Introduction

Over the past five years, US Quidditch has experienced rapid growth and development. Between our founding as a nonprofit in 2010 and today, our annual budget has grown from $68,000 to over $400,000. We’ve gone from being an all-volunteer organization to being led by four full- and part-time staff. We’ve published nine editions of the rulebook that have successively improved safety and increased clarity. We’ve gone from hosting one World Cup with 46 teams to hosting nine events annually in eight regions. In the 2014-2015 season 141 teams participated in our events, which brought an economic impact of over $1.5 million total to the cities that hosted them. We serve over 4,000 people and have certified over 400 officials, coaches, and tournament directors. We’ve learned a lot in the last five years, but at this point in our young sport’s development, having a solid strategic plan is critical for the organization’s future success. In October 2014, USQ’s board of directors empowered a strategic planning committee to create a plan determining US Quidditch’s strategic priorities for the next three years. This process became even more important when founder and CEO Alex Benepe and COO Alicia Radford announced their departures from the organization in April 2015. This strategic plan will give USQ’s new executive a roadmap, and allow for a smooth transition to the new leadership.

PURPOSE

This strategic plan lays out USQ’s strategic priorities and goals for the next three fiscal years and will guide decision-making, resource allocation, and prioritization of work. USQ’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, and this plan encompasses July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

To achieve the goals and outcomes detailed in the following pages, we will be working from a detailed internal operations plan encompassing specific strategies and action items for each goal. Every spring, the US Quidditch staff will draft the following year’s operations plan, to make sure implementation is taking into account the most recent data and experiences available as well as the current situation on the ground.

PROCESS

This plan was developed over the course of ten months, and takes into account the feedback of multiple stakeholder groups:

- 85 people filled out a 44-question strategic planning survey that asked questions about USQ’s mission and values, strengths and weaknesses, external environment, constituents, and challenges and trends.
- 93 people participated in 33 focus groups on 11 different topics, ranging from “the Competitive Structure of Quidditch” to “Expanding Quidditch to Different Age Groups,” and “External Communications.”
- USQ staff talked to six representatives from cities across the country who have hosted regionals or nationals.
- The first draft of this plan was workshopped with seven groups of USQ volunteers, and the first and second drafts were also presented for feedback and discussion in two different all-volunteer meetings.

Because USQ is currently in the midst of an executive transition and search, we also worked with our executive search and transition consultants at Loveall Price & Associates to make sure that this strategic plan is consistent with the results of their organizational assessment of USQ and complements the 18-month transition and operations plan that they are helping us draft to guide our new leader.
Our Mission

US Quidditch is the national governing body for the sport of quidditch. USQ advances the sport by organizing events and programs that build community and empower all genders to compete together.

Our Vision

We envision a future where every person in the United States is aware of quidditch as a sport and has opportunities to play and engage at all levels.

Our Values

- We establish the foundation for long-term sustainability through regulations, innovation, and expansion.
- We provide competitive opportunities for every level of athlete.
- We build a safe, inclusive, and respectful community.
- We strive to be a leader in gender inclusivity for all age groups.
- We create meaningful community partnerships.
- We develop and empower future leaders.
Identity Statement

OUR DNA

We aim to empower future leaders and advance gender inclusivity in sports by focusing on creating competitive opportunities and programming for our members.

We host high-quality tournaments.
We provide a membership program that facilitates community and supports current and future teams and players.
We maintain a rulebook and league policies that promote safety and competitive integrity.
We run certification, education, and training programs for officials and team leaders.

Our programs and services emphasize our competitive advantages:

The uniqueness of quidditch—it’s a new sport, and a gender-integrated one, with a diversity of positions and competitive strategies that make it interesting to watch and fun to play. And even though, unlike more established sports, people don't yet grow up having familiarity with the rules, our sport’s connection to Harry Potter allows us to be a cultural touchstone and reach new audiences.

Our people—our organization’s biggest assets are our hardworking volunteers and staff, and our sport attracts a broad spectrum of seasoned and first-time athletes who come together and build a unique community. Quidditch inspires an entrepreneurial drive among participants that builds and sustains teams.

We are sustainable through a diverse mix of funding: membership dues, events-related revenue, and fundraising.
Strategic Priorities

These three strategic priorities will guide US Quidditch over the next three years. Each priority is interrelated, and success in one builds on the success of the others.

- **Shape and grow the sport of quidditch.**
- **Strengthen trust in, and identification with, the US Quidditch brand.**
- **Ensure US Quidditch is organizationally and financially sustainable.**
Shape and grow the sport of quidditch.

OVERVIEW

As the national governing body for the sport of quidditch, it is important that we continue to guide and shape our young sport’s development as it becomes more popular. We know our stakeholders want to ensure that quidditch retains its unique and inclusive culture as it grows, and to succeed USQ needs to be more intentional with promoting and encouraging that culture.

