

MILTON SPORTS
**Beyond the
Mainstream**

The 'ultimate' in sports excitement

Ultimate frisbee catching on in local adult league

By Steve LeBlanc
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Compared to many sports, ultimate frisbee is still in its infancy. But you'd never know that based on YouTube footage.

In fact there are so many high-light reel-calibre clips in cyberspace — most involving an incredible dive or vertical leap — that one might get the impression that it's a sport reserved for those with exceptional co-ordination and mobility.

So is ultimate frisbee only for the truly gifted?

"Apparently not," quipped Stephen Barredo, in unison with a friend during warm-up for an exhibition match to start a new season with Milton Urban Sports.

Added teammate Jose Buenavides, "Basically if you can run and catch you can play. Anyone can do this."

Both are third-year players who had virtually no knowledge of the game before joining the local adult rec league. A hearty appreciation for it quickly followed.

"I love it. It's fast-paced and is a combination of a lot of sports — like football, soccer and basketball — which I think is the appeal for a lot of people. And it's great exercise," said Barredo.

Once thought of as merely something to bring along to the beach or family barbecues, the Frisbee — whose origin has a rather delicious connection (see *At A Glance*) — was officially brought into the competitive sporting realm in 1967 by New Jersey high school students.

At A Glance

Original flight

The Frisbee Baking Company (1871-1958) of Connecticut made pies that were sold to many New England colleges. Students soon discovered that the empty pie tins could be tossed and caught, providing endless hours of fun. As a result, a number of colleges have claimed to be the home of 'he who was first to fling.' In 1948 a Los Angeles building inspector and his partner invented a plastic version of the Frisbee that could fly further and with more accuracy.

Beginner's advice

Don't be afraid to give the disc a little oomph, at least for lengthy passes. Under-throws can be quite common among novice players. A firm grip on the Frisbee definitely helps with accuracy, as does a good read of wind conditions.

Playing locally

Milton Urban Sports offers recreational (5-on-5) or intermediate (7-on-7) ultimate frisbee. The cost for the season (May 25-September 21) is \$85 per player or \$650 for a rec. team and \$750 for an intermediate team. To sign up or for more information, visit www.urbansports.ca.

Since that initial pick-up game, ultimate frisbee — or ultimate as it's often referred to — has grown to include millions of players worldwide, the majority in the U.S.

For those unfamiliar with the sport, it's essentially football with a disc instead of the pigskin and with no ground game or physical contact.

Teams attempt to pass down field into the end-zone. There's no running with the frisbee, and once caught it has to be thrown again in 10 seconds — with the passer's defender keeping count. Unlike in football, a change of possession doesn't only occur via interception, with an incomplete pass and out-of-bounds play having the same result.

