

EUF Youth Roadmap 2017-2019

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After plenty of discussion with team Reps, Federations, within EUF committees, the board, and during the 2 meetings at EYUC and WJUC 2016, the EUF youth commission and board now has defined the way forward for 2017, and a more general agenda for 2018 onwards.

Below there are three Appendix from previous meetings. Much of the discussion and the rationale given for many options can be found in these documents.

2017 – 2 EYUC events: one east, one west. The events are planned 2-4 weeks apart; teams may choose which one to attend, or even both. Additionally it is planned to have a EUF Clinic for young players and youth coaches in the Baltic area.

2018 – WJUC in Canada; regional events for juniors U20 and U17 in Europe

2019 – one big EYUC

2017

In 2016, we had separate events for the first time for U17 and U20. This was not quite by free will, but rather WFDF asking us NOT to hold the U17 event in parallel in the same place as WJUC. This had obvious disadvantages (logistics, less interaction), but also advantages (tournament size remains feasible, full attention for the U17 at their event).

In spite of the advantages experienced in splitting the age groups, for 2017 most nations asked for a joint event. However, we have the situation with many new federations with junior programs in the far southeast of Europe who really would like to attend such an international youth event, but cannot possibly afford to come to a 6 day event with all the associated cost and logistics. (see detailed rationale below).

The solution we have found is a one-off exception, which is the best compromise for all stakeholders:

Two EYUC events in 2017; one in the east of Europe, one in the west.

The West event will be almost identical to the 4 division EYUC as seen every odd year since 2009:

- 4 divisions with a good size of teams
- 5-6 days, as requested, ending on Saturday
- loose schedule for U17 with byes, allowing for more rest, social and cultural experiences
- hosting not yet decided
- preferred date is the classic junior date, 1st week in August

The East event is with main focus of enabling as many potential teams as possible to attend:

- shorter time (4 days)
- realistically only 3 divisions; unless we do see several U17 women team wanting to attend
- hosted by Debrecen, Hungary
- timing in early/mid July BUT not during World Games

Hosting EYUC west:

We have declarations of interest from Frankfurt, Helsinki, Amsterdam. BUT if anyone has also a high interest in hosting, you have until September 14th to declare your interest, and submit the bid by September 29th. EUF will then make a shortlist during the EUCF board meeting.

EUF will not define the East and West regions; each federation, and moreover each team, is free to choose which event to attend.

2018

WJUC 2018 will this time NOT happen in Europe, but in Waterloo, Canada. Many U20 European Elite players will attend that event which we support. The vast majority of juniors will not be able to attend for financial and other reasons.

We plan to take this opportunity to give room in 2018 for youth "grass root" development. There were increasing numbers of youth reps pointing out that playing all 4 youth divisions every year is too much strain on players, coaches, and parents' wallets (more rationale below).

Several regional events all over Europe

There was a very strong opinion expressed that a yearly event IS good, BUT not to have the same "Championship Event" every year, but rather a more loose event focusing on the development of ALL players and not just those on the national team rosters.

The concept will give ALL U20 and U17 players the opportunity to participate internationally and develop their skills. More players will benefit from these events and the skill level will improve short term!

The exact nature of these events is to be defined within the next year; there are many ideas: skills camp, hat tournament, Mixed ultimate.

What is already clear is that these events should be easily accessible for all youth players: shorter duration, lower cost, less travel. Thus, we are looking at several events, distributed over Europe. The exact format need not be the same at all these events, but can be tailored to each region's needs.

Following years - 2019

2019 should again have a full EYUC, with 4 divisions - it is our intention to host event(s) for all national teams in Europe. Whether this is possible with the expected growth in the next few years is still to be determined.

Another possibility for the further future would be to go to a 3 year cycle following the age definition which is also 3 years: one year EYUC, one year WJUC and one year regional events. This of course, would need to be a mutual decision with WFDF and we have not even discussed this internally yet.

