

Comments from Significant Individuals from Era 1 and Era 2

From: **Dan Haar '81** (Haar@Courant.com)

Scooter

"...be aware you have been sitting on a monumental bit of disc history. It [had been] thought that the first Wes ultimate game was October, 1977, against Williams. That college has always claimed chronologic supremacy, its competitions dating to 1976... I remember playing with some of those primordial guys in 1977. And I well know the UConn guys, who later became the Dukes of Disc.

Era 1

Bob Lacy

From: **Bob Lacy '77** (rlacy@ix.netcom.com)

Date: Thu, 11 Oct 2001

Gee, this brings back memories ... or perhaps my lack of memory.

We did have an ultimate Frisbee Team in '75-'77 (after which I graduated, but I presume that the team carried on in fine style). I had played in high school, on one of the few high school teams at the time [Staples High School, Westport, CT]. I don't really remember how we got the WesU team going, other than it was probably by word of mouth among networks of friends.

I do remember that the Athletic Dept. was kind enough to let us use their van to get to away games, even though they were initially skeptical (or maybe amused) by us and the sport. The Argus article looks correct, at least as far as I can remember -- except that it was Lyle Rudensey (a great guy), not Rudenzi.

I was the first captain (or maybe a co-captain?), not because I was particularly good but because I got it organized initially. The first team played a few games (UConn, maybe Quinnipiac, and maybe Bridgeport?) and played well. (Bischoff, Ritchie, Bath, and the others were -- unlike me -- really good.) I think that Bill Ritchie took over the organizational/captain role in the second year (1976?), but it could have been one of the other guys.

Good luck in searching out the history.

Bob Lacy

WesU '77

Spike Berry

Hi Wes Frisbee alumni,

Thanks to Nick for tracking me down! I haven't used "Spike" for a long time, but this reunion thing has catapulted me back in time. I had a fantastic and mind-bending phone call with Nick on Sunday after 46 years. Then I got ahold of my good friend Fred Hewett who I haven't seen in probably 10 years. He registered for Saturday's event then contacted Steve Berlin who is now coming too. After a couple hours rummaging around in the attic I found a Wesleyan notebook with the attached list from the fall of 1977 when I took over the organizing duties after Bob Lacy graduated. Communication in those days was by telephone, U.S. mail, and by knocking on dorm room doors! I apparently had written out the fall calendar on a sheet of notebook paper before making phone calls to other teams.

From the 1975 letter to the editor in the Argus posted by Bob Bischoff on the nf-forever.com webpage as well as another website that catalogs the beginnings of ultimate teams in New England, there is no doubt that Bob Lacy started the Wesleyan team and was the first team organizer (I don't think we called ourselves captains at first). I clearly remember Bob's notices posted on bulletin boards around campus when I arrived my first year 1975-76. I had been involved with Frisbee golf in high school, so was excited to see it. I can't say there is a whole lot else I remember from back then. I'm hoping that visiting campus and talking with people this weekend will revive some memories. Finding the page of names helps. I still have some boxes to look through in the attic. I wonder if there's more up there? This is what attics are for.

I'm also attaching a news article that Fred downloaded from the Hartford Courant dated April 28, 1978 about the Frisbee team. Unfortunately, Pamela Glass managed to spell both Donohue and Hewett incorrectly. I suppose it's too late to run a correction. It's a great piece of history nonetheless.

Thanks for organizing this weekend. I'm looking forward to it! It will be a strange experience I'm sure.

Henry Berry

207-462-0732

Augusta, Maine

FRISBEE PRACTICE		
September 15, 1977		
MON. 4 PM		
NAME	PHONE	BOX
1. SPIKE BERRY	347-8139	229 ✓
2. CHRIS HEYE	347-4527	334 ^{WET C} 632 B
3. NICK DONOHUE	346-1503	585 ✓
4. POLO Smith		798 ✓
5. G. GINSBURG		1098 ✓
6. R. ULLICH		499 ^{PR.} C381
7. Todd Hein?		631 ^{LOW CUBANA}
8. TODD SCHLOSSBERG	346-9578	504 412 FOSS
9. Danny Kummer	346-9538	371 514 A FOSS

Hi, Bill.

