game is being played, as directed by the Competition Director, TD, or Head Observer. In practice this means the player must remove him or herself at least 100 yards from the specific field and refrain from interacting with any players, coaches, fans, or officials involved in that game. Failure to do so results in a forfeit for that player's team. If a player plays in a game from which they have been ejected, that player is suspended for the entire tournament, the player's team forfeits that game, and harsher sanctions may also result, depending on the event. A team whose player is ejected may substitute another player, and the opposing team also may exchange a player if they wish. All players must remain in the positions they occupied when play stopped (no set-up), unless the ejection also triggers a Team Misconduct Penalty, as described in the following sections.



### **Team Misconduct Penalty Against the Offense**

The disc is moved to the reverse brick mark, away from the end zone of attack. The offense is given 30 seconds to set up anywhere on the playing field. After all offensive players have assumed STATIONARY positions, the defense has an additional 20 seconds to match up and check the disc in with a new stall count. Give appropriate time warnings to both teams. If the defense prefers, they can elect to leave the disc where it was when play stopped – in this case no set-up is allowed, and the stall count resumes as if an uncontested offensive violation had been called, once teams are ready.

### **Team Misconduct Penalty Against the Defense**

The disc is moved to the brick mark closest to the end zone of attack. The offense is given 30 seconds to set up anywhere on the playing field. After all offensive players have assumed STATIONARY positions, the defense has an additional 20 seconds to match up and check the disc in with a new stall count. Give appropriate time warnings to both teams. Two other options are available to the offense:

Leave the disc where it was when play stopped, no player set-up, new stall count.

Center the disc on the long axis of the field, normal player set-up, new stall count.

### **Team Misconduct Penalty Assessed Between Points**

If the Misconduct Penalty is accepted, there is no pull. If the penalty is against the receiving team, the disc is put into play at the brick mark in the end zone they are defending. If the penalty is against the pulling team, the receiving team puts the disc into play at the brick mark closest to the end zone they are attacking. Each team may substitute players as usual, and normal time limits apply.

### **Declined Team Misconduct Penalties**

A team captain can decline a misconduct penalty and leave the disc as is. In exceptional circumstances, observers can overrule the declination and insist on enforcement of the misconduct penalty. Observers will rarely overrule a team's declination of the yardage penalty.

## Appendix 1 – Guide to Timekeeping

Situation	Watch	Observer Announces	Notes
Before Pull (to gendzone)	Up to 0:25	“4 women” or “4 men”	Give appropriate hand signal.
(to receiving team)	0:35	20 seconds for a line	Stand on the field, close to the team so they can hear you. After the ten second warnings, arm chop the remaining time. For the first point of the game, at five seconds after the horn, give the offense a 10 second warning for a line. Give the pulling team a 30 second warning when the offense declares a line.
	0:45	10 seconds for a line	
	0:50	20 seconds for a hand (only if line declared before 0:50)	
	1:00	10 seconds for a hand	
(to pulling team)	Up to 0:55	Offense has declared a line	Note: for showcase games, USAU and/or TD’s may want an accelerated start at the horn or coming out of halftime.
	1:05	20 seconds to pull (only if hand given before 1:05)	
	1:15	10 seconds to pull	
After time violation warning (to receiving team)	0:05	10 seconds for a line	Do not forget to reset the watch as soon as a time violation warning is called.
	0:20	10 seconds for a hand	
(to pulling team)	Up to 0:15	Offense has declared a line	
	0:25	20 seconds to pull (only if hand given before 0:25)	
	0:35	10 seconds to pull	
Timeout (during point)	0:40	Sideline players clear the field	This is an informal warning. Get the bulk of the superfluous personnel off the field to give the offense space to set up.
	0:50	20 seconds, offense	Be very loud and make it clear that these warnings pertain to the offense.
	1:00	10 seconds, offense	
	1:05	5	
	1:07	3, 2, 1...offense freeze!	
	1:10	Defense, 20 seconds	Give the first defensive warning immediately following the offensive freeze.
	1:20	10 to check, defense	
	1:30	Offense start when ready	
Timeout (between points)	0:10*	1 minute for a hand	Once the watch reaches 1:10, reset it and switch to Before Pull timing after the “1 minute to pull” warning. Reset again for additional timeouts if necessary.
	0:25*	1 minute to pull	
Halftime	4:40	5 minutes	At 8:50, reset the watch and switch to Before Pull timing after the “1 minute to pull” warning, with the exception that the defense cannot pull until 1:10 on the new clock (ensuring a full 10 minute half).
	7:40	2 minutes	
	8:45	1 minute for a line	
	0:10*	1 minute for a hand	
	0:25*	1 minute to pull	
Disc completely in endzone or disc has out-of-bounds status	0:00	20	Remember that this includes bricks. Give extra time for far out-of-bounds discs as necessary. Make sure to be audible to the (likely) thrower.
	0:05	15	
	0:10	10	
	0:15	5	
	0:17	3, 2, 1, disc-in	
In-bounds disc in central zone	0:00	10	Be very loud when this occurs in the middle of the field.
	0:05	5	
	0:07	3, 2, 1, disc-in	
Observer time-out (between points)	N/A	N/A	If it is necessary to take time between points to discuss something, stop the watch temporarily.

