

How to Run a PDGA Tour Event



This is the companion document that follows the PDGA guide for “How to Plan a PDGA Event”

A. DAYS LEADING UP TO THE EVENT

A1. Course Prep

Has the Park Dept or your volunteer done what they promised in terms of maintenance on the course, weed whipping and grass cutting? Do you need to pick up any keys for gates, buildings or shelters? Make sure all trash cans are empty. Make sure tee signs are legible and accurate. Will the restrooms be open (need to get the key?)?

Be certain to sweep the tee pads. Check out-of-bounds areas to be sure the OB line is visible, fair, and intact. If the OB line is not clear and distinct mark it with string and nails. Check each basket to make sure all of the chains and chain rings are properly bound and that discs can't slip through. Be certain your course is ready to play (so players can practice) several days before the event. Be certain traveling players can tell which layout to practice.

If you are using temporary courses, holes, tees & pins, please refer to Appendix A for guidance on how to use these different options and suggested ways to mark the course. Have recent weather conditions affected the playability of a course such that alternate holes or even courses need to be considered or prepared as backups? Will alternate holes be needed due to higher than expected registrations?

A2. Staff & Vendors

Check in with your staffers to make sure they are ready for fulfilling their duties for the event and know what time they need to be where. Contact your backups if you're unsure about any of your staff. Make sure your food and merchandise vendors know when and where to set up for their part of the event.

A3. Equipment & Merchandise

Is someone helping get player packs assembled? Are your merchandise supplies ready or your vendor who will handle them? Is your TD supplies kit packed and ready to go? Do you have enough small bills for making change? Have you picked up all of the printed materials you'll need like scorecards, leaderboard cards, coupons, signs, programs and course info sheets? Picked up trophies or plaques? Water cooler containers ready to go or already filled? Got your PDGA packet of materials and member list?

If you're using a laptop, got your PDGA TD Excel report and current member list loaded and ready? Is the final list of pre-registered players posted online? Are group assignments and/or group tee times published online if that's your format?

B. DAY OF THE EVENT

B1. Weather Conditions

Watch the weather channel. Take an EXTRA umbrella. Know what conditions you will face. If crazy weather threatens, your local weather office can give you the latest updates by phone. Take extra dry clothes. Have an extra cooler with some cold fluids in it in case of extreme heat.

B2. Arrive Early

Get to the course at least 2 hours before tee time. Check the tee pads. (Are they safe? Be sure to carry a shovel for last minute tee drainage situations.) Check the OB lines (Are they fair and visible?).

B3. TD Central

Set up tournament central. A shelter near the center of the course is ideal. Set out the water stations – you should have at least two large water coolers per course, and more on warmer days, one of these should be located at or near the farthest point of the course from central. Set out sponsorship signs. Put the minis for sale out in plain view. Some of your amateur golfers will need them. Someone else may lose theirs.

Put the discs out for sale if your team is selling. It is essential for disc sales and smooth tourney registration to have your staff lend a hand here! Post sponsor signs at each tee or on or around tournament central.

B4. Registration/Check-in

Use a couple of picnic tables. Lay out the leaderboard cards/registration forms by color if that's how you planned to do it. Set out pens (better) or pencils for the registrants to use.

Once you are set up, players will be all over you trying to check-in. Request that that pre-registered players and those who have filled out registration cards form a single file line in front of the registration table. Two single file lines seem to work best if you have the staff. Players who have not pre-registered, must fill out the registration/leaderboard card. Make it easy for them to access the blank cards and go to another table where several players can fill out cards. When their cards are filled out, they get in line and hand you their card and the money together. Do not accept one without the other. This is the only way to keep the money straight.

Some of your buddies will try to come around the side of the table. Resist! It will be sheer mayhem if you allow the players to break out of line. Make it easy as a breeze for your pre-registered players to check in. They should only have to sign their leaderboard card/tournament waiver form and should be able to jump ahead at the reg table to pickup their player packs!

B5. PDGA Fees and Memberships

For SuperTour, NT, and Championship events all competitors MUST be current PDGA members, for all other B, C and X tier events all competitors we hope either are or will become current members. All competitors who are not PDGA current MUST pay an additional \$10 in order to participate except for special exemption events.