I wish I could help more with your timeline. My expedition to the attic was disappointing. Lots of stuff up there, but I didn't come across any more first-hand frisbee team records. I looked through some of the Argus online archives and found two items (attached) that may help a bit. In October 1976 the "Frisbee Club (Team)" received an allocation for 1976-77 of \$50 from the College Body Committee, so the team must have been active that year. They did not receive an allocation for 1975-76, but that doesn't really tell us much. The second item, in April 1977, announces the Little Three Ultimate Frisbee Championship at Amherst. Again, not a huge amount of information, but it's documentation. The Amherst College newspaper (creatively called "The Amherst Student"), verifies that Amherst played Wesleyan in the spring of 1977. I don't remember anything about official tournaments or leagues, which would have been a higher level of organization than we were looking for in those early days. We would call around to see who had a team that was willing to schedule a game

In the early days before Nietzsche it was about having fun, being able to show up regardless of skill level, and being accepted as part of a team. Simplicity, intensity, individual motivation.

Not sure

Bill Bath

From: "Bath, Bill"

To: Scott Michaud

Subject: Wesleyan Ultimate Frisbee

While researching how much public information there is on the internet about me, I found your website about Wesleyan ultimate frisbee. I am the Bill Bath referenced in **Wesleyan's first ultimate frisbee game in 1975**. For the record, I was high scorer in that game.

I do remember that Bischoff could throw-accurately- further than anyone, and I had a better sense about where his long tosses were going than others. I was class of '75, so I wasn't there in '77 when ultimate frisbee apparently became more formal.

There was an informal game at **Harvard in '76** that you could list on the website if you want, but I can't remember the outcome. It wasn't official league play. I found your e-mail listing useful- now I know how to contact my friend John Brainard, also on the 1975 team.

I'm proud (still) about our first game, so I don't mind your documenting it. Another interesting fact is that **Time magazine** was going to cover the game after our 1975 UConn game- I think it was going to be against Tufts- but it got rained out.

Bill Bath

EESH Shared Services

Bill Ritchie

Probably Nick Donahue. When he instituted wind sprints I stopped yelling at teammates to hustle more. New Sheriff in town.

I would contribute

Bob Bischoff

No response on contribution

Fred Hewett

There's no greater way to make lifelong friends than the sport of ultimate.

Good Idea, I would contribute

Steve Berlin

Not sure

Second Era

Nick Donohue

I forced Steve Mooney to try ultimate. He was kind of clumsy and had no throws... but he improved a little over the years. Spike Berry was a great player.

Playing in a windy game on Fauver so fierce that a full field pass 3/4 the way down the field came all the way back to the pull line.

Beating Williams 23-21 76? 77? at home in one of the teams first intercollegiate mini tourney. We had mistakenly invited two teams on the same Saturday... Didn't know what to do... And then realized we could play a little round robin tournament. We won!!

Coming in second? Or third? at sectionals and qualifying for regionals... finally!! Big step up!!!! Great game - a best win ever. Made the practice and running seem worthwhile.

My first glimpse of the team. I had thrown a frisbee with my friend, many evenings out on the sidewalk in New York with a Super Pro. I had pretty well mastered my backhand, forehand, and overhead. Knew nothing about ultimate. Throwing a 80 mold with somebody down at the bottom of Foss Hill during first days on campus Sept of 76. Spike Barry a really good player walks up to me we chat. He says have you ever played ultimate? No? He says I think you're gonna like the sport... We walk up over the hill to Fauver Field. Discs are flying people are running around some barefoot.. Best day ever

Success takes hard work. Teammates are everything. You can always get open if you try hard enough. When in doubt... Go long!

I would contribute

Steve Mooney

Nothing more fun than seeing Chris Heye hucking it long to Neech for the goal and then having Chris turn to you and say, "you know, he's a phenomenal scorer."

There's no greater way to make lifelong friends than the sport of ultimate.

Good Idea, I would contribute

Chris Heye

Nietzsche Factor. Named after David Garfield who was named after his brother's dog

Good Idea, I would contribute

Dan Haar

Besides Nietzsche? Steve "No Nukes" Hubbell, a fringe player who personified curiosity about the game.

Good Idea

Janet Cranshaw

No, But I'm Interested In Zooming In To The Banquet

Carson Milgroom

I'm from the Moons, Nick and Chris era. Sounds like Steve is still the man. For the record, after those three graduated, I was the handler.