\*After watch reset

## **Resuming Stall Counts**

Count is resumed with the word “stalling” followed by the number listed below:

Uncontested defensive foul or violation .....	1
Uncontested offensive foul or violation.....	count reached plus 1, or 9 if over 8
Contested foul or violation.....	count reached plus 1, or 6 if over 5
Offsetting calls .....	count reached plus 1, or 6 if over 5
Unresolved calls.....	count reached plus 1, or 6 if over 5
Retracted defensive call .....	1
Retracted offensive call.....	count reached plus 1, or 9 if over 8.
Pick .....	count reached plus 1, or 6 if over 5
Marking violation (no stoppage).....	count reached minus 1, no “stalling”
Contested stall	
- First call .....	8
- Second and subsequent due to fast count .....	6
Technical timeout.....	count reached plus 1, or 6 if over 5
Obstruction within 5 meters of playing field .....	count reached plus 1, or 9 if over 8

## Appendix 2 – Hand Signals

### Active Calls

When making the call, give the appropriate hand signal while the ruling is being made and loudly announce the call so that it is immediately communicated to impacted players.

<p><b>4 Women.</b> Used in mixed games. Arms straight out to sides, clenched fists, wrists facing forward.</p>	
<p><b>4 Men.</b> Used in mixed games. Elbows straight out, arms bent, hands behind head.</p>	
<p><b>20 Seconds.</b> Both arms straight up, clenched fists, palms forward.</p>	
<p><b>10 Seconds.</b> One arm straight up, clenched fist, palm forward.</p>	
<p><b>Line Declared.</b> Face downfield, point with one arm extended, flat palm, thumb on top parallel to fingers, towards offensive starting line. Lower arm when other observer acknowledges signal.</p> <p><b>In/Out.</b> Point with one arm extended, flat palm, thumb on top parallel to fingers, towards playing field (in) or away from playing field (out).</p>	
<p><b>Readiness.</b> One arm raised straight up, no bend in elbow, with an open hand. Use when you are the observer with the receiving team once they have signaled readiness (not merely lineup for point declared).</p>	
<p><b>Time violation (on pull).</b> Right hand on top of head, palm down, fingers extended parallel to each other, patting top of head.</p>	
<p><b>Offsides.</b> Arms crossed overhead in an “X”, hands closed in a fist, wrists forward.</p>	

<p><b>Second count (arm chop).</b> Use for 20 or 10 second countdowns; flat hand, palm down, thumb in, STATIONARY above elbow, lower arm extended between parallel and a 45 degree angle to the ground, chopping at one-second intervals.</p>	
<p><b>Bobble.</b> Elbows in, extend forearms forward, open palms facing up. Motion one forearm up (by bending elbow) while motioning the other forearm down, then reverse motion for each forearm. Repeat for three cycles.</p>	
<p><b>Force-out foul.</b> Motion towards out-of-bounds using a pushing motion with both palms outward, and be sure to verbally call “Force-out!” as well. Note that this is an active call, and play must be restarted with a check afterwards.</p>	
<p><b>In the end zone.</b> Point with both arms, flat hands, palms down, all fingers parallel, towards the center of the end zone.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> There is no hand signal for “not in the end zone” to accompany the verbal “Not in!”</p>	
<p><b>All Clear.</b> Stand straight up and keep elbows at your sides and raise forearms straight up. Used by trail observer(s) to indicate no calls at or near throw after a catch in the end zone.</p>	
<p><b>Goal.</b> Raise both arms, fully extended, straight up, palms facing inward (similar to a touchdown signal in football). Hold signal for a count of three while standing still. See below for full procedure for signaling goals.</p>	

*Note: Images of hand signals will be updated shortly.*

**Procedure for signaling Goal:** Downfield observer signals “in the end zone” and surveys field for downfield calls. Trail observer(s) checks for calls near throw and, if there are none, gives the “All clear” signal. If the downfield observer(s) sees no calls, they look to the trail observer for the “All clear” signal. If given, **all** observers give the “Goal” signal. If any observer sees a call, the “Play has stopped” signal should be given instead, to indicate no goal, and then the appropriate signal for the call as well.