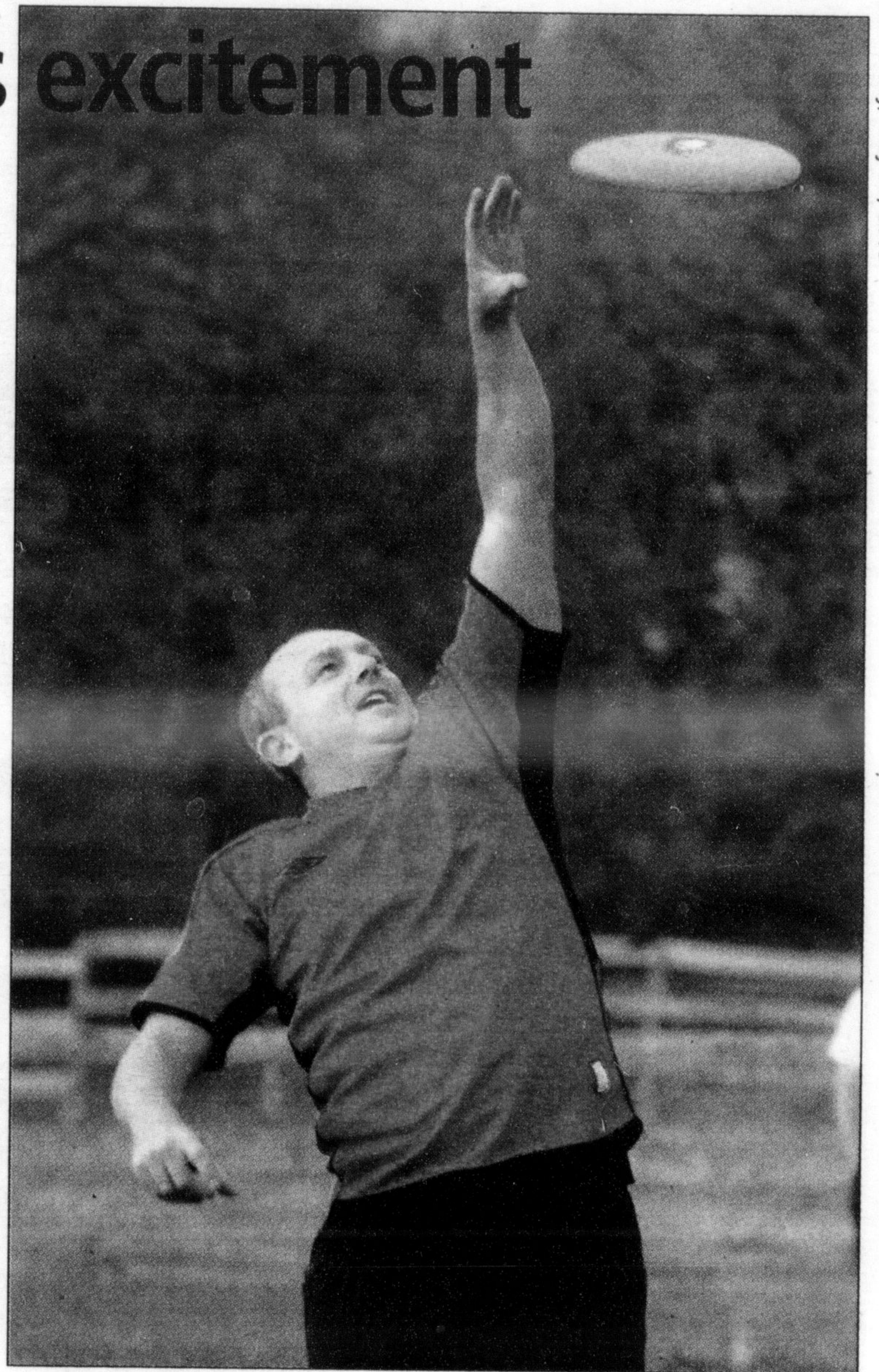
"Having to throw it in 10 seconds makes for a fast-paced game and a pretty exciting one to watch," said Michelle Schaeffe, who runs Milton Urban Sports with husband Patrick. "When we first started it up three years ago a lot of friends and neighbours said 'What is this?' It's definitely more than just throwing the Frisbee, but once you play a few times it's pretty easy to pick up."

Newcomer Stephen Kerr seemed to think so, with no apparent reservations seen during the recent introduction night.

"Everyone is really welcoming here and it looks like a lot of fun," said the lifelong Miltonian, who opted to try out ultimate frisbee after finding the area adult soccer leagues booked up.

Still accepting players in both the recreational and intermediate divisions, Milton Urban Sports offers the sport Monday evenings at Lions Sports Park — starting next week.

Schaeffe says it doesn't take long for many players to get pretty creative with their throwing and that



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GOT IT!: Jay Paul leaps for the Frisbee during warm up for an exhibition game.

despite the high tempo of the game, disputes are rare and heated arguments almost non-existent.

That's saying a lot for ultimate frisbee's degree of sportsmanship — given that there are no officials.

Said Schaeffe, "Except at the top levels, it's a self-regulated game. Some people may think that would cause problems, but ultimate frisbee is really known for being honest and for its spirit of the game."

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