Appendix 1:

Euro youth 2017

(handout for discussion during WJUC Wroclaw)

- 1. Considerations of various formats**
- 2. Special situation: new teams in eastern Europe**
- 3. Possible models for 2017**

1. Considerations

- a) PRO a total EYUC with 4 divisions (as previous years)
 - It is a well working event, with a good history
 - It is a highlight for many elite juniors
 - It helps with development of high level of play
 - In many (small) countries it helps development of youth ultimate, because yearly EYUC's are the centre of their youth program and biggest players magnet
 - It is easier logistics for many countries to organize the trips for all national teams to travel together
 - Easier management when you can register all 4 teams into one system

- b) PRO regional events
 - Easier travel
 - EUF and local organizers struggle to organize such a big event. E.g. for 2017, we have many new teams very interested in joining. So future full EYUC's would have 60+ teams. It is not easy to find organizers with such capacities. We have a bid in Hungary, but that TOC possibly still can't organize a large event. In the West there are several notions of interest, but no real bids yet.
 - Again, size: a 60+ team tournament may more easily run into problems or chaos (See Dublin 2012 and Lecco 2014)
 - Many nations pointed out that having all four divisions every year is problematic, because many national team players start to play national teams at age 13, then play when they are 14, 15, 16. At some point when they are 16-18, they may find this boring and drop out. Or just burn out. So skipping the event at some point, and NOT doing all 4 divisions every year is seen very desirable by some federations.
 - EUF have been organizing an EYUC every year for many years. The players are usually the same elite players every year. EUF feels that if we invest so much work every year, it may be good thing to not only let the same elite youth players enjoy this, but do more development work, eg for the 2nd tier players.
 - Money issues: a great number of countries mentioned that the yearly event is pushing many parents to financial limits, so these countries prefer to go away from a yearly championship and to do it every 2 years

- c) PRO an U17/U20 split / separate events
 - 2017 was the first time with separate U17/U20 events. This was not the choice or will of EUF, but because WFDF asked us very intensely NOT to hold U17 in parallel with WJUC in Wroclaw

- Each division gets 100% attention. At U17 in Ghent, this was perceived as extremely positive: the teams now were not just “the little ones”, but the stars of the event
- As there is no distraction from the other age division, teams of one age group get to know the other teams much better (including the other gender division team of their own country). This adds a lot to the social experience of the event.
- The smaller tournaments are much easier to handle. Both the U17 in Ghent and the U20 in Wroclaw ran very smoothly and had a 100% positive feeling. In a 60+ team tournament with 4 divisions, there is a much higher risk of mistakes and difficult or negative situations. It also means a lot more work and stress for the TOC.

2. **New teams** arising in eastern Europe

There are several new teams forming, especially in the far East (with # of national teams projected to compete if the event is near and cheap): Romania (3), Hungary (3), Ukraine, Moldova and Bulgaria, besides also in the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus). Also some junior activity in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, of unknown size.

Most of these have no or hardly any way to attend a 6 day event with all associated costs. Bear in mind that these countries have only a small adult scene with only 1-3 tournaments per year, and most junior players only get to play 2-3 2 day events at max. Asking parents to pay for a 6 day event, mosting multiples of an average income, is unrealistic. But they are more than ready to play an international event, if it is low cost and not too long.

3. **Models for 2017**

- a. No EUF junior event
- b. Regional junior camps/clinics
- c. Only U17, or only U20
- d. Full EYUC, 4 divisions
- e. Full EYUC Mixed
- f. 2-5 regional championships
- g. 2 full events 2017 (EYUT/C)
 - i. 1 Event in western Europe, almost identical to EYUC as we know it. 5-6 days, the 4 classic divisions. This is important for those federations that say that a yearly event is very valuable for them.
 - ii. 1 Event in the East. Focus on enabling especially the new junior teams to be able to attend: therefore, just 3-4 days, cheap.
 - iii. Both events not labeled EYUC. That gives those federations, that want to go away from the current cycle (all 4 divisions every year), the chance to not attend without missing out on an official championship. So perhaps calling them EYUT East and EYUT West.
 - iv. Free choice: EUF will not make up a geographic split, but each team is free to decide which event to attend.
 - v. Potential hosts
 - East: bid from Debrecen/Hungary
 - West: interest to host from Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Helsinki. BUT call for bids out now. Declaration of interest before Sept. 15th 2016