## Inactive Calls

**General Procedure:** For all inactive calls that stop play, first signal that a call has been made (1) immediately at the time of the call, regardless whether play has stopped or not, using the “call on field” signal. If play continues in a play-on situation (e.g. marking foul during a throw which is completed), lower your arm and continue observing. For situations where play is to stop, once the thrower has acknowledged the call or continuation has ended, use the “play has stopped” signal if any downfield players continue to play. Once play has stopped, use the hand signal appropriate for the call (2), accompanied by a verbalization of the call. This first indication only communicates what the call is, not that an observer has made any ruling. As the other observer, echo the call and hand signals if possible.

Generic hand signal sequence for inactive calls at the time of the initial call:

- 1) Give “call on field” signal
- 2) Give specific call signal.

At this point, players should discuss the call to try to reach their own resolution. If the call is uncontested, give the signal for the call again followed by “no contest” signal (3a). If the players agree to a contested call, give the signal for the call again followed by the “contest” signal (3b). If you uphold the call, give the “observer ruling” signal followed by the signal for the call (3c). If the call is overruled, give “observer ruling” signal followed by the “overruled” signal (3d). In all cases, the trail observer should then announce the stall or pre-stall (4) and ensure that play restarts smoothly. In all cases remind players to restart with a check. If observers have made a ruling (3c or 3d) and players do not restart with a check, actively stop play and require a proper restart. In the case of multiple calls, extra signaling may be preceding rulings may be used for clarification. The list below clarifies the hand signal sequences for these various outcomes:

- 3a) (uncontested) – Give specific call signal again followed by “no contest” signal
- 3b) (contested, no observer ruling) – Give specific call signal again, followed by contest signal
- 3c) (contested, observer ruling, upheld) – Give “observer ruling” signal, followed by specific call signal
- 3d) (contested, observer ruling, overruled) – Give “observer ruling” signal, followed by overruled call signal
- 4) Signal stall/prestall

If, in case 3d (an overruling), a foul is being overruled due to the disc being uncatchable, give the uncatchable signal before giving the “overruled” signal.

**If the call is retracted, give the wipe away signal with 3 wipes.**

**Aiding Restarts** While you usually do not actively restart play, you can help get play restarted in a consistent manner and avoid false starts. When players are returning to their positions, keep your arm up in the “call on field” signal (after signaling the specific call). As the trail observer, confirm the stall count while the downfield observer helps reposition players if necessary. Once players have returned to their correct position, as the downfield observer, lower your arm and point towards the trail observer, indicating downfield players are positioned correctly. Then, as the trail observer, lower your arm and point towards the thrower, indicating play can restart. If there is no thrower (disc on the ground), as the trail observer announce the prestall time limit (10 or 20 seconds) and allow play to start.

**Note:** When you are moving, such as to meet to discuss a call or waiting for a call resolution, lower your arm. Keep your arm raised only between resolution and repositioning for restart.

<p><b>Call on the field.</b> One arm extended straight up, fingers extended parallel to each other, palm facing forward.</p>	
<p><b>Disc down or up.</b> Down – index finger straight arm pointing down at 45 degree, verbal “down.” Up – elbow down forearm vertical index finger pointing upward, verbal “up.”</p>	
<p><b>Foul or Contact.</b> Hold one arm straight out and chop the other forearm across the straight arm.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Do not signal contact calls unless the call results in play stopping.</p>	
<p><b>Uncatchable.</b> Hand waived back and forth directly over the top of head, palm down. Use to communicate that contact occurred but the disc was uncatchable by the fouled player.</p>	
<p><b>Pick.</b> Arms out from sides, horizontal, bent at elbows, forearms vertical, with closed fists, wrists and palms facing forward.</p>	
<p><b>Travel.</b> Two fists circling one another 1.5 times (when this is an active call, verbalize “Travel!” while raising flat hand palm forward straight armed overhead, then make signal for travel).</p>	
<p><b>Stall.</b> Right hand on top of head, palm down, fingers extended parallel to each other, patting top of head.</p>	
<p><b>Fast Count.</b> One arm bent, like looking at a watch while tapping the wrist with the opposite hand’s fingers (like tapping a wristwatch).</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Use only if call results in play stopping.</p>	

<p><b>Double Team.</b> Point to two defenders that are marking the thrower and hold for two seconds.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Use only if call results in play stopping.</p>	
<p><b>Vision Blocking.</b> One hand held in front of eyes.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Use only if call results in play stopping.</p>	
<p><b>Disc Space.</b> Motion of holding a disc flat, pushing it out at the marker (pushing motion performed twice).</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Use only if call results in play stopping. Use this same signal for straddling or wrapping.</p>	
<p><b>No Contest.</b> Arms in by sides, elbows bent with forearms extended mostly forward (each forearm slightly angled away from center of body), open palms facing up.</p>	
<p><b>Contest.</b> Two fists bumped together in front of chest, back of hands facing outward; used when call is contested but does not come to you.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> this is only used when the resolution of the call is a contested violation, not merely when any call is contested.</p>	
<p><b>Observer Ruling.</b> Upper arms extended out sideways parallel to ground, forearms reaching back, fingers touching both shoulders.</p>	
<p><b>Overruled call.</b> Two open hands palms down cross and uncross arms to “wipe away” called foul.</p> <p><b>Retracted call.</b> 3 wipe away motions.</p>	



