

# Board of Directors Fall Summit Meeting Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA)

Appling, Georgia  
September 22-23, 2014

## Monday, September 22, 2014

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Duffy, Bob Decker, Kevin McCoy, Karolyn O’Cull, Rick Rothstein, Shawn Sinclair, and Dave West.

**Quorum present?** Yes

**Executive Director:** Brian Graham

**Staff:** Michael Downes, Steve Ganz, Toni Giusto, Matt Gregoire, Sara Nicholson, Zach Shafer (intern) and Andrew Sweeton.

**Guests:** Bill Wallis, Mary Ann Wallis, Nate Doss, Valarie Jenkins, Lorrie Gibson.

**Consultants:** Brian Hoeniger, Dan Roddick and Chuck Kennedy

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM by Board President Rebecca Duffy. Welcome remarks and introductions followed.

## **PDGA Headquarters Report - Graham**

### *Finance*

As of September 30, 2014 the PDGA had a net financial position of \$823,609, as compared to a net financial position of \$977,343 at the same time in 2013, representing a decrease of \$153,704. As noted in the Spring Summit report, the majority of this decrease is a result of increased financial investment in information technology.

As of September 30, 2014 we have expensed \$258,603 on IT projects, with 74% of this being with Bluespark on projects including ongoing website work and final development of our new online membership registration system. We are currently 36%, or \$68,603 over budget on IT projects this year. We finished the 2103 year \$66,000 over budget on IT projects.

The 2013 financial audit is underway. All requested financial documents were delivered to the auditors on 9/4/2014. Year to date balance sheets, P & L and A/R Aging reports have been uploaded to the Board Yahoo Group for your review.

### *Tech Standards*

Approvals of the following discs and targets by the tech standards committee were certified by the PDGA Board of Directors via online poll since the last board teleconference:

- “Supreme Legacy” from Ching Discs
- “Felon” and “Freedom” from Dynamic Discs
- “Buzz OS” from Discraft
- “Bird-Dog” and “Terrapin” discs from Paradigm Disc Golf

- "Cure" disc from Salient Discs
- "Solace" disc from Vibram Disc Golf
- "Thunderbird" disc from Innova (note: original Thunderbird became the Tee Bird)
- "Veteran" disc from Millennium Golf
- "Spider Web" target from JPasak LLC
- "Honey" disc from Essential Discs
- "H1" disc from Prodigy Disc
- "Jiao" and "Wei" discs from Yikun Sports
- "CD2" disc from
- "Savant" disc from Innova
- "Splinter" disc from Obsidian Discs
- "Outlaw" (retooled) from Legacy Discs
- "Proxy" and "Theory" from Axiom Discs

### **Memberships Manager Report – Sara Nicholson**

As of 9/18/14, the PDGA had 21,697 active members and lifetime membership # 68158 had been issued.

- Compared to 18,816 active members at the same time last year
- This represents a 15.3% increase in memberships thus far in 2014

(See memberships chart below)

Gender	Division	Total
Female	Amateur	1356
	Pro	346
Female Total		1702
Male	Amateur	15498
	Pro	4497
Male Total		19995
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>21697</b>

Country	Total
Australia	73
Austria	66
Azerbaijan	1
Belgium	32
Canada	385
Chile	1
Croatia	14
Czech Republic	36
Denmark	157
Estonia	74
Finland	1000
France	179
Germany	182
Hungary	17
Iceland	17
Ireland	1
Israel	3
Italy	11
Japan	92
Latvia	10
Lithuania	13
Mexico	3
Netherlands	47
New Zealand	8
Norway	190
Poland	3
Russia	14
Slovakia	7
Slovenia	1
South Korea	10
Spain	13
Sweden	480
Switzerland	76
Taiwan	10
Thailand	10
United Kingdom	100
USA	18361
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21697</b>

**States leading in Membership**

State	Total
(TX) Texas	1751
(CA) California	1688
(MI) Michigan	1223
(NC) North Carolina	898
(IL) Illinois	712
(FL) Florida	682

**Ace - Birdie - Eagle Members**

Membershiptype	Total
Ace	271
Birdie	234
Eagle	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>576</b>

