

Disc Golf

History

Disc golf is played much like traditional golf. Instead of a ball and clubs, however, players use a flying disc, or Frisbee®. The sport was formalized in the 1970's, and shares with "ball golf" the object of completing each hole in the fewest strokes (or, in the case of disc golf, fewest throws). A golf disc is thrown from a tee area to a target which is the "hole". The hole can be one of a number of disc golf targets; the most common is called a Pole Hole® an elevated metal basket.

As a player progresses down the fairway, he or she must make each consecutive throw from the spot where the previous throw has landed. The trees, shrubs, and terrain changes located in and around the fairways provide challenging obstacles for the golfer. Finally, the "putt" lands in the basket and the hole is completed. Disc golf shares the same joys and frustrations of traditional golf, whether it's sinking a long putt or hitting a tree halfway down the fairway. There are a few differences, though. Disc golf rarely requires a greens fee, you probably won't need to rent a cart, and you never get stuck with a bad "tee time." It is designed to be enjoyed by people of all ages, male and female, regardless of economic status.

Terminology

Discs: There are several types of flying discs used in disc golf. Professional players may have as many as 70 discs used for various shots and different types of terrains. Discs are generally separated into three categories, driver, all-purpose/ mid-range, and putter. Each disc is described by the following characteristics: speed, glide, turn, and fade.

Driver: These discs are used for tee shots and are designed to cover long distances.

Putter: These discs are used close to the Pole Hole for putts or approach shots.

Multi-purpose/ Mid-range: These discs are used for mid-range shots and approaching the Pole Hole.

Speed: Speed is the rate at which a disc can travel through the air. Speed 14 Distance Drivers are the fastest, having the PDGA maximum legal wing width. Faster discs cut into the wind with less effort and are best when throwing up wind. Slower discs take more power to throw upwind, but they're easier to throw more accurately and may actually go farther downwind. High speed discs are not recommended for beginners as they require more power to fly properly.

Glide: Glide describes the disc's ability to maintain loft during flight. Discs with more glide are best for new players, and for producing maximum distance. Beginners wanting more distance should choose discs with more glide. Discs with less glide are more accurate in high wind situations.

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Turn: High Speed Turn is the tendency of a disc to turn over or bank to the right for Right Hand Back Hand (RHBH) throws during the initial part of the flight. A disc with a +1 rating is most resistant to turning over, while a -5 rating will turn the most. Discs rated -3 to -5 make good roller discs. Discs with less turn are more accurate in the wind. Discs with more turn are easier to throw for beginners.

Fade: Low Speed Fade is the disc's tendency to hook left (for RHBH throws) at the end of the flight. Fade is rated from 0 to 5. A disc rated 0 will finish straightest, while a disc rated 5 will hook hard at the end of the flight. High fade discs are usually used for Spike and Skip shots.

Pole hole: The term for the elevated metal basket that the disc is thrown into.

Skills

Driving: The act of throwing the disc from the tee box. A variety of grips on the disc can be used depending on the skill level of the player, terrain, or obstacles.

Putting: The act of throwing the disc into the hole from a distance of 10-meters or less.

Backhand Grips

Power Grip: This grip requires four fingers wrapped around the disc with the thumb on top. It is most useful when driving.

Control Grip: This grip requires three fingers wrapped around the disc with the index finger on the rim of the disc. It is most useful when putting.

Forehand Grip

Sidearm Grip: A grip where the palm is facing toward the target and the thumb is on the top of the disc with one or two fingers pressed against the rim.

The Course

A Disc Golf course consists of 18 holes of play. Courses are usually in parks and sometimes also built in conjunction with traditional Golf courses and Foot Golf courses. Terrain varies from open greens that are flat or rolling to dense hilly forests. Players start from a tee box and try to throw the disc into the Pole Hole with the fewest amount of throws possible. Holes range from par 3 to par 5 (i.e. an experienced Disc Golf player should be able to get the disc into the goal in 3-5 throws).

Health Benefits

Playing Disc Golf can positively impact an individual's health related fitness including cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition. Playing Disc Golf can enhance an individual's cardiovascular endurance because a player must walk the distance of the Disc Golf course. Terrain is varied and can include long greens and steep hills.

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For a normally sedentary individual, the added walking can positively impact body composition. Muscular strength is enhanced through practicing driving. Players typically need to throw the disc 100-150yards (1-1.5 football fields) when driving. A good drive utilizes the muscles of the legs, core and upper body. Lastly, flexibility is developed through moving joints through a full range of motion. As a player becomes more advanced flexibility and dexterity are very important in the upper body to make skillful shots.

Web Resources

<http://www.pdga.com/>

<http://www.innovadiscs.com/>

Local Disc Golf Courses

Pinewoods Park

Payne Park

Ellicott Creek Park

Lincoln Park

UB North

Veterans Memorial Park