

Ultimate thrill is championship win

McGill event decides Frisbee titles. Furious George heads to world competition after getting Goat of Toronto

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Vancouver's Furious George hucked, pulled and passed Frisbees on its way to a sixth national win in the men's final of the 2003 Canadian Ultimate Championship at Molson Stadium yesterday.

The other champions, Chaos of Winnipeg and Prime of Vancouver - victors in the mixed and women's finals - will, like Furious George, continue on to the World Ultimate Championship in Finland next year.

"It was incredible," said Daragh Karkairan, 24, of Furious George, who scored the winning point against 2002 men's champions Goat of Toronto.

Furious George defeated the underdog - though crowd favourite - Goat 17-6. It was Furious George's sixth win in the past eight years.

"I was just able to beat my check to the disc and catch it on an easy out," Karkairan said, describing the winning play.

Teammate Elvis Berson, 38, chalked up Furious George's string of championship wins to hard work and depth of skill.

The team practises three times a week and has enough quality players that it brought 19 to Montreal and still left some behind, he said.

"Vancouver is a hotbed for Ultimate," Berson said. "It feels great to win."

In Ultimate, teams field seven players at a time as they compete on a 120-metre-long playing area. Teams try to pass the "disk" upfield until a player catches it in the opposing team's endzone.

Players do not run with the disk, rather they pivot, while players from the opposing team try to block their next pass.

Ultimate was invented in the late 1960s by a couple of bookish teenagers at a New Jersey high school, and has since grown into a fast-paced, noncontact game played in more than 40 countries worldwide.

There are no referees and fouls are called by the players themselves, contributing to a strong sense of sportsmanship on field and off that players call The Spirit of the Game.

"The Spirit is really crucial," said Simon Beauregard, the championship's sponsorship director and an Ultimate player himself. "It's a founding principle of the game."



CREDIT: JOHN KENNEY, GAZETTE

Daragh Karkairan (centre) of Vancouver-based Furious George is congratulated by teammates Andrew Lugsdin (left) and Kirk Savage after he pulled in a Frisbee pass for a score and victory in the open-category final at the 2003 Canadian Ultimate Championship held yesterday at Molson Stadium.

The Spirit was on display as champions Furious George posed for their championship photo, together with members of Goat.

The six teams snagged their spots in yesterday's finals at Molson Stadium after a 1,200-athlete, 60-team tournament in St. Jean sur Richelieu last weekend.

Patrick Dolan, 23, who plays for IAX Montreal, a mixed-

gender team that placed sixth in its category, said the allure of the sport is that it is accessible and that new players can excel.

"Because there are so many new teams, you can quickly become a competitive player," said Dolan, who like many players fuelling the sport's phenomenal growth in North America, started playing while at university.

"There are so many chances for personal glory ... you're always in the thick of things. You never have a nothing-role if you're on the field."

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