State	Total
(AE) Armed Forces Canada	7
(AK) Alaska	80
(AL) Alabama	319
(AP) Armed Forces Pacific	7
(AR) Arkansas	133
(AZ) Arizona	270
(CA) California	1688
(CO) Colorado	536
(CT) Connecticut	103
(DC) District of Columbia	5
(DE) Delaware	82
(FL) Florida	682
(GA) Georgia	588
(GU) Guam	1
(HI) Hawaii	14
(IA) Iowa	398
(ID) Idaho	155
(IL) Illinois	712
(IN) Indiana	369
(KS) Kansas	354
(KY) Kentucky	376
(LA) Louisiana	83
(MA) Massachusetts	257
(MD) Maryland	162
(ME) Maine	38
(MI) Michigan	1223
(MN) Minnesota	579
(MO) Missouri	492
(MS) Mississippi	100
(MT) Montana	84
(NC) North Carolina	898
(ND) North Dakota	31
(NE) Nebraska	111
(NH) New Hampshire	44
(NJ) New Jersey	195
(NM) New Mexico	120
(NV) Nevada	180
(NY) New York	370
(OH) Ohio	633
(OK) Oklahoma	410
(OR) Oregon	553
(PA) Pennsylvania	489
(PR) Puerto Rico	1
(RI) Rhode Island	10
(SC) South Carolina	271
(SD) South Dakota	82
(TN) Tennessee	538
(TX) Texas	1751
(UT) Utah	156
(VA) Virginia	342
(VT) Vermont	32
(WA) Washington	556
(WI) Wisconsin	618
(WV) West Virginia	50
(WY) Wyoming	23
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18361</b>

## **Tour Manager Report – Andrew Sweeton**

### *2015 Tour*

To date we have 1,999 total events in the 2014 database and 1,932 of them are unique events. 1,993 events have completed all sanctioning requirements including payment and are thereby listed on the online calendar. At 72% of the tour year complete, we stand at 11% growth in total. Canada is at 52% growth over last year and International is at 20% growth.

Since the last tour report, the July and August player ratings updates were published on-time and the PDGA Office work is completed for the September update with the data now in the hands of the ratings crew looking towards a September 30th publication date. With 1,469 events due to have been reported by the September 9th submission deadline, 1,437 events (98%) are imported and will be complete with the September ratings update.

### *2015 Tour*

The 2015 Major/NT schedule is set along with some other notable events. (see page 2)

The A-Tier request story has been published with a nifty on-line request form built by Matt that will save me a ton of time sifting through emails. The goal is to release the Major/NT/A-Tier schedule by November 1st (one month earlier than past years.)

## **Events Manager Report – Michael Downes**

Michael Downes gave the BOD a report on his responsibilities as events manager including attendance at events and management of the PDGA Tour Trailer.

## **Media Manager Report – Matt Gregoire**

Matt Gregoire reported on his media manager responsibilities including managing all media requests for exposure, publishing media at pdga.com and the e-newsletter. He reported a 21% open rate and 20% click-through rate. He stated that there may be a proposal to coordinate on YouTube with McFly so High. He stated that all film crews should sign an agreement with the PDGA, while the PDGA retains all rights to those videos. Chuck Kennedy commented perhaps a news blurb on new discs could be promoted as a bonus. Guest Nate Doss, gave high praise to Mike Downes and Matt Gregoire on putting a professional face for the PDGA.

**Office Manager - Toni Giusto** had nothing to report, as Headquarters figures were previously posted.

Discussion continued, with comments from staff, Board Members and Consultants;

Bob - commented that the auditors needed to submit Form 990 by November 15<sup>th</sup>, even if it was not an audited return, and amend it at a later date.

Mike – when asked about the Marco Polo grant funding Mike Downes said he felt it was close to being exhausted; and it was noted by Executive Director Brian Graham that it would be brought back to the Board under budgeting.

An open discussion ensued about invitational Director's Cup for State Coordinators and Tournament Directors and "Regional Development Centers", a topic to be addressed later in the meeting.