From feedback during the strategic planning process, we learned that our stakeholders want more ways to engage with US Quidditch than just the pathway from regional championships to nationals. With this in mind, we plan to increase resources and opportunities for multiple age groups and playing levels, to expand competition while preserving the culture that forms one of our competitive advantages.

Just as critical to the long-term success of quidditch is the continued development of officials and team leaders. Over the next three years, we will focus on increasing the quality and quantity of officials and making the sport safer overall.

2016-2018 GOALS

▷ Grow the sport of quidditch, as well as league opportunities, for those under the age of 18.
▷ Make quidditch and USQ’s events more accessible and meaningful to non-players.
▷ Expand competitive opportunities at a variety of playing levels.
▷ Continue strengthening our core services: regional championships and nationals.
▷ Make the sport of quidditch safer for all of those involved.
▷ Further develop training, recruitment, and assessment of officials.

YEAR ONE OUTCOMES

- Develop and publish rulebooks for youth, high school, and intramural levels.
- Make the USQ website more user-friendly for members and spectators, prioritizing events, safety and training, and team information and resources.
- Create a plan with staff and stakeholder input to add an additional competitive event to USQ’s season.
- Develop a plan to create separate college and community competitive divisions. All USQ staff and volunteers will be involved in developing parameters that must be met in order for the league to split into two divisions.
- Grow the number of referees and snitches through increased training opportunities.
Strengthen trust in, and identification with, the US Quidditch brand.

OVERVIEW
As USQ continues to grow and increase the number of employees focused on fulfilling our mission, it’s important for us to communicate regularly and effectively with all stakeholders, from members and volunteers to the public. The biggest theme from our environmental scan was the need for US Quidditch to be more transparent and communicative; with this in mind, improving communication, trust, and identification with the USQ brand will be one of our major strategic focuses. Achieving these things will help the sport grow by opening it up to new audiences, and aiding in member retention.

2016-2018 GOALS

- Sustain high levels of transparency and consistency in communications.
- Improve internal organizational communication.
- Improve external communication, both to members and fans.
- Increase social media engagement.

YEAR ONE OUTCOMES

- Create an organization-wide communications plan to ensure communications are consistent across all channels and not duplicating work or resources.
- Increase engagement and outreach with spectators, previous ticket buyers, alumni, parents, and donors.
- Grow social media reach and engagement by posting content that inspires conversation and shares.
- Host regular employee office hours and create guidelines for how staff can engage with social media effectively.
- Increase formal and informal opportunities for our volunteers to connect with staff and each other.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Ensure US Quidditch is organizationally and financially sustainable.

OVERVIEW

As a new and still-growing organization, and especially one in the midst of a leadership transition, it’s important for us to continue assessing and developing the operational and programmatic systems we need to succeed. Our members and stakeholders want more programs and services, and we want to offer more—but to continue delivering high-quality programming and be sustainable, USQ needs additional funding. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, we can take advantage of many traditional nonprofit fundraising avenues. And utilizing the competitive advantage of our people, we can build a database of donors and supporters who will help us deliver our programs and services.

Additionally, many great partners are involved with growing the sport of quidditch, from city CVBs who help us host events to manufacturers who constantly innovate to provide the best equipment for players. USQ needs to continue developing these partnerships to benefit our current community and help advertise the sport to new players and fans.

Finally, USQ couldn’t exist without passionate and hard-working staff—it’s one of our competitive advantages. Ensuring that USQ is a productive and happy place to work is essential to improving staff retention and ensuring the highest quality of work.

2016-2018 GOALS

- Diversify revenue streams through traditional nonprofit fundraising methods.
- Develop strategic partnerships with organizations that have a competitive stake in growing quidditch and events.
- Facilitate a positive working environment for employees, board members, and volunteers.
- Regularly evaluate organizational development and programmatic sustainability.

YEAR ONE OUTCOMES

- Achieve 100% board giving.
- Expand our donor base through a targeted fundraising plan.
- Train volunteers to solicit donations in person at regional championships and the US Quidditch Cup.
- Increase online and event merchandise sales.
- Begin soliciting corporate donations.
- Develop closer and sustained relationships with CVBs, vendors, and university administrations.
- Recruit two new board members.
- Ensure clarity in role descriptions, commitments, and expectations for all staff and volunteers.
Thank you.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our strategic planning survey and focus groups; your input helped shape this plan. We would also like to thank our volunteers, both for the time and work you give day in and day out, and for giving great feedback on the first draft of this plan—it is stronger because of your input. And we would especially like to thank Logan Anbinder and USQ’s staff, Alicia Radford, Katie Stack, Sarah Woolsey, and Mary Kimball, for working tirelessly on this plan and accepting nothing less than our best.