

PDGA Player & Course Ratings System Questions & Answers - Year 2006



The PDGA rating system calculates each player's skill level and also the difficulty rating of each course played in PDGA events. Your PDGA Player Rating (PR) is a number that shows how close your average round scores are compared to the course rating, called the Scratch Scoring Averages (SSA), of the courses you've played in competition.

Players who average the SSA on courses played will have a rating of 1000. If they average even better scores, their rating will be over 1000. Most competition players shoot scores higher than SSA so their ratings range somewhere from 700-999.

Why did the PDGA create this rating system? Dealing with 'sandbagging' - playing in a division lower than your current skill level - has been one of the more difficult challenges. PDGA Player Ratings are used to group players in competition divisions that are more fair and provide a basis for an accurate ranking of the world's top players on the PDGA Tour. Course ratings pave the way for statistical comparisons of courses around the world with the potential to improve their designs and levels of challenge. Course SSA ratings provide a benchmark for local players to gauge their skill improvements. Ratings also allow players to handicap their play against others.

When are ratings updated? Ratings will be updated at least 5 times per year near the middles of February, April, June, September and December. Additional minor updates may be added when special corrections or adjustments are needed. All rounds entered into the system during the 12 months prior to each player's most recently rated round will be evaluated to calculate their current rating.

Q&A for Players

How do I get a rating? Players who enter a PDGA event in a division tracked by the PDGA will automatically get their results entered into the ratings system. However, only ratings of current PDGA members will be published.

Every throw equals about 10 rating points on a typical 18-hole course. If your scores average 5 throws over SSA, your rating will be 50 points lower than 1000 which would be 950. The system uses most of your rounds to calculate your rating. However, everyone may have an exceptionally bad round once in a while. About 1 in 50 rounds get dropped that have been entered into the system.

How many rounds do I have to play to get a rating? Your first rating can be calculated after just one valid round of tournament play. It will be posted on the PDGA website the next time the ratings are updated.

Where can I see my rating? Ratings are published on the PDGA website: www.pdga.com In addition, you can see unofficial round ratings in events you've entered, that haven't been rated officially, if your TD has posted results of your event online at the PDGA site. All Tournament Directors receive the current PDGA member list with individual player ratings included if you don't have access to the Internet.

How do I use my rating? Your rating will be used to determine the lowest division you may enter in PDGA amateur divisions. All amateurs with the exception of Juniors compete in divisions based on rating levels. You may also use your rating to handicap (adjust) your scores against other players in casual play. For example, if your rating is 30 points higher than your buddy, it means you're about 3 throws better on average. Giving your buddy 2 or 3 throws per round would make your competition a little more fair.

Will World Championships use ratings divisions? No. However, the Mid-Nationals is a special major event that uses ratings ranges to define divisions. All traditional mens and womens divisions including age based divisions are planned to continue being offered in World Championships.

Q&A for Course Pros

What does the Scratch Scoring Average (SSA) mean? The SSA is an estimate of the average score a scratch disc golfer (a player with a 1000 rating) would shoot on that course configuration. The SSA will be roughly 4-6 throws higher than the course record on a typical 18-hole course. Courses suitable for pro competitions have SSAs of at least 49 with the longest, toughest courses in the world having SSAs up to 70.

Where can I find official SSA values for courses? Once tournament results have been turned in and processed, the SSA values for courses played will be posted or updated on the PDGA website: www.pdga.com/tournament/course_ratings_by_course.php

How do I get a rating for my course? Hosting a PDGA event is the official way to get an SSA rating for your course. Your course gets an SSA rating when at least 5 current PDGA members with official ratings over 799 play it in PDGA competition. On courses not played in PDGA events or those with multiple tees or pins, you can calculate SSA values for other configurations by gathering scores from local players who have ratings. More details are available on the PDGA site.

Our course has hundreds of tee and pin combinations. How can all of these SSAs be tracked? We recommend that TDs select a specific group of configurations to be used regularly for tournament and league play. This way, players have benchmark SSA values to compare against whether for local leagues or major events. However, the PDGA will track SSA info for every configuration submitted for ratings as part of PDGA events.

How does the off-season or abnormal weather affect the SSA calculation? The SSA is generated from player scores, so it will just end up a little higher in poor weather conditions. Player ratings can be calculated properly regardless of the weather.

Q&A for Tournament Directors

What are the rating breaks for competition? The PDGA publishes competition guidelines each year that determines where the ratings breaks are located for entering each level of amateur competition. Look for this document in the PDGA Tour section: <http://www.pdga.com/documents/td/06PlayerDivisionsGridFinal.pdf>
The document name will change slightly for each year.

Q&A for Mathematicians

Where can I get more mathematical details on this system? Tech questions may be directed to Roger Smith or Chuck Kennedy by sending us a message from the Contact area of the PDGA website. Other information documents are also posted on the PDGA website: www.pdga.com/competition/ratings/index.php