



Joel Silver

IT WAS a high school joke that became a sports phenomenon. In the fall of 1968 Joel Silver, a junior at Columbia High in Maplewood, N.J., raised his hand at a student council meeting: “I move that we establish a committee to investigate the possibility of adding Frisbee to the high school curriculum.” Recalls Silver, now a major Hollywood producer, “Everybody laughed—and the motion was carried.” The student committee born from that meeting wrote the first rules for Ultimate Frisbee.

Silver had learned a similar game at summer camp, and back in Maplewood he and his friends adapted it into what originally was called Speed Frisbee. “That name wasn’t romantic enough,” says Silver, 56. “This is the *ultimate* Frisbee contest.” The game spread as he and his friends went off to college, and now nearly a million Americans regularly play Ultimate, a staple of college intramural sports. There are 181 leagues in the U.S. and 77 internationally.

Many more millions have enjoyed Silver’s career in movies. He runs Silver Pictures and Dark

Castle Entertainment, and along with Jerry Bruckheimer, he is credited with reinventing the Hollywood action movie, having produced such titles as the *Lethal Weapon*, *Die Hard* and *Matrix* series. While Silver’s movies often feature dazzling special effects and cost more than \$100 million to make, Ultimate requires only a plastic disc and some open space. Still, Silver knows Ultimate will always be a part of his legacy. He remembers reading an obituary for Donald Duncan, who mass-marketed the yo-yo. “In the last paragraph it says he also invented the parking meter,” recalls Silver. “I guess that’s where Ultimate will be in my obit.”

—J.L.

DISC DRIVE Silver (above) got the Ultimate phenomenon flying.

