

# PDGA Mid-Event Weather Suspension & Cancellation Guidelines

Dangerous conditions at a PDGA sanctioned event may require a Tournament Director (TD) to consider the need to suspend play or outright cancel the remainder of the event. The purpose of this document is to help TDs to make good decisions concerning suspensions and/or cancellations based primarily on player safety, and secondarily on maintaining the integrity of the competition.

It is critical that TDs place the safety of their players, staff, and spectators above all else. Although the sport of disc golf is generally continued during wet weather conditions, TDs need to be aware of those conditions that could cause injury or death. These dangerous conditions may include:

- Lightning
- High Winds - especially on wooded courses (danger of falling branches/trees)
- Downed power lines
- Flooding - especially on courses with flash flood areas or creeks/streams that need to be traversed
- Slippery Conditions – especially on those courses with inclines that need to be traversed
- Extreme Heat or Cold - especially if sudden onset so players are not prepared with appropriate clothing
- Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, Mudslides, etc.

Other non-dangerous weather issues:

- Course closures
- Park/Course double-booking
- Property Owner dissent
- Slowness of play (bad weather) causing loss of daylight

TDs need to suspend play immediately upon dangerous conditions while ensuring that ALL players, staff, and spectators are aware that play has been suspended so they can seek shelter. TDs should utilize tools such as lightning detectors and online lightning maps to assess both the onset and passing of lightning conditions with an eye to the speed of the storm. An approaching fast-moving lightning storm may require that a TD suspend play before conditions at the course have even begun to deteriorate.

Only after carefully assessing that the danger has passed should a TD consider resuming play. In the case of lightning, play should not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last strike.

## Planning for Delays or Cancellations

Prior planning is essential for a TD to be able to quickly and confidently deal with necessary event delays or cancellations. Prior to an event even starting, a TD should consider their event's format and consider multiple possible contingency plans that may be required depending on when during the event the delays or cancellation occurs. Such contingencies need to ensure that the integrity of the competition is maintained by providing for final tournament results tabulated with all competitors within each division having played the same total layout.

Simple formats with players contained on a single course playing shotgun rounds can be relatively easy to recover from delays or cancellations, while complex formats with divisions that span multiple pools and/or tee times can be much harder to provide for recovery and will need more complex recovery planning and execution.

## Items to Consider when Planning for Event Recovery

- Number of days of the event
- Number of rounds and holes of the full event
- Number of rounds and holes per day
- Round format – Shotgun, Tee Times, or both
- Any Pooling (Course or Divisional) and how that affects recovery
- Recognizing the required milestones to use a partially completed tee time round (9 or 13 holes)
- Retaining all scorecards for proper calculation of a partially completed tee time round

With each of these in mind, consider the various stages of the event and the impact a delay or cancellation would have and what would need to be done to recover. Remember that completion of a previous round always takes precedence over starting a new round, so delays earlier in the event are easier to recover from by simply completing the round after the delay even if necessary to do so the next morning prior to the start of any other round (may require cancelling a later round.)

If a delay occurs late in the event time-line it may be necessary to cancel a partially played round. If so, the results of the event would need to be based on the last completed round(s) that ensure all members of each division completed the same total layout. Note that in the case of a larger event that has a division or divisions that are large enough to cover multiple pools, it may be necessary as a last resort to vacate different completed rounds from different pools to ensure all competitors within a division have completed the same total layout for final standings.

## Decision Process for Cancellations

TDs need to make sure that once all participants are safely off the course, they plan to allow for the possible completion of the event once conditions clear, rather than outright cancelling the event too early. Wherever possible it is critical that a TD take the competitor's hard work into account by trying ***to complete as much of the event as possible***. TDs should always attempt to complete any partially completed round first, but may need to consider drastic measures to allow for a fairly-contested competition. Depending on the time available before dark, such measures could include (in preferred order from most to least time available):

1. Cutting an in-process Tee Time Round to just the first 13 Holes
2. Cutting an in-process Tee Time round to just the first 9 holes
3. Reducing a field down to 72 competitors that could complete a shotgun-round.
4. Reducing a field to 54 competitors that could complete a shotgun-round.
5. Reducing the number of holes of a layout to a minimum of 13 holes.
6. Reducing the number of holes of a layout to a minimum of 9 holes.
7. Reducing the number of holes to a Final 9 of the top 4 competitors plus ties of the affected divisions.
8. Reducing to just breaking any first-place ties from the scores of the previously completed rounds.

## Figuring the Timeline for Delays on the Final Day of an Event

If there are weather delays on the final day of an event, it can impact the completion of the event depending on when the dangerous weather finally clears. Creating a timeline for the various recovery options will help the TD to decide on the best recovery option. The easiest way to do this is to figure the amount of time required for each possible option and set a timeline based on when it will be too dark to continue play. In all cases, prior planning is a critical element in allowing TDs to be prepared to make tough decisions when needed. These tough decisions should be made carefully, thoughtfully, and away from the emotions of competitors and staff at Tournament Central.

