

15 Tips to Attract, Encourage and Retain Participants in your Women's Disc Golf League



-Notes from the 2017 PDGA Women's Symposium by Jenny San Filippo #38831

Attract: *This is the startup of your league and how to gain new participants.*

1. Reach out!

- You can reach out to your local disc golf community online via social media.
- Post in local club or course pages to let people know you are starting a ladies' league.
- Once you have determined you are starting a league create a group page for your ladies' league and share this page with your local disc golf community.

--When I was first forming our Milwaukee area league this is how I started, there were about 4 or 5 women on a local area Facebook disc golf group who I didn't know at the time, but expressed interest in playing disc golf with ladies in the area. This online connection was a great start to the building of our league.

2. Host an Informal Ice Breaker Event

- Host a casual mixed doubles round or Ladies round where the guys can play in a separate group on a weekend or weeknight before your league starts.
- By hosting an event like this, women can come with their significant other to meet everyone at first, it is a great way to help ease into things, especially for people who may be a bit shy or not comfortable meeting new people, having a familiar face with them helps add to the comfort level

3. Always have a free option for your league.

- Aside from any course fee, it is a good idea to have an option to play in the league for free.
- You may want to have a paying option for the ladies who like to compete and don't mind paying a small league fee.
- For the people who are new to your league or just starting out, by having a free option to play it makes it more appealing to try something new, without having to spend any money.
- If you want your league to be a league that participants have to pay for, consider having a free night once per month, or first time attendees play for free.

4. Right place at the right time

- Spring is a good time of year to start a new league, and your league should continue into the Summer months.
- If you are fortunate enough to live in a warmer climate your league could go all year.

- Choose a day of the week that most people are available. You won't be able to meet everyone's scheduling needs, but after normal business hours or weekends tend to allow more people to attend.
- If you have created a group via Facebook for your league, take a poll and see what days and times work best for those who would like to participate.
- Consider the course, is it beginner friendly, but challenging enough experienced players will want to keep coming, is it easy to get to, is it frequently busy?

5. Let it be known! Promote, Advertise and Inform

- Create promotional materials to advertise your league.
- Create a flyer with the date, time and basic league info to hang at the park your league will play at.
- Create business cards that can be handed out easily to new ladies you and other league participants encounter on the course.

Encourage: Welcome all players, and grow your league attendee's skills & confidence

1. Show up!

- *As the leader of your league it is important to show up each week no matter if you are the **only** person there.*
- *If you are there and stick with it believing that it will grow into something bigger it will.*
- *Don't get discouraged by low turnout especially in the beginning...some areas don't have as many ladies playing yet, **or** they may not know of your league.*
- *Be there, show your commitment, dedication and determination to grow your league and it will.*

2. Welcome ALL new players.

- On the first night of your league for each season have a meet and greet time before you play, where all new and existing members have the chance to introduce themselves.
- When there is a new member of the league participating during the season, be sure to welcome them as they arrive, and introduce them to the existing participants.
- Let all your existing participants know how important it is to welcome new members regardless of their skill level, after all we were all beginners once too

3. Score

- Have printed scorecards available, or use a scorecard app to track the progress of your rounds.
- For new players keeping score is important. It teaches them to count their strokes which is important when they get to the point of wanting to play competitively and it also offers a gauge for them to track their improvement.
- Even if your league is not playing in a competitive fashion for top scores, keeping score is important to help encourage growth, knowledge and the bettering of your league players game by tracking their progress.

4. Can I get a Mulligan?!

- Allow for 1-2 mulligans per round for new players. If their throw puts them in a really bad, tough spot let them re-tee to try and correct their recent mistake.

--We have offered the option of "DOLLigans" in the past which are the DOLLs version of a Mulligan. League players could buy up to 2 DOLLigans per night for \$1.00 each if they wanted to have a chance to re-throw. The funds raised by DOLLigans or your Mulligans can be put towards an end of season party, tournament fund or prizes for your league.

5. Bring a friend!

- Encourage all your league participants to bring a friend, either someone who does play or someone who has never played.
- If you can offer a reward such as a (mini, towel, disc) for people who bring a new player that is even better.
- Have beginner friendly discs on hand so if that a new player has the right equipment needed to make the league a good experience.
- Allow the new player to be in a group with the friend that brought them to league.

Retain: Keep them coming back for more!

1. Mix it up!

- If you are fortunate enough to have more than 1 card playing, switch up how you determine groups.
- You can choose at random by using playing cards, or flipping discs. Make some nights where your participants can choose the groups. Mixing it up is a good way to keep things fresh and allows players to get to know other members of the league.
- Vary your formats: come up with a schedule of what formats you will use when. Format options: Singles, Best Shot Doubles, Wolf, 2-disc night, 3-disc night.

2. Offer prizes

- Ask local disc golf companies, area players and sponsored players for donations to be used as prizes.
- Think of creative ways to distribute the prizes. Some ideas include: Newest member of the league, closest to pin, closest to tee pad, longest putt, furthest traveled, closest to pin with opposite throwing hand, closest to pin with opposite throwing style, most bogies, most birdies, highest score, lowest score, most improved score. By having different ways to win this helps to spread out the prizes to all players over time.

3. Stay connected 365 days of the year

- Stay connected on social media through your Facebook group by posting league schedules, event information, and other disc golf news.
- Encourage your league members to post in your group if they are looking for people to play a casual round with.
- If your league only runs during the Spring, Summer and/or Fall months offer ways for players to get together during the times of year that your league is not running. Some ideas: create a winter travel league, where your league members can travel to different courses in your state once per month, as a way to meet new ladies and also try out a new course....Set up a bowling or game night with your league so you can all get together even if the weather isn't great for outdoor activities... Host a craft night where you all get together and make something (knit items, painted items, t-shirts), maybe that something can be sold to raise funds for your leagues upcoming season.

4. Reward attendance

- Offer incentives to attend the league regularly.
- You may give points or raffle tickets for every night a person attends.
- If you do the points based attendance you can have a prize for the person who has the highest attendance points.
- If you go with the raffle ticket based system, they can get a raffle ticket for every night they attend, at the end of the season those tickets can be put into a drawing with other attendees for a prize.

5. Celebrate your league

- Host a beginning of season and end of season party for your league. Try to pick a weekend where there aren't a lot of other disc golf events going on.
- Have a party in the beginning of the season to kick off your league, offer a learning portion of the event where you have an experienced player offer advice on driving, putting, techniques and any other useful information. At this party:
- Eat together, have a potluck style lunch where everyone brings a dish to pass.
- Play a round together, a fun way to get people to know each other is to have a best shot doubles round where you pair new players with experienced players.
- Host an end of season party, you can make it similar to your beginning of the season party with a potluck meal, casual round and clinic, but also add a prize or raffle into the party if you have gathered prizes throughout the season.
- Another way to celebrate your league is to order some league merchandise, if you have a logo or name for your league order some bag tags, towels or t-shirts. League participants can show their excitement to be part of your league by purchasing and showing off their lady league merchandise.

The sky's the limit when dreaming up your new or existing league. I have mentioned 15 tips that can be helpful if you are new to running a league or need a little inspiration. These tips are just a start, there is no limit to your success.

Some additional resources are the Facebook Group called Women's Disc Golf League Directors. discgolf4women.com has a list of ladies leagues, you can also find resources on "How to Run a Women's League" on PDGA.com/women.

Recommended Links:

<http://www.pdga.com/women>

<http://www.discgolf4women.com/women-s-league-directory>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370156046512512/>