**Headquarters Report ends 9:45 am.**

## **Worlds Model Discussion – Graham**

Brian Graham opened with comments about inconsistencies among our National Championship events, including the availability of more than one national championship for some age based divisions. Graham stated that the PDGA should be setting the example for excellence at our top level PDGA owned events like our national and world championships, however the current formats, number of competitors, and number and quality of course needed to host these events made it very challenging. Graham stated that it was time to review the formats of

our top events and make the necessary changes to increase the quality and professionalism. The World Championships have historically been a family reunion event for our sport. Graham recommended changing the format of the World Championships to make it the most elite level event in the sport and to create another new annual event to serve as our family reunion event and to build in a tradeshow component for the disc golf industry.

Graham asked guest Nate Doss to share his thoughts. Nate said the Worlds Championships should be the best, finest event in the world as the name suggests. He suggested that the number of courses played be reduced to a manageable level, so that all courses played are simply the best courses, not fill-ins to accommodate a large field. A consistent registration format should be used at all events. He further suggested the event be a four-day event, with a cut made the last day, eliminating the Final 9.

A general discussion ensued, with the following suggestions made by those present:

Graham – Split the Worlds into A) Smaller more manageable elite events and B) Create a new family reunion event, with a tradeshow component, educational sessions, competitions & fun activities;

Sweeton – Set aside spot(s) for International and other divisions that won't fill quickly;

Hoeniger – Define and guarantee slots for international members; then give the slots away if not filled.

Doss & Graham – Tier the registration process by ratings to ensure that top level players get into the event. Points currently assure an invitation, but not necessarily registration;

Ganz & Sinclair – Stress a focus on the best of the PDGA on all fronts, and suggest “comply or bye-bye” in a non-bullying, discussion format person to person;

Sweeton – Change planning pipeline to align with CVBs, with advanced planning four (4) years out;

Downes – Said that information needs to be provided soon, info for 2016 must be available now;

Roddick – Reminded everyone that changes are evolutionary and small changes will resonate for years. PDGA's goals must be identified first, and decide what an Elite Event Worlds Championship will achieve.

A straw poll showed a unanimous agreement to review the Worlds model and to consider format changes.

**Worlds Model Discussion ends 11:00 am.**

### **International Report – Hoeniger**

Brian Hoeniger pointed out several areas of interest regarding International events, and made suggestions on PDGA improvements;

The 2013 Copenhagen Open's course was not up to par;

Sweden has a large viewing gallery, with hundreds of spectators attending hometown events;

Two (2) European Majors are held in even numbered years;

Two (2) European Majors & European Championships are held in odd numbered years;

One (1) Oceania Major is held yearly for Japan and Australia;

Brian Hoeniger reported that Canada is quasi-international and in its formative years. All fees are managed by him and remain in Canada, returned by 2/3 to new courses and 1/3 to Canadian tournaments. Other requests are considered on a case by case basis. He noted membership growth of 33%, with the majority in British Columbia and southern Ontario. Manitoba has five (5) members, two tournaments and leagues. The Maritime Islands are a recent addition, with tour fees waived the first year to encourage growth.

Of special note on membership growth, is Finland with 1,000 members in a 5 million population. By comparison, Sweden is a distant second with 500 members, but a stronghold of most events in Europe.

His suggestions going forward are:

1). Globalize PDGA standards

- Sanctioning fees
- TDs must be Officials
- Rules on Pros playing Am
- Membership renewals
- Tournament sanctioning

2). Formalize Country Relationships

- WFDF + PDGA = Authority for disc golf; Sports Accord will garner global recognition
- Vote on 2016 PDGA Europe events
- Observe other events
- There are 24 countries on Yahoo Group and is most active sector
- The European view of disc sports is Olympian in nature; spectacle is most important
- Involvement of the Host City, extracurricular activities and spectacle = Olympian
  - Example: European Championships host team Swiss Disc Golf contributed \$40,000 EU and \$40,000 EU in-kind sponsorship, partnering with Geneva and the Canton of Geneva, Latitude 64 & many other contributors.