Peter Jacobs and Jeff Williams were freshman rookies on the 81 team that put NF on the map.

Kind of a dumb question... the essence of sports lives in moments... moments of awareness that stick with me for decades... moments only I was aware of... laying out for an errant flip, concussing during an over the middle cut, covering a full game's worth of the Williams handler in the mud at Wes, way quicker than me, having to play dirty.

Showing up to so many Saturday and Sunday tournament games bleary-eyed and hung over for the first few minutes then the athlete in me kicked in. My girlfriend at the time was at Mount Holyoke. Thank god my car had autopilot...

When I was a senior we almost always felt out-manned and out-gunned by the larger schools. We played one point at a time and games were worth playing, won or lost. We played one game at a UMASS tournament, 80 teams. We were playing Keene State when one of them appeared to be injured on the ground. After a few minutes, we found out he was dead on the field. he had a brain aneurism, died right there on the field. We met as a team and decided to play the rest of the weekend. We chose in, though something had died in each of us as well. I also learned, or was reminded one of the sweetest things I can hear is the praise, acknowledgement or appreciation from an opponent.

No response on fundraising

Dan Haar – Scott Michaud's web page

From: **Dan Haar '81** (Haar@Courant.com)

Scooter

"...be aware you have been sitting on a monumental bit of disc history. It [had been] thought that the first Wes ultimate game was October, 1977, against Williams. That college has always

claimed chronologic supremacy, its competitions dating to 1976... I remember playing with some of those primordial guys in 1977. And I well know the UConn guys, who later became the Dukes of Disc.

As for the name, your version is close to the essential truth, which is that the Nietzsche Factor was the speed of a guy named Nietzsche.... David Garfield, class of 1980 and now an immigration lawyer in D.C., looked less like an athlete than anyone...but he had NCAA Division I football speed, brilliant instincts and great hands. He brought the nickname with him from high school in Pittsburgh.

The Nietzsche Factor play, developed long before the name, was him blazing out of what we now call a stack, whether off a pull or a set play. Nietzsche hung around in the fall of 1980 before heading to Ghana in the Peace Corps. At that time we were finally ready to take on a real name.

[Our original name] "Wes U Bee" was initially a play on the question, "Where's your Frisbee?" The day we talked about a name, on the field behind Delta Tau, happened to be his last day before embarking. And so it [NIETZSCH FACTOR] was a natural, although Garfield never played on a team with his name..."

Dan

From: **Nick Donohue '81** (NDonohue@ed.state.nh.us)

Date: Wed, 5 Sep 2001

Hi here. Scott - You may have heard back already, but here is some info.

"Nietzsche" was and is a real person -- Dave Garfield, class of 80? The NF was a facet of our game - long play - most notably between Chris Heye and Nietzsche. [My] first intercollegiate game was with Williams in the fall of 1976 (or was was it 1977.)... We won on a windswept day 23-21. I was self appointed and then elected captain of this squad 1976-81. I took a year off in 1979-80 and Chris Heye took the reins in the interim.... Pretty sure that is right. Good luck.

Nick

From: **Nick Donohue '81** (NDonohue@ed.state.nh.us)

Date: Fri, 12 Oct 2001

I am both crushed and honored. Still a legend in my own mind, one of the major pillars now has a crack. While I have claimed to have brought WesUbee into the modern era (and maybe can still lay claim to that) it is clear that homage must be paid to "Those Who Came Before." The names mentioned below are indeed valid harbingers of the sport at Wesleyan. I can claim taking over the team without permission in 1976. (So put mein as Captain as of 1976) I came in as

freshman, we played a little that fall (my first Ultimate) and then organized a game against Williams. Windsprints soon followed. Tears, attrition and the quality went up.

But when I did arrive there were those who played and they had, as I now recall, played against other teams - the UCONN Powerhouse included.

It was different from the Williams game on, but not the very beginning. We "reinvented" the tournament in the fall of 1977 when we unintentionally invited two teams on the same day - I think Central Conn College was one of them. We were panicked until someone said, "Hey, we can play one now, they can play each other, we will play the other last." (The Round Robin Reborn!)

