

# Disc Fever

## Otterbein professor and Ultimate Frisbee coach takes an innovative approach to community involvement

**FOR PATTI WILSON, FITNESS AND Frisbees go hand in hand.**

Wilson is a professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education at Otterbein University, where she has worked for 20 years. She lives in Westerville with her partner, Kim Boggs, and their son, Mason Boggs, a freshman at the University of Dayton.

Wilson teaches more than just classes; she's also an athletic adviser. Her sport: Ultimate Frisbee.

The sport combines aspects from a variety of other physical games. A team scores points when a player catches the lightweight flying disc past the opposing team's goal line, but players cannot run while holding the disc, making clever positioning and quick passing paramount to victory.

Wilson first became involved with Ultimate Frisbee while teaching a class on the sport at Otterbein. Around that time, Mason came home from Westerville North High School and suggested starting a team there. The idea stuck.

In forming the team at North, Wilson worked with Jeff Will, then the school's athletics director, to ensure the team received status as an official club.

"She knew that she had students who were interested in Ultimate Frisbee and she wanted to make sure that they had those opportunities," says Will, now the coordinator of special projects for Westerville City Schools.

After much organization, the team was formed in 2010 with Wilson as its administrator. Mason played on the high school's team, and he now is on a team at Dayton.

"My partner and I enjoy watching the kids play," says Wilson. "The biggest joy for both of us is being able to see these kids really make a connection to a community – my son knows kids who play all over the state of Ohio now."



**Patti Wilson**

Westerville North is in the 12-team Columbus High School Ultimate League, and for the past two years, the team has gone to the Ultimate State High School Championships open tournament. Last year, the team placed fifth.

Wilson's involvement in the high school arena doesn't stop with North. She works with USA Ul-

time, the sport's national governing body, to revise physical education teaching guidelines across the state of Ohio.

But now, Wilson's stepping up her game to install a club team at Otterbein, the school's first, which will begin play this spring. There are 200 to 300 university teams throughout the country.

Wilson is serving as the team adviser. She doesn't play the game, but she has extensive knowledge of the sport and how it's played.

"I really like to teach kids the fundamentals, and then I can utilize some of the things I know from being a physical education teacher," she says.

Wilson is keenly aware of the physical benefits associated with the sport.

"The health benefits of being involved are tremendous," she says. "It's a very aerobic, fast-paced game. It involves a lot of running and quick jumping."

There are also social advantages. The games are self-officiated, meaning players must make calls on rule viola-

tions themselves. This helps with leadership ability, Wilson says, and the game creates a great atmosphere for team camaraderie.

"The thing I think I like about (Ultimate Frisbee) most is you get a bunch of kids together who probably don't have a lot in common (otherwise)," says Wilson. "Anybody can play this sport. It's kind of a newer sport, so people don't come in with years and years of experience. All of our players are starting at square one."

Of the 20 years she's taught at Otterbein, Wilson has lived in Westerville for 15. In that time, she's busied herself with a plethora of community engagements that benefit local children.

"Patti's participation in the entire school community doesn't end with her involvement with Ultimate Frisbee," says Will. "Her enthusiasm and her willing-



**Connor Duncan competes as part of the Westerville North High School Ultimate Frisbee team.**



The 2012 North Ultimate Frisbee team

ness to help anyone who needs help are just fantastic. She has a genuine, caring spirit."

Her other activities include Best of Both Worlds, a transitional program for high school graduates with disabilities, and Share Bac a Pac, a weekend program that delivers food to children who may not have access to lunches outside of school. Wilson works through Otterbein on both programs; there are people in town who need help, she says, and

getting students involved is important for community growth.

"I work a lot in all of the classes I teach to have some kind of community involvement," says Wilson. "I like to be able to help make connections with people and programs. It's all about connecting to people – I think that's how we make our way."

Rose Davidson is a contributing writer. Feedback welcome at [gbishop@cityscenemediagroup.com](mailto:gbishop@cityscenemediagroup.com).

## Gathering Strength

The Arnold returns to Columbus for its 25th year

You won't be seeing any Ultimate Frisbee there, but a huge line-up of other competitions is laid out for the 25th annual Arnold Sports Festival.

This year, the Arnold runs Feb. 28-March 3. Events take place in and around downtown Columbus.

A total of 45 sports and events, from bodybuilding and weightlifting to mixed martial arts and archery, make up the Arnold agenda this year.

New in 2013 are the Arnold Scottish Highland Games, featuring such competitions as the Scottish hammer throw and the caber toss; the Arnold, Champions & Legends Sunday Morning Showcase, an information session and Q&A with event founder and namesake Arnold Schwarzenegger and the winners of several festival competitions; and the Arnold Party with the Pros, the official after-party for the Arnold at the new Hollywood Casino Columbus.

That's on top of the usual highlights, which include the Arnold Fitness Expo, this year boasting more than 700 exhibitors selling the latest in sports equipment, apparel and nutrition; and the Arnold Classic, the professional bodybuilding competition that started it all.

Westerville has sent a number of top-flight competitors and keen organizers to the Arnold over the years, including:

- Damien Brandon, a middle school teacher who won the Arnold 5K Pump and Run in 2007;
- Nathan Aichele, a former Westerville North High School track star who took second place in the Pump and Run in 2008;
- Wally Carl, owner of Old Skool Skate Shop, who co-promoted the Arnold Skateboarding Contest in 2010; and
- Kevin Buckland and Pertain Gillespie, husband-and-wife graphic designers and owners of Buckland Gillespie Design, who started the Art at the Arnold competition in 2010 and continue to coordinate it.



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