3). Build Better World Events

- 2014 Am Worlds reflected poorly on the PDGA
- Reserve 24-48 spots for International players
- Reserve 12-20 spots for Canadian players
- Caveats – Here are your open slots; if you don't respond, the number will be fewer next year.

The total number of countries represented in a Worlds event is important. Pro Worlds held in Europe would be held in either Sweden or Finland.

**Lunch Break at 12:15 pm.**

**Global Disc Golf Day – Graham**

Graham gave the BOD an update on discussions with John and Dee Houck for the PDGA to take over the World's Biggest Disc Golf Weekend. Graham suggested changing the name to Global Disc Golf Weekend or something similar to stress the fact that it is not a tournament but an initiative to get new players playing all over the world. Graham requested ideas and input from the summit attendees prior to the staff beginning planning of the event.

Discussion included "Love a Frisbee" day, the focus of which being a new disc golfer introduced to the sport. An existing disc golfer should bring a "newbie" as an entry fee. It was suggested it be coordinated with a League launch and include a "What is Disc Golf brochure, a beginner disc and information to the TD.

**Disciplinary Process – Sinclair**

Shawn Sinclair recommended that the board modify the current Disciplinary Action Appeals Process document as follows.

Line item #2.

Current:

2. Once the PDGA office has received your appeal, it will be forwarded to the PDGA Board of Directors for their review. Your penalty will be suspended during the appeals process until such time as The Board resolves the appeal.

Proposed:

2. Once the PDGA office has received your appeal, it will be forwarded to the PDGA Board of Directors for their review. Your penalty will **not** be suspended during the appeals process as The Board resolves the appeal.

The reasoning is so that a player cannot game the system. If they are given a suspension that would affect an upcoming tournament they might appeal just so that they may play in the event, regardless of whether they agree with the punishment or not.

The BOD voted instead to strike in its entirety, the whole second sentence of Line item number two.

Shawn Sinclair noted that a German TD complained that the Disciplinary Excel sheet publicly showed a "reason" column, and cited possible life-impacting consequences of such information. It was suggested that column be hidden from public view and the BOD agreed that these changes be made.

**The Board entered into Executive session at 1:40 pm.**

**Day 1 Wrap up at 3:15 pm – Duffy**

Kevin McCoy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Karolyn O’Cull.

Yes: 7, No: 0 – Motion passed and meeting adjourned.

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## Tuesday, September 23, 2014

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Duffy, Bob Decker, Kevin McCoy, Karolyn O’Cull, Rick Rothstein, Shawn Sinclair, and Dave West.

**Quorum present?** Yes

**Executive Director:** Brian Graham

**Staff:** Michael Downes, Steve Ganz, Toni Giusto, Matt Gregoire, Sara Nicholson, Zach Shafer (intern) and Andrew Sweeton.

**Guests:** Bill Wallis, Mary Ann Wallis, Alan Kane, John Baker, Lorrie Gibson.

**Consultants:** Brian Hoeniger, Dan Roddick and Chuck Kennedy

### **Arrival and Meeting Preparation**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Board President Rebecca Duffy.

### **Strategic Planning Topics – Graham**

A review of Strategic Planning themes was done and the following notes were made:

#### 1 - Grow the sport through broadcasting, educational programs and our club networks:

1a). Media Manager Matt Gregoire is currently working on developing revenue generating media projects. Also, it was suggested to either step up or discontinue Disc Golf Monthly. Disc Golf Planet use has been scaled back.

1b). The PDGA’s goal is to have this become manufacturer neutral, possibly through acquisition.

1c). Cliff Towne to review and revamp affiliate club program.

1d). Target demographics for non-competing member were seniors, military, Girl Scouts and home-school children.

#### 2 - Make the disc golf experience awesome for our competitors and player community:

2b). Collaboration to improve standards has been addressed, in part, by Jay Svitko at Lemon Lake.

#### 3 – Foster an active and engaged membership with a focus on providing the highest quality products and services:

3a). Identified as low-cost, club level, non-competing memberships.

#### 4 – Market and grow the awareness of disc golf:

4c). A 6-page typo was noted in the 2014 Fall DiscGolfer magazine.

