

Edited Zoom Transcript

Wesleyan Ultimate Alumni Conversation January 2026

Source: Zoom recording transcript (VTT)

Bill Ritchie:

Greetings!

Jeff Staples:

So, is this going to be a facilitated call so everybody gets equal talking time, or is this just for people to shoot the shit? Bill, you had questions about breaking off from the old guard.

Bill Ritchie:

Yeah, I sure do.

Jeff Williams:

I don't know how much we're going to be able to help you, but we're—

Arnie C:

—certainly willing to give you our perspective on it.

Bill Ritchie:

We've been working on an alumni newsletter project. One of the topics I've been focusing on is putting together a team history over the last 50 years. I've been thinking about it in terms of periods of stability—where the team has continuity over generations—and then disruption periods, where things break down and have to be rebuilt.

There's the separation between Era One—the Mooney, Donahue, Heye group—which was very intense and high-energy. Once they left, things changed. There was turbulence and rebuilding, and then it emerged into the longest period of stable leadership. I'm really curious about that transition period.

Jeff Williams:

I can start. I was a freshman when Moons, Chris, and Nick were seniors. I had never played before. Peter Jacobs—who's invited but not here tonight—and I were basically the only freshmen who stuck it out.

By “sticking it out,” I mean there was a fair amount of abuse. There were probably no more than 14 players. Peter and I were basically there for practice—we didn’t play in games at all.

I think Nick and Moons appreciated that we stuck around. Then they left. Todd Maybrow was still around as an interim captain the next year, and then Peter and I took over as co-captains, maybe with Jeff Staples, during our junior and senior years.

I didn’t feel a huge culture shift, other than those guys being gone. We just wanted to play frisbee, have fun, and get better—and that’s what we did.

Bill Ritchie:

I’m curious about the abuse thing. Was that just Donahue yelling at everybody?

Jeff Staples:

Yeah. About 20 people would show up, and nobody made it past one or two practices because it wasn’t fun. It was really just Peter and me from the freshman class who stayed.

There were no participation trophies, no equal play. I didn’t know Nick and Moons well—just met them at tournaments—so I didn’t really know the past.

By the beginning of junior year, we had about 20 kids on the team. Great spirit, great momentum, good people playing hard and winning. The abusive culture was already gone by then. It’s telling that their team name was the Rude Boys.

David Weber:

There definitely was a change. I arrived in the fall of ’81. Nick, Steve, Chris—those guys had just graduated. At orientation it was basically Todd, Jeff, Peter, maybe Doug Rooney. That was it.

They were recruiting, and the idea was: anyone who wants to be on the team can be on the team. We’re going to practice, play, have fun, and try really hard to win. That’s when it started becoming a big team.

Bill Ritchie:

When was that?

David Weber:

Fall of ’81—the first season after Nick and those guys graduated. Todd was the bridge captain.

Later we spent years having trouble agreeing on leadership, which held us back.

Bill Ritchie:

How did that work? Competing interests?

David Weber:

Yeah. Some people wanted a hardcore, win-at-all-costs approach. Others—including me—pushed back. One spring I showed up at practice every day asking who brought the joints, because everyone was so serious.

We had joint captains. Nobody wanted to call lines. No one wanted to assert authority. Different ideas, no one stepping up collectively.

Todd was really the link from the post-Moons era. He kept organization but was much more low-key and fun to play for.

Bill Ritchie:

Post-Moons era—you started having women on the team, right?

Scooter Michaud:

Yep.

David Weber:

We had some earlier, but—

Jeff Williams:

Caught ya!

[Group laughter / overlapping comments about early women players]

Bill Ritchie:

It still feels like there was a big break from the earlier era—intense, unhappy—and then you all rebuilt something larger, more inclusive, more fun.

Bill Wehrli:

Well, not when Scooter was in charge—

David Weber:

We were still intense.

Scooter Michaud:

I remember not letting people be stoned on the field, which caused some tension.

David Weber:

At least that's what you thought you were doing.

Bill Ritchie:

So how did you actually rebuild?

David Weber:

Todd recruited. He was on Foss Hill during orientation saying, "We've got an Ultimate team—everyone's welcome."

Arnie C:

We sometimes had 20 people and would just sub constantly—fresh legs everywhere.

Scooter Michaud:

We didn't say no to anyone who wanted to play. People might not play as much depending on the situation, but everyone was welcome, including women.

Jeff Williams:

We got better fast. People who had never played showed up, and soon we were cohesive and competitive. We almost made Nationals as this grassroots hodgepodge team.

Kevin Boucher showed up—phenomenal handler. Andy Norman, great cutter. By my junior and senior years we were near the top of the college ranks.

Scooter Michaud:

Bill, I can send you the playbook from those years. I still have it.

Arnie C:

Scooter, the energy you brought was amazing. You dove for everything. It became a philosophy—dive for the impossible.

Scooter Michaud:

We've gone back and forth on whether we consciously reinvented ourselves after the Moons era. I think it was more Darwinian—we had to adapt.

We wanted to build a team and a sport, not just avoid being hardasses. Todd was the real bridge. I was a freshman when he was a senior, so I don't know his internal process.

Jeff Williams:

Peter and I froze on the sidelines because we didn't play. With two points left, Nick finally put us in and said, "Run hard." After suffering all game.

That's why Todd's perspective is key. Some people probably quit because it was too intense.

But don't forget—those guys were Hall of Famers. They won everywhere. Their approach worked for them, even if it wasn't peaches and cream.

Bill Ritchie:

They're like Greek god heroes—un-Wesleyan, unsustainable, but magical while it lasted. Then came the transition. You guys built a long-lasting program.

Bill Wehrli:

When I came out, you were super welcoming. Show up, play. Maybe get cleats—no other requirements.

Scooter Michaud:

We played all the time. That made a huge difference.

Bill Ritchie:

It feels like a clear story of reimagining—consciously or not—and building something different.

Jeff Williams:

Everyone at Wesleyan had their thing. We just wanted to play, recruit, have fun. No grand plan—though Todd might have had one.

David Weber:

We wanted to win, too. It's more fun when you win.

Bill Wehrli:

Winning isn't everything, but losing isn't anything.

Jeff Williams:

We didn't have egos. Todd didn't. We never told people they sucked and couldn't play.

Arnie C:

We played against super-intense teams and thought, "They may kick our asses, but they're miserable. I don't want to be that."

Scooter Michaud:

We were going to have fun, goddammit.

Jeff Williams:

Nick Donahue taught me to put everything out there—and to respect your opponent. Even when I got frustrated as a freshman, he'd pull me aside and say, "That's not how we do it."

Scooter Michaud:

Spirit of the Game was unwritten but essential. We'd call fouls on ourselves no matter what.

Bill Wehrli:

That's something we carried forward.

Jeff Williams:

You can see it now. When we went to the 50th reunion last May (2025) before Nationals, the team said they might not win—but they'd be the weirdest team there. And they were.

Bill Wehrli:

Good to hear.

Jeff Williams:

Yeah. Oh they're weird, really weird.

Scooter Michaud:

We've done our job.