Players are expected to provide proof of membership by showing their current year PDGA membership card at check-in. The lists of current members provided in the TD package from the PDGA should always be consulted for those entering amateur divisions to verify a member's rating or when a player claims to be current but cannot prove it. Please ensure that anyone paying the \$10 fee writes their name and mailing address on the form provided so that you have a record of fees collected and so that the PDGA can send that person an application to join.

Some players will want to either join the PDGA or renew their membership at your event, especially in light of the \$10 fee. If you accept a players money on behalf of the PDGA please give the player a PDGA "Soft Card" (receipt for membership included in TD package) and forward their info to the PDGA office as soon as possible. If you don't, you may cause problems for a player at their next events, where they are expecting to be recognized as a PDGA member. However, the PDGA doesn't know that they have joined until you turn in their paperwork and money.

B6. Ace Pool

If you're having an "ace pool" (a fund where players usually pay a \$1-\$5 fee and all of the aces split the pool), use a large envelope and the honor system or assign a volunteer to oversee this task. Players put their buck in the envelope and sign on top to indicate they are in. Announce in advance whether the pool will be won on the first ace, longest ace or split in the event of multiple aces.

B7. Tee Assignments & Scorecards

Begin to place the leaderboard cards that have been completed onto the leaderboard. The PDGA requests that the players be placed in groups randomly, which allows some flexibility. The cards can be placed on the leaderboard in the order that they were registered and within their division, or at least within their class (Pro/Am). One way to mix them up is to place the next player registering in the next expected group for their division, and the next in the next group, etc. If players are registering with their buddies, this will usually work to split them up for the first round.

After all players are checked in and the leaderboard has been filled, you will want to distribute the scorecards to each group. Place the scorecard(s) behind the first player's leadercard on each hole. Be certain to announce early and often that the first player (in each group) is responsible for picking up the scorecard(s). The typical process is to prepare one scorecard for each group listing the names of all players in tee-off order. This is the common procedure for one day events and when weather might damage the scorecards making it risky to have one player's scores for several rounds on one card. Multiple day events will sometimes use one card per player to record all of their scores for the event on it. This is not recommended because the history of which players played together each round disappears making it tough to correct scores and verify rulings if needed.

B8. CTP Markers

Distribute closest-to-the-pin (CTP) markers to the group that starts on each particular CTP hole. Use a large nail and baggie (with paper and pencil inside) as marker; the nail is the actual precise mark.

B9. Other Park and Course Users

Put the "Course Reserved" sign by the first tee if the Park Dept has allowed you to exclusively reserve the course for your event. Place some Maps to Area Disc Golf Courses at the base of the sign so that casual golfers will see they have another place to golf. Be sure to weight them down with stones so that they will not blow away! Encourage people to take one (especially non-tournament participants.)

Though Parks & Recreation should be aware of our date, the possibility of conflicts with other Park users does exist. People can make mistakes and schedule things for the same time and sometimes people just show up in the Park unannounced. It is very important that we be extremely nice to the other Park users. If they are on the disc golf course please, walk up to them and kindly explain what it is you're doing, how much fun it is and that they may be in danger. Give them a mini. Always give strollers a minute or two to wander off the fairway on their own accord. It usually works.

Parks & Rec may have officially asked that you display the "Course Reserved" sign. Although we actually have permission to keep people off of the course, this is sometimes easier said than done. We do not want conflicts with other park users, even if we are in the right. You may catch more flies with honey. If casual players come up and want to play during your event, politely inform them that the course is reserved. Let them know when the course will be free. Steer them to other nearby courses. Be sure to give them one of the Maps to Area Disc Golf Courses. Invite them to play in your next event. Explain where they can find the flyers and who they can call for more information on disc golf. If they get angry, expect the question "This is a public park, how can the course be reserved? I pay taxes."

Calmly reply, that the concept of reserving facilities in a public park is an everyday occurrence. Softball fields are reserved for the softball leagues, tennis courts are reserved, picnic shelters, etc. Be nice, but insistent, parks are full of things that people can reserve. Explain that even if they were to go ahead and play that it would take way longer than they are used to because there are golfers on every hole. Let them know when the tourney will be over or if they can play during lunch break. Remember the person you are being nice to may be the spouse of the mayor or a huge corporate sponsor we are looking for!

