

HUSKY ATHLETICS SUSTAINABILITY

University of Washington Athletics Sustainability Newsletter



NUTRUIING SUSTAINABILITY IN UW ATHLETICS

UW Athletics’ sustainability program at the University of Washington isn’t just about putting garbage in the right bin. It’s about creating a lasting impact that will help Husky Nation today, and in the future, to enjoy athletics in the best setting in college sports. From our events to our facilities, we are committed to preserving resources, sustainable construction and renovation, reducing waste, and inspiring our community to take part in a greener future. For Husky Athletics, sustainability means being intentional about our practices, mindful of our environmental footprint, and persistent in pursuing change. Today, climate change is a real threat and every step we take now will be 5 times more impactful as the same action in 10 years.

“We are well aware of the challenges in connecting our mission with sustainable practices. This is not unique to athletics, however, and we take these challenges head on to continue making sustainable changes in our operations”
(Karen Baebler, Associate Athletic Director and Team Green Founder).

Continue reading to learn more about what actions UW Athletics is taking to ensure that a greener future is in store for us all.

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RESUABLE CUP PILOT PROGRAM



In partnership with the UW Office of Sustainability, Aramark, Pepsi, and Bold Reuse, UW Athletics recently launched a reusable cup pilot program in Alaska Airlines Arena. Durable, reusable cups are available at all concessions stand in place of paper cups to help minimize waste while fostering an eco-conscious game day culture. Initial feedback from fans has been overwhelmingly positive. The pilot will extend through the basketball season, and as we assess the program's success, there is opportunity to expand similar initiatives across all athletic venues and across campus. Arena events were selected for the pilot due to their consistent attendance, allowing us to better anticipate fan numbers and collection needs.

Education and Promotion: To raise awareness about this new initiative, Husky Athletics is implementing several key steps. The goal is to ensure the cups are returned and reused, which is where Team Green and other sustainability-minded volunteers come in! They will be present at several events throughout the season, helping educate fans about the program and the importance of returning cups to the right bins. The Pepsi UW Athletic Marketing team has also played a vital role, creating signage, cup and bin graphics, educational videos and social media content so fans better understand the program before they even receive their cups. With education and awareness efforts that promotes participation, this program is sure to be a resounding success.

Next Steps: The success of this program depends on consistent effort throughout the remainder of the year. We are committed to making this initiative not only effective and sustainable but also cost-efficient. Our goal is to integrate this program into our game-day operations seamlessly and in a cost-efficient way to continue with the program in future seasons.

FEATURED STUDENT ATHLETE

Sally Jones, Husky Rower

Hometown: Victoria, Canada

Degree: Bachelors of Oceanography from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada

Q: What Does Sustainability Mean to you?

A: To me, sustainability is about balancing the needs of the biosphere on Earth today with the future health of the planet. It's treating everything around us whether it's nature, our homes, or our training spaces with care and respect for what they give us. Sustainability is being mindful of the future while appreciating what we have in the present.



Q: How do you practice sustainability as a student athlete?

A: I practice sustainability by being mindful of my choices and looking after my training environment. I try to reduce my waste by using reusable water bottles and shopping second hand to furnish my spaces. I take care of my training environment by helping keep it clean and turning off lights and fans when not in use. For me, sustainability isn't about big gestures but about making small, intentional choices that reduce my impact and ensure that the resources I depend on are there for future generations.

Q: Where could Husky Athletics improve and where do we succeed sustainably?

A: I have been impressed with the sustainability initiatives by Husky Athletics. There are compost, garbage, and recycling bins in the Don James Center (DJC) and around athletics facilities. In the DJC, it is nice to see student-athletes filling up reusable water bottles at the drink station. In addition, it is exciting to hear about the new sustainability initiative of reusable cups at basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics events. Something we could work to reduce is the use of single-use take out boxes from the DJC and single-use plastics from the PNC.

Q: What other hobbies or interests do you have?