<p><b>Play has stopped/Play is being stopped.</b> Wave both extended arms crosswise overhead. Verbally echo this call as well, but first be sure that the thrower has acknowledged that play has stopped, except in cases where you are stopping active play.</p>	
<p><b>Announcing stall count before restart.</b> Indicate with appropriate number of fingers: Stalling 1-5 is one handed, stalling 6-9 is two handed, raised over head...announce “stalling 1-9,” whichever count is applicable.</p>	
<p><b>Restarting play.</b> After announcing stall count, pause briefly and chop arm down to horizontal, point at disc and announce “you may check the disc in.”</p>	
<p><b>Timeout.</b> “T” made with both hands, hold for a few seconds, followed by pointing with two arms straight out, palms inward towards the end zone being defended by the team taking the time out. Hold the “T” for a few seconds to differentiate a timeout from a technical.</p>	
<p><b>Spirit Timeout.</b> Upside-down “T” made with both hands, hold for a few seconds.</p>	
<p><b>Injury/Official’s Timeout.</b> Upper arms extended out sideways parallel to ground, forearms reaching back, fingers touching both shoulders.</p>	
<p><b>Injury Substitution.</b> Arms forward, slightly raised, elbows mostly bent, forearms start vertical, then switch pointing fingers pointing back and forth (opposite of each other).</p>	

*Note: Images of hand signals will be updated shortly.*

## Misconduct Signals

Utilize the appropriate misconduct signal when assessing a misconduct foul or penalty.

<b>TMF/PMF/Ejection.</b> Hold blue/yellow/red card above player's head for 3 seconds.	
<b>Technical Foul.</b> Give exploding "T" (like timeout, but don't hold the T for any period of time).	

*Note: Images of hand signals will be updated shortly.*

## Observer Crew Communication

Signal subtly to other officials, as appropriate.

<b>I saw the play/can make the call.</b> Only used if not the closest observer handling the call. One or two hands, palm down, on top of head. Preferably quickly move to the observer covering the call to give input.	
<b>I did not see the play/cannot make the call.</b> Arms crossed in front of chest.	

*Note: Images of hand signals will be updated shortly.*

# Appendix 3 – Game Scorecard

OBSERVER SCORE CARD											
FIELD	START	HALF CAP		FINAL SCORE		SOFT CAP		HARD CAP			
TEAM				TEAM							
COLOR		FIRST PULL TEAM			DIRECTION		COLOR				
CAPTAINS				CAPTAINS							
SCORE TRACKER											
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]						[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]					
TIME OUTS											
1ST HALF			2ND HALF			1ST HALF			2ND HALF		
[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]
VIOLATIONS											
Warnings		Penalties		Offsides		Warnings		Penalties			
[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]		
Time		Tech		Warnings		Penalties					
[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]				
MISCONDUCT											
TMF	PMF	Player	Categories	TMF	PMF	Player	Categories				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
TOURNAMENT				MISCONDUCT CATEGORIES Use back of sheet for notes 1. Dangerous Play 2. Intentional Infraction 3. Repeated Infraction 4. Sportsmanship 5. Other							
OBSERVERS											
DATE		Pool	Consol	Pre-Q	Semi	Men	Women	Mixed			
		Power	X-Over	Quarter	Final	Youth	College	Club			

OBSERVER SCORE CARD											
FIELD	START	HALF CAP		FINAL SCORE		SOFT CAP		HARD CAP			
TEAM				TEAM							
COLOR		FIRST PULL TEAM			DIRECTION		COLOR				
CAPTAINS				CAPTAINS							
SCORE TRACKER											
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]						[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]					
TIME OUTS											
1ST HALF			2ND HALF			1ST HALF			2ND HALF		
[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ]
VIOLATIONS											
Warnings		Penalties		Offsides		Warnings		Penalties			
[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]		
Time		Tech		Warnings		Penalties					
[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ]				
MISCONDUCT											
TMF	PMF	Player	Categories	TMF	PMF	Player	Categories				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
TOURNAMENT				MISCONDUCT CATEGORIES Use back of sheet for notes 1. Dangerous Play 2. Intentional Infraction 3. Repeated Infraction 4. Sportsmanship 5. Other							
OBSERVERS											
DATE		Pool	Consol	Pre-Q	Semi	Men	Women	Mixed			
		Power	X-Over	Quarter	Final	Youth	College	Club			