C. PLAYER'S MEETING

C1. Start on Time

Start the players meeting 10 minutes before you think you need to. Begin the players meeting promptly. Don't wait for stragglers. Call everybody in 3 times (over about a 5 minute period) and then rock and roll. PDGA EVENTS START ON TIME! MAKE SURE YOURS DOES! Avoid "Tournament Directors disease", the practice of delaying the start of the players meeting "because all of the players aren't in yet" while continually yelling to "bring it in". Some players simply are not going to come in for the players meeting and some people are not going to pay attention during the players meeting. The tournament *must* be run on time. Start the players meeting on time so that you can get the groups out to their holes in time for the posted start.

C2. Introductions

Welcome everybody. Mention the local club! Mention ALL SPONSORS! Invite people to join the PDGA! Recognize staff and officials. Ask that everyone thank them profusely. Announce upcoming events.

C3. Basic Rules

Go over a few of the more basic rules for any new or novice players. This should include: use of a mini and proper stance, a falling putt, and, for everyone, courtesy towards fellow players - show other players the same courtesy and respect that you would expect them to show you. Remind players that no alcoholic beverages or drugs are allowed. : "Respect Park Laws and the PDGA Rules of Play!" Have fun.

Note: If there is a rules discussion or some other controversy during your event you will need to investigate. Listen to all parties involved. Be proactive! Seek out those that do not come to you. Follow the PDGA rules. Stay calm, do what is fair, consult other officials in attendance, and give the benefit of the doubt to the player where there is doubt. If players have a complaint, hand them a PDGA Tournament Evaluation form.

C4. Format

Go over which course layout will be used. Make the Out of Bounds (OB) and any special conditions well known. Detail how they are marked. Announce the CTP (Closest to the Pin) Holes. Explain how to "mark the time" of an Ace if that's how the fund will be distributed. Go over the two minute warning and the start signal.

Describe and demonstrate where scorecards should be placed when players come off the course after completing a round. Having a small cardboard "scorecard box" will give players an easy place to put their cards and keep them from disturbing your staff as they are attempting to verify scorecards.

Mention Sunday's tee time (if it's a two day event). Stress that there will be NO player's meeting on Sunday (unless you require one). Players need to get to the course, pick up their scorecard(s) and get to their tees.

C5. Bad Weather

If the weather looks threatening, go over exactly how play will be halted if conditions warrant. Cover how to handle the hole being played when the signal to stop is given (players mark their last shot or mark score for a hole just completed). Distribute your plastic bags so that players can keep their scorecards dry. Above all respect thunderstorms and other nasty weather by erring on the side of caution. Get players to safety quickly! Read Appendix B about how to handle lightning.

C6. Lunch Break

Explain how much time will be taken between rounds. Urge players to get off the course, turn in the scorecards, and hustle out to lunch. Leave the tournament staff to their task of verifying scorecards and recording scores. Explain that you will take "X" amount of time after the last group comes off the course (usually 1 hour). Mention that if they are done while other groups are obviously still playing, then they have more than X-minutes before the next round starts. Players should not hang around waiting for the next rounds' start time to be posted. "Go to lunch and get back quick!" Then look for the start time to be posted.

C7. Distributing the Cards

Explain how the leaderboard is laid out. Show the hole assignments on the leaderboard. Give an example of a hole and the players that are on it. Mention that the first player on each hole is responsible for picking up the scorecard for the group. Place the box of pencils in front of the leader board. Announce where they are. Ask for any questions.

C8. Get the Round Started

- Send them to their tees
- Two minutes before tee time, sound the two minute warning. (Get to your hole!)
- Two minutes later, sound the signal to start!
- Head to your post where people can find you during the round

D. BETWEEN ROUNDS

D1. Scorecards & Leaderboard

Have your scorecard box set out at tournament central. Be sure that players have a place to turn in their scorecards in case you're not at HQ when they finish their current round.

Start verifying scorecards ASAP. Point to your sign showing when the next round will start if someone asks "What time is the next round?" Suggest that they should hurry back if they plan on leaving. Have at least two others on your scorecard verification team. Do your scoring in a private spot. Get the leaderboard out of the public's eye. This will limit the number of interruptions from players eager to see where they stand. Once the last group has come off the course (be certain!), post the starting time of the next round.

Record the first round scores onto the leaderboard cards. Sort the cards within divisions by ascending total scores. If it's after round two, then use the best score in the most recent round (and then next most recent round) to break ties. If tied players have shot several identical rounds, use something like lowest PDGA number to determine who's placed higher on the board.

