

Five Things to Know about SPIRIT OF THE GAME

Ultimate Frisbee is governed by a code of ethics called "Spirit of the Game". This is a version of the Spirit of the Game guidelines adapted for use in Jewish summer camps. For more information on Spirit of the Game, visit www.USAUltimate.org.

1. The golden rule: treat others as you would want to be treated.

What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow
Da-alach s'ni L'chavrach lo ta-aveid zu – Baylonian Talmud , Shabbat 31a

Spirited games result from mutual respect among opponents. Assume the best of your opponent. Give him or her the benefit of a doubt. You would want the same for yourself.

2. When you do the right thing, people notice.

Veer away from evil and do good.
Sur mei'ra v'ase tov – Psalms 34:15

Instead of yelling at your opponents to settle a disagreement on the field, talk to them calmly. This is all about role modeling, something that we talk about a lot at Jewish summer camps. When you do the right thing, you might not hear praise, but people do notice, and their respect for you and the game will grow.

3. Breathe.

My God, the soul you have given me is pure.
Elohai n'shama shenatata bi t'hora hi – Daily prayerbook

In competitive sports, emotions run high. After a close call, or disputed play, take a step back, pause, and take a deep breath. By giving yourself just a bit of time and space, you will gain enough perspective to compose yourself and concentrate on the facts involved in the dispute (was she in or out; did you hit his hand or the disc; did that pick affect the play). Your restraint will induce a more restrained response from your opponent, and you will be able to settle it calmly.

4. Be generous with praise.

Judge each person generously.
Dan kol adam l'chaf z'chut – Pirkei Avot 1:6

Compliment an opponent on her good catch. Remark to a teammate that you admire his honesty in calling himself out of bounds. Look players in the eye and congratulate them when you shake their hands after a game. These small acts boost spirit greatly, a large payoff for little time and effort.

5. Have fun.

It is a big mitzvah to be always happy.
Mitzvah g'dolah l'hiyot b'simcha tamid. -Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlov

All other things being equal, games are far more fun without the antipathy. Go hard. Play fair. Have fun.