Use of Non-Standard Rules at PDGA Sanctioned Events

In 2018, Hazard and Relief areas were added to the PDGA Official Rules of Disc Golf as standard course design items available to Tournament Directors. All TDs should remember that any rule or tournament procedure which is not specifically allowed by the PDGA Official Rules of Disc Golf, PDGA Competition Manual, or PDGA Tour Standards and companion documents, requires prior approval from the PDGA Director of Event Support.

Events that use non-standard rules, without prior approval, risk being unrated or unsanctioned after the fact.

Any use of a non-standard rule, including but not limited to, a different percentage of payout, mulligans, team formats, limiting a player’s OB options, etc. MUST be approved prior to the event by the PDGA Director of Event Support to ensure the event is legal and can be rated.

- As per PDGA rules (806.02.D), for a TD to limit a player’s choice for playing an OB disc from 1) the previous lie, or 2) a lie marked within one meter from where last inbounds, 3) within 1 meter of all OB lines, 4) from a designated Drop Zone (if the DZ is provided by the TD), and 5) a lie designated by a marker disc placed on the playing surface at any point on a one-meter line that is perpendicular to the out-of-bounds line at the point that is nearest to the position of the disc (if rule is provided by the TD), then the Tournament Director MUST request a waiver.

- Typical examples of limiting a player’s OB options include, but are not limited to, course design items like Island Greens, forced drop zones, or “Throw & Distance” rules like the “BUNCR” rule. Any rule requiring players to re-throw from their previous lie after landing in a marked area, with or without a penalty (Island Greens, “Throw & Distance”, BUNCR areas, etc.) may also potentially be un-rateable and must request a waiver.

- Any Mandatory that does not have a Drop Zone within 10 meters of the Mandatory, requires a waiver. This includes all Mandatories that do not have a defined Drop Zone and thereby require a throw from the previous lie.

- When a waiver is requested, the PDGA Director of Event Support will work with the TD to ensure that any such rules will not prevent the event from being rated. This can typically be easily accomplished with the addition of an appropriate drop zone, alternate route to complete the hole, or some other alternative. Note that a waiver for the use of a BUNCR area, where a re-throw from the original lie is required, usually CANNOT be rated. TDs should explore other options such as a HAZARD Area (play it where it lies with a penalty) or RELIEF area (mark as if OB, but without a penalty.)

- Any event that receives a waiver for a rule where it is determined that the rule will make the layout un-rateable will only be sanctioned using the X designation added to the Tier level and the TD will need to include the information that the event WON’T be rated within the event information prior to players registering to ensure they are aware.

Again, events that use non-standard rules without prior approval risk being unrated or unsanctioned after the fact. TDs and course designers are encouraged to use less punitive ways to challenge their players while following standard PDGA rules. HAZARD areas, RELIEF areas, or establishing a forward drop zone providing players with options after landing in a marked area are a more appropriate way to penalize players while also keeping players moving forward to benefit the speed of play.

To request a waiver for a non-standard rule and discuss options to ensure the event may be rated, please contact the PDGA Event Support Team at eventsupport@pdga.com