## 5 – Relentlessly pursue excellence in how the PDGA operates and accomplishes its goals:

5a) TD communication - short term - creation of Facebook page by Tech Director Ganz; Committee communication – underway – Google Group or Yahoo archives.

5c) Board appointments - short term – make appointments of persons with special skills.

When asked, the PDGA staff made the following remarks about making the PDGA more efficient:

Mike Downes – Suggested that we consider giving State Coordinators free memberships during their 2-year term; and some sort of reward be given to TDs

Toni Giusto – again mentioned the need for the membership database and the accounting software, QuickBooks, to somehow link which would avoid duplicate data entry;

Andrew Sweeton – Agreed that the Strategic Plan, with its data measures, made sense;

Jason Allind – stressed the importance of having a Marketing Director;

Sarah Nicholson – thought the highest quality product to members as important, as is the reclamation of Affiliate Clubs.

### **Technology Update – Ganz**

Related to the membership registration shift, Steve Ganz made mention of several areas that should be improved upon. Steve suggested the telephone system at the IDGC be updated to function more efficiently in anticipation of a rise in the number of calls. As such, he announced the PDGA website's home page display would no longer prominently display the telephone number, encouraging the membership to search the site first as it already included nearly all of the information members call the office for.

Steve Ganz then gave a preview of the new online Membership model, to be launched October 1, 2014. Several Board members made suggestions and comments related to International memberships, the ability to opt out of email, country code detected by IP address of user, Affiliate Clubs and coupons usage. Brian Hoeniger noted that a zip+4 address ties an address to a specific block and could present privacy issues.

Related to memberships, Officials Exams can now be taken online free as many times as necessary, until the TD passes, then the cost of certification is \$10.00.

Steve then went on to report Steve Carson was working on a “live scoring” project and had several young folks working pro bono on mobile applications. He encouraged more investment in the IT area, stressing the need to continue identifying PDGA needs, writing specifications to get there and working steadfastly to build it correctly.

**The Board entered into Executive session at 11:45 am.**

**Lunch Break at 12:30 pm**

### **National Tour Discussion – Graham**

Brian Graham stated that Mike Downes and Matt Gregoire provided support services to 17 NT and Major tournaments in 2014. Graham questioned whether the PDGA should change the current NT series model to a more inclusive model which might include regional A-tier events in the points standings. Kevin McCoy suggested that the NT series be expanded to include 40 events over 8 regions, five events per region, putting the most

emphasis on each regions NT events. Andrew Sweeton suggested the NT be promoted as Elite Events, restricting play to FPO and MPO only.

Mike Downes said he thought a Marketing Director would be key to NT growth. He said that consistency among NT events such as the spreadsheet used to calculate a purse was important. The number of players, amount of fees, added money and number of places paid could be included for TDs to use, the design of which would be by Tour Manager, Andrew Sweeton, and ideally would include both Mike and Matt during design discussions.

The office staff was asked to perform a review of the National Tour in 2015 and to bring back improvements for future changes that might be implemented in 2016.

### **Course Design Standards – Kennedy**

Chuck Kennedy gave a presentation on course design. He said that neither courses nor course categories have been defined very well by the PDGA. He said course owners needed to be persuaded to build and/or reconfigure existing courses to meet PDGA standards. Graham warned that we needed to be aware of potential liability issues but also stated that it was time for the organization to set proper standards. Kennedy questioned why people do things: 1) They are good things to do 2) They are required to do them by an Institution or 3) They are legally required to do them.

To recap, he suggested the following standards be met by those wishing course approval by the PDGA:

1. Promote Best Practices
2. Receive the blessing of the PDGA
3. Revive Evaluation Ratings for courses
4. Retain Certified Evaluators
5. Evaluate courses
6. Establish PDGA minimum standards for Tiers
7. Revise the Course Directory, listing Evaluators, Designers and Builders
8. List PDGA elements, such as target convergence, to “hole out”.

### **Day 2 Wrap up at 3:15 pm – Duffy**

**The Board entered Executive Session for the remainder of the meeting.**