Put the leaderboard cards back on the board by division, Figure out how many players there are in each division. If the numbers make it difficult to have the same number of players on each hole, try forming threesomes or foursomes before you consider a fivesome. Don't make a larger group out of the slowest players. If some holes can be left open, the best idea is to make these the holes immediately before the most difficult holes on the course which take the longest to play. The top open group should be the group on hole one, the second open group should be on hole two, etc.

It is important to begin verifying scorecards as soon as possible. Get your staff moving! Get the leaderboard updated as soon as possible. One of the most exciting things in disc golf is watching oneself rise and fall on the leaderboard. Give your players a chance to see where they stand before they leave the course for the day.

D2. Other Tasks

Make sure the hardworking TD has some food on hand. A well-stocked personal cooler is recommended or arrange for someone else to get you some takeout. Have someone check the water coolers. Do they need more water? Ice? Are the CTPs ready for the next round? If this is a 2-round event, payouts need to be finalized and posted before the final round, especially for the Pro divisions. Get out the calculator and get to work. Perhaps you have already gotten a jump on your payout plan, especially pertaining to merchandise awards?

E. SATURDAY NIGHT

E1. Calculate the Purse & Prize Payout

Take the leaderboard to the party or restaurant if there's a gathering planned. If you have a laptop, use the Excel TD report template provided by the PDGA to help calculate your event income, expenses and payouts. If you have no computer, use the printed PDGA Payout Tables to determine how much cash to give away (and how many places to pay) in each division. Remember to take into account the PDGA fees as well as any other fees you may be deducting (i.e. Regional Series fees). Take your sponsorship money into consideration. Post the prize breakdown in a conspicuous place as soon as possible, certainly NO LATER than the morning of the final day for multiple day events.

Write out prize money checks (you can leave the "payee" blank) or prepare prize money envelopes. Write out the prize money breakdown for posting the next morning. You still may have to deal with some adjustment in the event players tie and you're using checks.

E2. PDGA Report

Continue filling in your PDGA Excel report template with scores, course layouts and financial information. This will set up your file to upload scores to the PDGA site for online viewing now. You can complete most of it in 30 minutes. Try to get that part done tonight.

E3. Plan for Tomorrow

Ensure that you have enough scorecards for the next day's play. Pack two extra rolls of toilet paper in the car. The bathrooms at the park will most probably be out by now. Get some sleep!

F. SUNDAY MORNING

- Tee early, 9:30 at the very latest.
- Arrive at the course one hour before tee time.
- Set leaderboard out.
- Set pencils out.
- Set out scorecard box.
- Replenish bathrooms with TP.
- Place scorecards on the holes on the leaderboard.
- Post prize breakdown.
- Set out water coolers.
- Prepare closest-to-the-hole markers.
- Two minutes before tee time, Sound "two minute" warning.
- Two minutes late, sound "start" horn.
- Get to your post

G. AFTER THE ROUNDS

Consider running a CTP or ace contest (a fun event) to occupy players while your staff is busy handling scores and prize preparations. Verify scorecards and update the leaderboard as soon as possible. Once all the cards are in, determine if any playoffs are in order. Play them off!

Ties will happen. Be prepared. Only first place ties are broken in PDGA events. If there is a tie for a place lower than first that involves a trophy or plaque, suggest a CTP throwoff. Divide money or prizes for the tied places equally among the tied players. For example, if three players tie for 2nd, total the 2nd, 3rd and 4th place money (let's say it's \$300, \$250 & \$200), divide that by three and award \$250 to each player. The 2nd place trophy goes to the winner of the CTP throwoff.

H. AWARDS CEREMONY

Thank everyone for coming again. Thank the sponsors. Thank the staff and volunteers.

Distribute the prizes. While most events start with the lower Amateur divisions (Juniors, Novice, Intermediate etc) and work their way up through the pros, it may be a good idea to start with the Pro Open division. This will give developing players a better chance to learn who the pros are.

Get golfers on the road ...and clean up.

I. POST-EVENT - FOLLOWING WEEK

Complete the administrative work for the event starting first with the PDGA TD report. Try to provide the complete information requested. Be sure to indicate if an Amateur player competing as a Pro declined a cash prize in order to maintain Amateur status. Call the PDGA office if you have ANY questions about completing the report (706-261-6342). Make a backup copy of the report in case something unforeseen happens. Send your results report by email to tourmgr@pdga.com. Post your results online at the PDGA site so players can see how everyone finished and their unofficial player ratings.