A: In my free time I enjoy biking, painting, hiking, and reading. I love trying new things and am learning Swedish this year while studying at the UW.

FOOTBALL WASTE DIVERSION

Football waste diversion rates decreased again this year. Since the pandemic, we continue to face some unique challenges. Recycling and Compost vendors have become more selective in what they will accept and how much contamination they will allow before a load will be rejected and sent to landfill. We have identified several contributors to contamination in our waste streams, which we will work on prior to the 2025 season.

Educating Vendors & Third-Party Partners: Back of house contamination is much higher than it should be. Much of the game-day waste is produced by stadium vendors and partners, yet educating third-party vendors on specific recycling and composting rules is a challenge. The employees that work the games change from week to week and education and ease of disposal influences their behavior. To enhance their understanding and participation, we're developing improved communication and leadership before and during games.



*Team Green
Getting Ready
for the 10/5
Green Game
against Michigan*

Bins, Signage and Fan Behavior: The number and placement of landfill bins have a surprisingly large impact on waste management. Adding more landfill bins can lead fans to mistakenly dispose of recyclables and compostables in the wrong container, while reducing them risks contaminating recycling and compost bins with landfill waste. Striking this balance is challenging, and we're working hard to identify the best approach for minimizing waste contamination. Although increased bins and signage has led to some improvements, the impact hasn't met our expectations—waste contamination remains high. This suggests that signage alone may not suffice; more direct engagement and education with fans and staff could be essential to achieving our goals. Fan participation is vital to our sustainability success; each individual's effort contributes to how sustainable UW Athletics can be. While this year's waste numbers show room for improvement and will need the participation of Team Green, UW Recycle, and every person in Husky Stadium.

2024-2025 TEAM GREEN

Our Team Green, the heart of UW's sustainable game-day operations, has grown in numbers this season, with more volunteers than ever joining the cause. Their dedication allows us to educate, support, and empower fans, helping them make more sustainable choices during each event. We are incredibly grateful to each volunteer for their contributions to a cleaner, greener Husky Stadium!



*Harry the Husky
Celebrating with Eco*



*Team Green Members and
the Lucky Raffle Winner
during the VB Green Game*



*Some Team Green Members
after the 8/31 Game*

FUTURE PROJECTS

Wetland Restoration

Again, this spring quarter, our staff and student-athletes will participate in a Wetland Restoration Project on the shores of Lake Washington next to our athletic facilities. This project not only enhances the cleanliness of local habitats but also helps wildlife thrive by removing invasive plants and adding plants native to the area. Wetlands play a crucial role in preserving biodiversity, managing flood risks, and improving water quality, and we're proud to contribute to their preservation. More information on how staff and student-athletes can get involved will be share in early spring.



Student Athletes Taking Part in the 2023 Wetland Restoration



The 2023 Wetland Restoration in Action

Green Games

As part of our ongoing efforts to raise awareness, we'll be holding more "Green Games" throughout the season. These themed game-days will highlight sustainability in action, featuring green initiatives, eco-conscious giveaways, and on-field shoutouts to our Team Green. All in an effort to engage and education our fans.

Winter Green Games

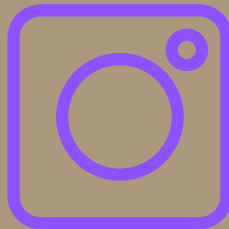
Men's Basketball - December 10th Women's Basketball - January 27th
Gymnastics - February 7th

BE PART OF TEAM GREEN

Get involved! We welcome all athletic department staff and students. Join us by volunteering for Team Green, helping fans choose reusable options on game day, and spreading awareness. If you can't join us on game-day, participate by printing double-sided, bringing your coffee cup to the office, and taking public transportation. Together, we can create a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable UW Athletics experience. Thank you for your support as we work to protect the beautiful environment all around us. Let's continue this journey and make sustainability a proud tradition for Husky Nation!



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