

WFDF 2017 elections

Candidate: Rena Kawabata (CAN)

Position: at-Large Board member



Candidate Statement:

"I am running for the WFDF Board of Directors to be an advocate for gender equity on the international stage. At this time in our sport, men and boys are increasingly afforded more and better opportunities to play ultimate at the local, national, and international levels, and women and girls are being left behind. My goal is to ensure that WFDF is at the forefront of the gender equity movement not only as a partner, but as an advocate and change agent. My dream is to live in a world where men and women are treated and valued equally, and where as many women play and compete in sports as men.

Spirit of the Game has allowed ultimate players around the world to develop skills in conflict resolution, clear communication, and active listening. It has taught us to show respect towards each other, and has increased our willingness to see another perspective and to empathize with people with whom we might disagree. With the skills of SOTG in our tool belt, ultimate players are in fact the best equipped to navigate the problem of gender inequity and to tackle closing this ever-increasing gap.

Currently, I sit of the Board of Directors of Upwind Ultimate, an organization committed to increasing the value of women in sport and a resource for socially conscious ultimate players. This summer, I also facilitated several discussions in gender equity in ultimate including one at the Canadian Ultimate Championships, and another at the US Open. These conversations are incredibly important in educating people and creating awareness about the problems that exist, as well as in gaining support and allies to the movement. On an international level, the WFDF Forums would be an excellent place to host these conversations, and a great way to hear underrepresented voices. The most important part, however, is calling people to action. What can we do on the international level to get as many women's teams at World Championship events as men's and mixed teams? How can we support and incentivize National governing bodies to grow their female participation? These are some of the questions I will set out to answer as a member of the Board.

With so much divisiveness and polarization in our world today, it is critical that we are able to engage in conversation, listen to opposing opinions, discuss respectfully, and come to a resolution. I have such an incredible passion for the sport of ultimate and for Spirit of the Game, and am so grateful for all the amazing opportunities and lessons I have learned as a result. My promise is to listen to marginalized and underrepresented voices, and to be an advocate for these voices on a Board, which frankly lacks much diversity. With my experience and passion for gender equity, I feel I am an excellent candidate for this position."