Email the PDGA report on time based on the requirements of the event tier. Make sure to send payment according to the current PDGA requirements to cover fees and memberships. Are the completed membership forms attached? Put plenty of postage on the envelope. Thanks for all your help.

Begin planning for next year's event. What can we do better? How can we make it more fun? Can we get better sponsorship? How can we attract more players? Try to keep it on the same weekend as this year's event.

Mail "thank you" notes to your sponsors. Clip and keep all printed coverage of your event. These could be helpful in securing sponsors for next year's event. Next year will be bigger and way easier now that you've done such a great job and gained lots of experience!

* * *

Thanks for your help in making PDGA events more consistent!

Appendix A – How to handle temporary courses, holes, OB, tees & pins

Proper marking is one of the most important aspects when adding temporary elements for events. Even though the rules make it the player's responsibility to know the courses, the TD should make it as easy as possible so players do not make a mistake such as playing wrong tees or holes, or not seeing the location of OB areas until it's too late. Players need proper printed information, proper explanations at player meetings and proper signage where needed on the courses.

Temporary holes added to course or a complete temp course

The earlier these holes or courses can be set up before the event, the better. In the case of the course being used in an NT or Major event, recommend testing the temp layout at an unsanctioned local event well in advance to test the holes, layout and course timing. Even though portable baskets may not be available until the event, mark the tee and pin locations with paint and flags in advance so players can walk the course. If surveyor's 4" lathe stakes are available, pound these in the ground at the pin positions and spray paint the tips orange to make them easy to see. An added touch would be to have a course map with hole lengths posted for downloading from your website.

Hole numbering should be done properly for temporary holes added to an existing course. The only time additional holes should ever be numbered is when ALL temp holes are added after the last hole on the current course. The best method is to label temp holes with letters starting with A for the first one players who start on hole 1 will encounter, then letter B, C, etc. If all three holes are after hole 8, sometimes TDs will mark them 8A, 8B and 8C. However, just A, B & C would be better so that players don't think 8A or 8B just refer to pin placements on regular hole 8.

Sometimes the course setup involves combining or skipping existing holes. Resist the temptation to renumber holes except possibly for Supertour and higher level events where a high percentage of visiting players are expected. A hole that plays from 3 tee to 4 pin can be called hole 3 on the map and scorecard. It's OK that the next hole is either a temp hole labeled A or regular hole 5 even if there's no hole 4 in-between them in the layout. Better that hole numbers are skipped rather than changing them so local players don't get confused at lower tier, more local events.

When temporary extended tees are used on some holes, it's extremely important to do everything possible to prevent the regular tee from being used accidentally. Put signs at the front of the unused tee, and/or place orange cones or trash cans on the unused tee so players won't play from it. When temporary baskets are used to extend a hole, make sure to put a trash bag over the existing basket if it's permanently mounted or remove it if that's possible.

OB & Paint Marking

Make sure the OB boundaries are identified on or close to the ground using string or paint as needed, especially if the natural boundary like grass/cement or water/land is not well defined. The best paint color for marking important lines such as OB boundaries is white, especially with a green grass background. Although most can see orange or pink on green, there are a surprising number of men with red-green colorblindness who cannot see pink or orange on green. Orange or other colors of paint are OK for tee lines as long as there are also flags or cones identifying their location.

Appendix B – How to handle Lightning

"Since we play outdoors where lightning occurs, we're prime targets for a lightning strike. Before your event, be certain that you have kept close track of the current (and future) weather conditions. Remember that the flash (bolt) of lightning moves at the speed of light. It's pretty much instantaneous. So we'll see it before we hear the rumble of the thunder. It takes five seconds for the sound of thunder to travel one mile. We can use this to calculate about how far from us the lightning is striking.

Here's how. Once you see the flash of lightning, begin counting seconds. Stop counting when you hear the thunder. Divide the total number of seconds by five (5) and you'll know approximately how far away the core of the thunderstorm is.

However, always remember IF you can hear thunder at all then you are always at risk of a lightning strike. Taking these measurements over a period of time can give one a good estimate of which way the storm is moving and how fast.

Also, please understand that the thunderstorm itself is also moving. Generally in the 25 – 30 mile per hour range. This all means that we're in danger whenever the lightning is within 6 – 10 miles of where we are playing. Since we have to evacuate players from a pretty large "playing field" we'll need to factor that in as well. When in doubt, halt play!"