Some names forgotten are - Dave Flynn - as fast as they came or come today a 400 meter HS star. "Spike" Berry? not sure of his last name - (Chris H do you remember?) - a gifted no-look thrower with all the throws who played the cello. Others who are vague memories. A gifter woman player, who we drummed off the team by running puke-inducing drills... The introduction, by another good player and good guy, Steve Berlin, years later at an MIT event as "Nick, a great player and leader who 'ruined' ultimate for me.' He had played for the fun!!! We did have fun, built the team, went to regionals for the first time by winning our way into third place at sectionals in overtime!!!! Oh the memories....

These guys who were there before had forehands when the disk was not so forgiving. Bill Ritchie - a sage even then - once won dinner off of me for hitting a lacrosse net dead center from across our large fieldhouse.

So, let me affirm the past as I enjoy it and the present (And rebuild some other personal myth to believe in.) A learning... if I had just contributed more to buying disks or shirts or something recently, maybe historical revisionism would have stuck! IS IT TOO LATE?!?!?!?! :-)

Nice work on the history! However... KEEP THE NAME!!! NF Lives!!!!!!

Nick

When the "WES-U-Bees" won their first game, against [UCONN](#) in April of 1975, it was the beginning of a long and continuing tradition of Ultimate excellence, stretching back to the earliest [days of the game](#).



The early Bob Lacy, Bob Bischoff, and Bill Ritchie-led team was re-invigorated with the arrival of **Chris Heye** and **Nick Donahoe** in the fall of 1977. Suddenly, practices involved actual running up and down the field. Fortunately, **Spike Berry** was there as a calming influence to prevent the young turks from making the team into a complete bunch of hard asses.

By 1979 the team, still known as WES-U-Bee, was a solid performer in the fast-growing New England college Ultimate scene. Williams College was the closest college rival, with the **Dukes of Disc** reigning as the Connecticut club bad boys. Two new players joined the WES-U-Bee team, players who would bring the team to even greater success: **Steve "Moons" Mooney** and a guy from Pittsburgh called **David Garfield** -- universally known as "Nietzsch".



Mooney, a giant of an athlete, quickly became a dominant deep threat and one of the first "big" handlers in the game. Donahoe realized he had a kindred spirit in the Moon man, and pushed the team even harder in practice. Vomiting ensued. Wins quickly followed. Although Mooney, Heye, and Donahoe never made it to Nationals (a separate college division was not created for Nationals until 1984), they joined some of their former rivals from Williams to create the first "super-team", the world champion **Rude Boys**, in Boston.

As for **Nietzsch** himself, he was an unassuming player, most often described as "deceptively fast." He would come blazing off the pull or out of the stack to outrun surprised defenders for the quick huck, a play practiced by Heye and Donahoe years earlier. Garfield got the disc time and time again because he wanted it more than the other guy did. This became the "Nietzsch Factor" -- that ineffable difference-maker that has defined the team over the decades.

DAN HAAR '81, CERTIFIED NIETZSCH FACTOR OLD-TIMER, ADMITS THE TRUE NIETZSCH STORY:

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"...I'm distressed that your site contains the actual, true accounting of our naming history. There's a much more lyrical, mythic version floating around. You may remember it, the one about Nietzsche being a 6-foot-8, All-State wingback from Pittsburgh..."



This version has the better Nietzsche story, so it should replace the unfortunately accurate one on your site. Eventually we could build on the history until it's all pieced together and the truth comes out: [Todd Maybrow](#) '83 is the nearly forgotten but crucial linchpin in the team's history..."

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To: Scott Michaud

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Bill Bath

EESH Shared Services

SCOOTER, MIDDLING OLD OLDTIMER, COMMENTS ON HIS REIGN IN THE NIETZSCH "DARK AGES" OF THE EARLY '80s...

When I joined the team as a freshman in 1982, [Todd Maybrown](#) was captain, and his class was the last to have played with the legendary Nietzsche (Dave Garfield). We freshmen learned the game of Ultimate hearing the glorious exploits of the speedy "Nietzsch", the indomitable "Donohue" and the Brogdinagian "Mooney"...



When Maybrown's class graduated, there was talk of changing the name -- I remember the name "**ARACHNIDS**" being suggested as a replacement. So, my one small claim to fame (very small) is that at that time -- that critical juncture in team history, that temporal crux, that lame post-season team meeting with too little beer and too much yakking -- I convinced enough other players not to change the name of the team.

