

Statement from Mark Mason to PADA board, December, 2023

Good afternoon, everyone

Thanks for allowing me to join tonight's meeting! From Bucks County, I'm a longtime PADA member, a former Delaware Council member, and a Delaware Council member to be starting in the new year. I've been playing Delaware Ultimate since 2011 and I'm on the organizing committee that's working to create independent Delaware leagues.

We are proud to have been a PADA satellite. PADA has done so much to promote and grow the sport in the greater Philadelphia region. PADA leagues are well-known across the country for competition, camaraderie, and connections. The PADA community is truly special and unique. We are incredibly thankful for everything PADA has done for the region and the sport over the years.

We all share PADA's commitment to breed ultimate. That's why we want to discuss with PADA our transitioning to an independent operation. To date, we have created an organizational structure, wrote by-laws, researched registration options, created a budget, received insurance estimates, and drafted a website. We plan to hold a townhall to share this information with Delaware soon.

The reasons we believe it's time to move forward independent from PADA are three-fold:

We need to keep costs down for accessibility.

As you know, many of us in Delaware are committed to offering price conscious leagues. We need to keep entry into the sport cheap and easy. The cost of living is lower in Delaware than in Philadelphia and its suburbs, and accordingly, wages are lower than in large metropolitan areas. In Delaware, we also have a unique challenge with parking. All Delaware leagues, except our still relatively fledgling winter league, are played at Alapocas State Park in Wilmington. To park at any Delaware state park costs \$4-8/day, or can purchase an annual \$35 pass. We have had disagreements with PADA employees for having league costs too low because at face value, it looks like we are offering substantially cheaper leagues. In reality, we have a different player population than PADA, which necessitates keeping the leagues as economical as possible, and given that we have a substantial hidden cost. We also have many players join us from the University of Delaware; our leagues are full of players who join us during or after playing with Sideshow.

Efficiency

We are a small, unique, creative community. The geographic distances between Philadelphia and Delaware make our union impractical. Many events are held in Philadelphia, including holiday parties, volunteer appreciation nights, and these Board meetings. The hour or more commute to Philadelphia is a significant barrier for many Delaware Ultimate players. For others, who live further south in the state, it's an impossible barrier.

Independence saves time, energy, and effort. PADA involvement in planning often complicates and delays decision-making. PADA administration and infrastructure add unnecessary layers to coordinating local events. This is not criticism of Elena or Lindsay, or any of the volunteer

committees through PADA—that kind of framework is necessary for an organization the size of PADA. However, it's not necessary for Delaware. We are setting out to create our own leagues to provide for Delaware players' unique set of needs and desires.

Re-investing in the Delaware community

Keeping Delaware money local allows us to reinvest in our goals, vision, and priorities.

Allocating money to our priorities allows us to grow our local community. We hope to energize our community by lowering costs, increasing autonomy through local decision-making, and offering more community building and social events. Many of this is already done in Delaware, but it's done unofficially. Every winter league its first year had a party afterwards at player's house. Every mixed spring game this year had a designated post-league happy hour spot. We have holiday parties, Halloween parties, memorial day cookouts and hat tournaments—but most of this is unofficial and unfunded by PADA. We have a thriving community in Delaware, and we can grow it even further if we fully actualize our already-existing independence.

I welcome any questions or thoughts about our work.

Mark Mason