

Leveling up

A primer for creating a gender-inclusive ultimate community

MUFA Gender Inclusion Policy

MUFA seeks to make all events, programs, and spaces safe and inclusive for all individuals. Historically, Ultimate Frisbee in our community has been played with a gender ratio that supports a gender binary consisting of men and women. While MUFA has created policy changes that seeks to create an inclusive environment for women and acknowledge players that are transgender, we understand that achieving true gender inclusivity is a collective process that requires ongoing changes and support. Players that are marginalized by our community include players who identify as womxn, womyn, transgender, agender, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, or gender fluid. MUFA is committed to implementing this policy in order to work towards gender inclusivity.

Meet the season with intention.

It's the first week of summer league! Now is the perfect time to set the tone for the rest of the season. Express a desire – and the possibility of imperfection! – to embody an inclusive team environment. Learn your teammates' names, pronouns, and matchup preferences. Consider having open conversations with your team and opponents about ways you can proactively make space for players of all gender identities.

Respect names and pronouns.

Once you learn someone's name and pronouns, use and practice them. Lead by example – practice norm-setting on your team and with your opponents by introducing yourself with your pronouns and your matchup preferences.

Don't be afraid to correct yourself, teammates, and opponents if you notice someone has been misgendered or dead-named, even if that person is not present (though, be sure to do so only if you know them to be out). When corrected, remember that this gentle correction comes from a place of love for our community and the desire to make it a more inclusive space. Apologize, correct your language, and move on swiftly.

Use inclusive language.

Some words are easily replaced for others to be more inclusive. For example:

- "We need another lady!" → "Is there a female-matching player ready to play?"
- "You(r) guys played so well!" → "Your team played so well!" or "Your team challenged our MMPs!"
- "Let's play man defense." → "Let's play person defense." or "Let's go match."
- "They had poor sportsmanship." → "Let's follow up with their captains about spirit"

Sometimes it's not so straightforward, and that's okay too. For example, our current policies require players to choose their matchup (FMP or MMP) on registration. However, it's possible - likely, even - that neither choice accurately characterizes a player's identity. Or, perhaps the significance of making the choice itself is more imposing for some players than others. Not all female-matching players are women. Not all women are necessarily female-matching players.

FAQ: What does FMP/MMP mean?



MUFA has adopted the terms "female-matching player" (FMP) and "male-matching player" (MMP) to describe players in our mixed leagues.

While this binary system is still imperfect, we believe emphasis on the matchup, rather than a personal identity, to be more inclusive than asking players to self-identify as a specific gender. In other ultimate spheres, some teams opt to remove gendered language from the terms entirely (e.g., Psion/Nova, Elephant/Airplane). We've recently heard "femme-matching" and "masc-matching" as another inclusive option.

Regardless of the terms your team chooses to use, these terms are, importantly, not equivalents to "men" or "women" - many among us are neither of these explicitly gendered categories, but we hope they feel as welcome to the joy of this sport as those who are.

Avoid assumptions.

Whether you've known each other since the beginning of the game, or since the dawn of time, it never hurts to check in. Pronouns and identity may change over time or during a season, and it never hurts to check in.

Even if you know all the people on your team right now are men and women, we encourage all teams to create an environment inclusive of **all** gender identities. Training our brains to think beyond the binary sets us up to have honest, compassionate dialogue and establish trust among friends, especially those who may not be out yet.

Don't assume...

...your teammates and opponents already know your pronouns or matchup preferences. **Share** them!

...you already know your teammates' or opponents' pronouns or preferred matchup(s). Default to using gender neutral language, the person's name, or they/them pronouns until they've been given an opportunity to share them!

...we all have the same level of education and experience. **Communicate** your openness to share, learn, and adapt to make our league more inclusive for everyone.

...your gender-nonconforming teammates are out to everyone. **Learn** what allyship looks like to them in this space.

Reframe your mental models.

