

An Open Letter to Ultiworld on Equal Representation of
Women In DIII Championships Highlight Reel

May 30, 2016

Dear Ultiworld Editors,

I am writing concerning a highlight video of DIII Nationals posted on Ultiworld's YouTube Channel and website (video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HYSjZjHjjE>). I was excited to see the video, because, among other reasons, DIII ultimate is typically not as well covered as DI. I was dismayed, however, to find that the great majority of time in the video was devoted to men's ultimate to the relative exclusion of women's ultimate. To be exact, out of the 3:21 video, 50 seconds are devoted to women's highlights. Taking into account the 10 seconds of introductory and concluding shots of the Ultiworld logo, women's ultimate comprised just 26% of the video. This number reflects advertent or inadvertent discrimination of the videographers or the video editors, whether manifested by their choices of which clips to include in the video or how much time to spend filming men's vs women's games, or both – women played equally as much ultimate as men at Nationals. I trust Ultiworld will not suggest that men make more “exciting” and therefore “highlight-worthy” plays than women. I am deeply disappointed and surprised that Ultiworld would publish this video without demanding one that equally represents all the athletes that worked all year to compete at Nationals.

Unfortunately, discrimination against women athletes is not uncommon. In the NCAA, women receive 45% of athletic scholarships, while colleges spend only 40% of their athletic department operation money and 36% of recruiting funds on women's sports teams (www.womenssportsfoundation.org – check out this website to learn more). Ultimate, as a new and growing, non-NCAA, highly competitive sport governed by the Spirit of the Game, strives to be the sport to save sports from their own bureaucracy and lack of sportsmanship. Why not also from institutional sexism? The Spirit of the Game advocates “mutual respect among competitors.” This should apply not just to within game competitors of the same gender, but also to the treatment of women and men.

I choose to believe that the video in question was not an intentional attempt to under-represent women and reinforce rampant sexism in athletics, and rather assume it was an oversight on the part of the video makers and Ultiworld. If this is in fact the case, I hope Ultiworld will say so and redouble efforts to be constantly vigilant for entrenched sexism going forward, as appears necessary for women to receive equal respect and representation.

I look forward to watching the highlights of all the sick layouts and run through D's made by the incredible women and men competing at DI Championships this weekend.

Sincerely,

Lane Davis

Co-Captain of Williams College Women's ultimate team (La Wufa), 2016-2017 season