Appendix 2:

Protocol from Meeting of Youth Representatives and Coaches at EYUC 2016, July 2016

1. Agenda and nature of this meeting

This meeting is to gather opinions, not to vote or make decisions. Notes by Ted Beute (EUF)

2. Introductions

Chris, Paul – EUF Youth Cee. Jonas, Henrik – SWE. Shane – IRL. Caroline, Katharina, Stefan – GER. Matej, Jana – CZE. Ruth – GB. Leontine – NED. Simon, Pipo, Dominik – AUT. Stijn, Tof – BEL. Clotilde, Cédéric – FRA. Marco – ITA. Ted – EUF board (notes).

3. Feedback for this EYUC 2016 so far

Advantages :

- fabulous tourney (GB)
- all attention for U17 /2 teams is easier to handle (GER)
- small event is very nice (CZE)
- full schedule is good, we are preparing them for adult tourneys (GER)

Disadvantages :

- logistics, having 2 teams here and 2 in Wroclaw (GB/NED)
- hard for new players to play a whole week (GB)
- artificial fields / no shade at central Plaza (NED)
- schedule too full / teams playing at the same time -> difficult for staff and no cheering (NED)

4. Youth events cycle

For WJUC 2018 at present there are 2 bids : Heilbronn (GER) and Waterloo (CAN). Heilbronn bids for 4 divisions ! The problem is that we don't know what WFDF will do, so we should focus on ourselves.

5a. Options and bids for 2017

Chris : We are looking at 35 U20 teams and possibly (if we do it in the East) 25 U17 teams = 60 teams. Will be difficult to find a host. We have offers from Copenhagen (DAN) and Helsinki (FIN), but both are expensive countries. Debrecen (HUN) might be a possibility, but not for 60 teams. Their TOC is not inexperienced enough. Besides, a big tourney is more organisation than 2 small tourneys.

- a big yearly event is important for all players. They are at their best only 1 of 3 years ! (BEL)
- a yearly tourney is okay (FRA)
- we want to have it cheap. Every year a big tourney means pushing the finance for parents (NED)
- > the national federations should help out with money ! (GER)
- several of our families already have to choose amongst their kids ! We have high travel costs and we want for historical health reasons hotels for our players. That's a federation choice (GB)
- the organizing country could use profit they make to help finance their teams ... next year (BEL)
- do we have EUF funding available ? (Paul) -> not clear yet what EUF focus for 2017 will be (Ted)

5b. Would shortening the tourneys help ?

- we come by bus, our travel costs will always be high (FRA/GB)

- we would like to know earlier, so we can buy cheaper flights (SWE)
- we would like a shorter tourney (AUT)
- please stop on Saturday ! (ALL)

5c. This EYUC we have given a lot of game time. Do we want less games ?

- not every team should play 2 games per day (NED)
- we need a rest during the tourney, especially U17 (CZE/NED)
- we could already play on opening day to spread the games (NED)
- we want enough playing time for all our players (FRA)
- 2 games per day are okay (AUT/GER)
- we could have a cultural 'thing' in an off-slot (GER)

5d. Is having regional tourneys an option for 2017 ?