Most of us are steeped in a structurally rigid world. We have to actively train our brains to think beyond gender norms, expectations, and binary mental models. Practice reframing what you are accustomed to seeing on the ultimate field. Maybe your team's favorite puller matches up on an FMP. Perhaps your opponent's team captain is gender fluid and simply matches up on the other team's best thrower. Reimagining what we know ultimate to look like will take us toward more equitable, joyful game.

"Gender is complex and varied. It can change over a lifetime. It's both a made-up construct and a deeply meaningful way to mediate the dialogue between your internal self and the world you live in. It doesn't always fit into the static, binary male and female divisions that govern most sports — including most ultimate — and that creates challenges for teams and organizations seeking to make inclusive spaces for players of all gender identities."

-Mags Colvett, Tuesday Tips: Creating Welcoming Spaces for Trans and Nonbinary Players

Tell us about your experience!

What's made you feel included in our community? We'd love to hear more about what's worked for you to make our community more welcoming! Email us at mufa.leagues@gmail.com

Pro tip: Use hand signals



4 FMPs
3 MMPs

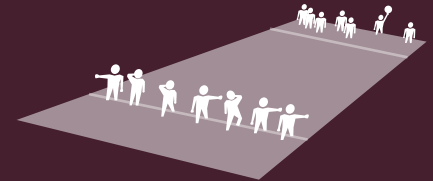


3 FMPs
4 MMPs

To avoid confusion, the World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) has designated these hand signals as a means for teams to communicate with each other what you understand the ratio to be for the upcoming point.

If your team is receiving the pull, you can help your opponents identify matchups by using "half" of each signal while waiting to receive the pull.

The pre-game coin toss is a great time to let your opponent know your intention to use these signals.



There aren't universal answers.

A diversity of intersectional identities and experiences exists among players of all gender identities. It's crucial to listen to the voices of all players in our community — one person's perspective rarely captures that of an entire group. We contain multitudes as a community and as individuals!

While MUFA policies are always evolving, they often lag behind what's ideal for our community. In the meantime, we enthusiastically support your engagement, creativity, and feedback as we make our league more inclusive.

This primer was created cooperatively using feedback from players, community partners, and publicly available resources. Please see the resource guide to learn more!

RESOURCE GUIDE

The Madison Ultimate Frisbee Association thanks the authors of the resources below. The list is a brief, non-comprehensive compilation of resources used to create this primer, and to help you learn more!

- **Tuesday Tips: Creating Welcoming Spaces for Trans and Nonbinary Players.** By Mags Colvett.
An Ultiworld article.
- **Reimagining gender inclusivity in sports.** By Jenna Weiner.
A TEDx talk.
- **Share the Air!: Episode 3.** Hosted by Tulsa Douglas and Luisa Neves.
A podcast episode hosting Jenna Weiner about her experience playing in the Mixed division and what it has to offer to the sport of ultimate, as well as her disc golf career, and the gender inequities that exist in the sport.
- **Broom Goes the Dynamite: What Ultimate Can Learn From Quidditch.** By Mags Colvett.
An Ultiworld article.
- **Top Five Tips for Allies of Transgender People.** (from transathlete.com)
- **Transgender 101.**
Working knowledge of terminology, frequently asked questions, and ways to engage and be an ally of transgender people as we work toward eliminating not only homophobia but also transphobia from athletics.
- **Trans Rights Are Human Rights: A Q&A with Penny Wu.** By Jenna Weiner.
An Ultiworld interview transcript.
- **Challenging Gender Norms Through Sporting: The Power and Potential of Ultimate Frisbee as a Tool to Challenge the Gender Binary.** By N.A. Nalworth.
A book chapter from *Voices of Change: Navigating resistance and identity in Latin America*.
- **Beyond the Checklist: Integrating LGBTQI+ Inclusivity Into Your Team and Department Culture.**
A resource created by Athlete Ally including reflection prompts and recommendations for action. The first half of this document may easily be adapted as a way to get conversations started on your teams!
- Other resources from Athlete Ally.
- **MUFA Gender Inclusion Policy**
- **USA Ultimate Gender Inclusion Policy**