

Theme 1

Widening the competition environment to develop character and life skills

Self-Refereeing and Spirit Scoring

Ultimate is a fast paced, non-contact team sport that is played with a flying disc (frisbee). The sport is refereed by the players themselves, even at World Championship level, according to a code of conduct known as 'the spirit of the game'. It places the responsibility of fair play on the players themselves and assumes that no player will intentionally break the rules. As a result, there are no harsh penalties for breaches; players are responsible for resolving conflicts amongst themselves. If they are unable to agree they resume play in a manner which simulates what would most likely have occurred if there had been no breach.

At the end of a game, teams also rate their opponents on 'the spirit of the game', which includes aspects such as being respectful, good communication, knowing the rules etc. In addition to celebrating the team that wins the most matches, the team with the highest score for 'the spirit of the game' is given equal status along with recognising individual players who have done something special.

At the end of every game both teams come together to form a Spirit Circle. This creates an opportunity for players from both teams to come together to highlight positives of the game and/or discuss any issues that may have occurred. This can also be used as an opportunity to do a short fun activity together, which can remind players that you can play a competitive game, but still be friendly with your opponents.

What are the benefits?

This approach offers young people a safe place in which to develop their skills, such as communication and conflict resolution. It also empowers them and gives them greater ownership of the game.

How was this used in the School Games Pilot?

In a netball competition, teams were asked to nominate another team based on their demonstration of the School Games Values: Passion, Self-Belief, Respect, Honesty, Determination and Teamwork. Bonus points were given to the team(s) that were voted for by their peers. This was then combined with win/draw scores to create an overall score.

In a rugby competition a bonus point per game was allocated for the 'moment of the match'. This was allocated by the referee to the team that demonstrated the most outstanding element of creativity. Again, this was combined with the win/draw points to create an overall score.

School Games Spirit Scoring

The School Games Spirit Scoring has been created to support SGOs, schools and young people to implement spirit scoring into their competition and can be downloaded via the resources section of the School Games website alongside a guidance document.