- do we have a real region ? we think not, so we would suffer from regional tourneys (SWE)
- the level will be lower than at real Europeans. Is that enough stimulance for the players ? (BEL)
- regionals for U17 Girls is not an option – too few teams (GER)
- we want more national federations to get involved. Are regional tourneys the key ? (Paul)
- U17 is about building the Ultimate Community. Not only playing ultimate but living ultimate ! (NED)
- we should look at what other sports are doing (Paul)
- we have an unique community, so we should take care with comparing with Olympic sports (GB)
- we should not burn our kids out, we need more grass roots development first (GB)

Appendix 3:

EUF Youth meeting during WJUC Wroclaw, August 2016

Notes by Mark Kendall, EUF

Chris, Mark, Ted, Ludo

GBR, NED, SUI, HUN, FRA, GER, XXX

At the WJUC 2016 we met with a number of Youth reps that have, over the years, been involved in Junior development efforts in their counties. The purpose was not to have a vote on the issues described below, but to get a feeling about the future of Youth Ultimate here in Europe. Indeed, we have been discussing very long we all very interested in making some decisions. We did actually make some progress and in a non-binding show of hands we wanted to determine if we were headed in the right direction.

The meeting started with a short discussion in which we tried to define where we want go in the future
Important issues were:;

1. Tournament cycle (Mainly U17 was discussed)
2. Ability of nations / Regions to achieve „Grass Roots“ growth
3. Educational aspects - players should at least be able to see the city they are visiting. One day with just one game or better no games should be the standard. Competition is not the emphasis in the U17 division.
4. The fact that the nations and regions have very different levels of need and support was discussed. The different requirements included financial, technical, regional events, skill camps and other necessary support.
5. Goal: Avoid “Burn-out” after 4 – 5 years of events year after year.

The U17 division (age 14 – 16) is the start of an Ultimate career.

- first contact with other countries and cultures
- first international playing experience
- goal to improve level of play and have fun!
- events can be less public oriented and the basics need to be right.
- lower cost is desirable.

The U20 division is more on serious Ultimate (but not solely; culture and educational aspect of great international experience is equally important):

- Competition is the important factor
- money and time investment is very high

- level of play is much higher!

Models for 2017

- a. No EUF junior event
- b. Regional junior camps/clinics
- c. Only U17, or only U20
- d. Full EYUC/T, 4 divisions**
- e. Full EYUC/T Mixed
- f. 2-5 regional championships
- g. 2 full events

Two quite clear opinions were expressed:

1. There was a clear majority (100%) for **Full EYUC/T, 4 division Championship** events in 2017 (odd years).

The question of the name for the event (EYUC or EYUT) was left open to leave room for more than one event, split regionally. For 2017, this is especially important looking at Eastern Europe, where many new federations are looking to participate but a full EYUC, 6 days with associated costs, would be impossible. One long term goal is to provide regional, lower cost events to provide playing and development opportunities for nations striving to join the Ultimate playing European Community.

Thus, for 2017, the solution of two events is favoured; one in the west, one in the east.

Several hosts are prepared to check if they can run the largest national team event in the world.

- Frankfurt (Again?), Finland (higher cost and farther away), Holland and Heidelberg (two new candidates).
- Copenhagen has (based on new information) stated they do not want to host in 2017.
- Debrecen/Hungary bid for the eastern event.

2. There was also a clear majority (with one person against) to NOT have a U17 EYUC on the even year in which the WJUC takes place.

There was a general feeling that the young U17 players do not need a highly competitive event every year. On the other hand, we would like to offer some form of development event for these young U17 players. Whether we have 5 or 2-3 regional events, skill camps or some other event (tournament, mixed format) has not been decided or discussed yet.

Of course, as the meeting was held at WJUC (U20 only), this opinion may not be representative, as there were only some U17 Reps present.

We were glad to get such clear opinions, so the planning for European Youth Ultimate Future can be started as soon as possible

How do we get started planning for 2017 (EYUC + additional event) and 2018 (U17 international events).

other issues:

- Is the EYUC to again be a OPEN EYUC in which U17 teams from outside of Europe are allowed to attend with no restrictions. No discussion at this meeting.
- Suggestion of passive observers (game advisors) from coaching staff for all game quarter finals and after.

Please see the document prepared by Chris summarizing the discussion we have over the last several years titled "Euro Youth 2017".