In addition to being a two-year captain in my (long ago) junior and senior years, I also had a work-study job in the [Wesleyan Office of Public Information and Publications](#), which means I got to see any and all news articles mentioning our illustrious **Universitas Wesleyana**. Every once in a while, I'd come across an article actually mentioning the Ultimate team or the game in general. They will appear here from time to time as I stumble across them in my "filing" system...

Scooter, '86

From Bill Ritchie's email

Bob Lacy

Hi Nick,

It is good to hear from so many of the first WesU Ultimate team!

I was a little surprised myself to see that I said that I was the first captain or co-captain, because now (so many years later!) I cannot recall if in that first year (1975) it was me or someone else, such as you. I know that I worked with the athletic department to get us permission to use a college van, but I don't recall who (and maybe no one?) was actually designated as "captain".

I haven't yet figured out if I can attend the event in May, but I will look into it. (Sadly, I haven't picked up a Frisbee for about 30 years.)

Cheers,

Bob

Hi guys,

Unfortunately, I can't add much to what Henry and others have been able to unearth. I know that we had a few games in that first year (spring of '75). I don't have any old records in attics or otherwise, so sadly I don't have any written record of who played in that first year or what teams we played, other than what is in that Argus article that you guys found. I am pretty sure that we could add Jim Ralabate to the list of people who played in that first year. I copied Lyle Rudensey on this message, although the email address that I have for him is from about 25 years ago, so it is unlikely that it is still functional.

I am sure that we still had informal, fun games among ourselves in the '75-'76 year (not that there was much "formal" about any of it in the first few years), but maybe we didn't arrange for games against other schools that year. I do recall that game we played at Harvard. There weren't a lot of other teams to play against back then! And probably no official "league" but rather, as Henry says, just casual phone contacts with people we knew at other schools. As Henry also noted, the concept of team "captain" back then was just whoever did the organizing – so more like a team manager than an on-the-field captain of any sort.

I won't be able to get to the upcoming gathering, but I am delighted to all of you for bringing back those good memories. And I am grateful that "Spike" and others not only kept WesU Ultimate going but helped it grow and evolve.

Cheers,

Bob

P.S. The "national champion" high school team that I played on (Staples, in Westport CT) was only a briefly self-declared champion after we defeated the prior undefeated Maplewood NJ team, but then was later beaten by them in a rematch.

Hi Henry,

Thanks for those kind words. It was a great group of people to work (and play) with.

I am fairly sure that Dan Buckley did go to UConn, and it was my connection to him at Staples HS that led us to be able to arrange a game with UConn.

Have great weekend!

Bob

Spike Berry

Hi Wes Frisbee alumni,

Thanks to Nick for tracking me down! I haven't used "Spike" for a long time, but this reunion thing has catapulted me back in time. I had a fantastic and mind-bending phone call with Nick on Sunday after 46 years. Then I got ahold of my good friend Fred Hewett who I haven't seen in probably 10 years. He registered for Saturday's event then contacted Steve Berlin who is now coming too. After a couple hours rummaging around in the attic I found a Wesleyan notebook with the attached list from the fall of 1977 when I took over the organizing duties after Bob Lacy graduated. Communication in those days was by telephone, U.S. mail, and by knocking on dorm

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By 1976-77 the team was definitely up and running. It's 1975-76 that remains a bit mysterious. I still like to think we played some games that year, although my memory of it is very fragmented. It just doesn't seem that Bob L. would simply let it go after getting things started in the spring of 1975. Maybe between us we can piece some of it together. I don't think we'll ever get a complete picture. We didn't know it was historic!

Henry

Dear Bob,

It is so wonderful to hear from you. Since you won't be attending this weekend I will thank you now for starting the team and running things the way you did in the two years we overlapped. Even looking back now I still remember how important it was for me to have a fun group to be a part of when I landed as an insecure college student far from home. No pressure, minimal rules, make it up when we needed to, welcome anyone who shows up. You were an unassuming, humble, inspirational leader. Even your message below reflects that. I love hearing the ancestral lineage story from Maplewood (the legendary "in the beginning" place of ultimate Frisbee) to Staples through you to Wesleyan. It's appropriate that the story is only vaguely remembered in the mists of time. It's not so much about what happened as why we did it. It was a privilege to be part of those early days of creating something new. Thanks for this great message. I'll raise a glass to you Saturday night!

Henry (Spike) Berry

Bill Ritchie

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