Example:

- Completion of the scheduled Tee-Time round and possible playoffs will take an additional 7.5 hours
- Completion of a Tee-Time round of 13 holes for all scheduled players will take an additional 6.5 hours.
- Completion of a Tee-Time round of 9 Holes for all scheduled players will take an additional 5.5 hours.
- Completion of a 72-person Shotgun round and possible playoffs will take 4.5 hours
- Completion of a 54-person Shotgun round and possible playoffs will take 3.5 hours
- Completion of a 52 person 13-Hole shotgun round and possible playoffs will take 3 hours
- Completion of a 36 person 9-Hole Shotgun round will take 2 hours
- Completion of a Final 9 for the top 4 competitors will take 1.5 hours
- Only breaking first-place ties from the scores of previously completed rounds will take 30 minutes

In this example let's assume it is too dark to play at 7:45pm, so:

- If play can resume by Noon - complete the scheduled round.
- If play can't resume until after Noon but by 1:00pm – have remaining groups only play to Hole 13.
- If play can't resume until after 1:00 but by 2:00pm – have remaining groups only play to Hole 9.
- If play can't resume until after 2:00pm but by 3pm - vacate the partial tee time round and cut to a 72-player shotgun round
- If play can't resume until after 3pm but by 4pm – vacate the partial tee time round and cut to a 54-player shotgun round
- If play can't resume until after 4pm but by 4:30pm – vacate the partial tee time round and cut to a 52-player 13-hole shotgun round
- If play can't resume until after 4:30pm but by 5:30pm – vacate the partial tee time round and cut to a 36-player 9-hole shotgun round
- If play can't resume until after 5:30pm but by 6:00pm – vacate the partial tee time round and cut to a Final 9 for the top 4 competitors plus ties
- If play can't resume until after 6:00pm – vacate the partial tee time round and cut to just breaking first-place ties based on previous rounds.

Remember, completion of a partial round always takes precedence over starting a new round. Some cuts to a new shorter format should only occur if previous rounds were complete. For example, if a Tee Time round is partially complete and there is time to either complete that round or complete it through 13 holes or 9 holes that will take precedence over dropping that partial round and starting a different format. (See below.)

It is also important to note that multiple weather delays could require the TD to reassess and re-format as the available time to finish the event decreases.

## Required Milestones for Partial Tee Time Rounds

In instances where Tee Time rounds are in use, it may be possible to save part of a partially completed round if all players in an affected division have reached a minimum milestone of completion.

The reason for the milestone approach is to reduce any perceived subjectivity in the exact timing of the cessation of play and to allow players to more easily and clearly plan their play strategy considering possible partial round usage in a shortened event. If **every** playing group in an affected division:

- Has not finished 9 holes, and the final round must be vacated with no chance of a restart, then the entire round will be vacated.
- Has finished at least 9 holes, but less than 13, the TD will use only the first 9 hole scores for the round and disregard any further holes played.
- Has finished 13 holes, but less than 18, the TD will use only the first 13 hole scores for the round and disregard any further holes played.

Example: The lead group is on hole 17 when the horn sounds. The TD determines that there is insufficient daylight to restart the round after the dangerous weather passes. All groups are then scored on just the first 13 holes of play for that round. **The TD is strongly encouraged to inform the players of this possible situation before the round starts so players can strategize their game accordingly.**

## Cancellations with no time for Recovery

A TD may be faced with a necessary cancellation with no time left to be able to further the completion of the event. In these cases, it may be necessary to vacate a partially completed round and in the case of pooled events, possibly vacate previously completed rounds to ensure all competitors within a division have completed the same total layout. Under no circumstances should players be expected, or asked, to return on a day following the last day of the regular scheduled rounds to finish the event.

## First-Place Ties

A problem when vacating partial or previously completed rounds is that with the fewer rounds counting towards final scores, it is more likely to be left with first-place ties. PDGA rules normally require that first-place ties be broken by sudden-death playoff so a winner can be declared and the first-place prize awarded. But such a playoff should only be held if the dangerous weather has cleared and there is time to complete the playoff during the last day of regular scheduled rounds for the competition (same day as the non-completed round.) If the playoff cannot be held in safe conditions during the last day of regular scheduled rounds for the competition, it is PDGA policy that a first-place tie will stand with the players declared Co-Champions with prizes for the number of places split evenly between the players.

Under no circumstances should any non-sudden-death playoff criteria such as hot round, head-to-head scores, etc. be used to break first-place ties.

Under no circumstances should players be expected, or asked, to return on a day following the last day of the regular scheduled rounds to conduct a sudden-death playoff.