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About WFDF

The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) is the international sports federation responsible for governance of Flying Disc Sports, including the disciplines of Disc Golf and Ultimate, among other emerging disciplines, with 126 National Federations across all continents.

WFDF is an international federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and other key international bodies.

WFDF is a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code, and is a registered not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation in the state of Colorado, USA.

WFDF's mission is to "support and promote the inclusive growth and development of all Flying Disc Sports and Spirit of the Game."

WFDF's values are:

- **Disc Sports Continuum:** A lifetime of the Disc Sports lifestyle; WFDF believes that Flying Disc Sports are accessible over an entire lifetime. Moreover, there is a lifestyle aspect and culture that is embraced by all participants.
- **Spirit of the Game:** Flying Disc Sports rely upon the Spirit of the Game that places the responsibility for fair play on every participant. This concept is at the heart of the rules of each discipline and our governance structure, incorporating elements of integrity and respect.
- **Passion:** Flying Disc Sports participants have a passionate enthusiasm for the sport. All of our disciplines generate excitement, emotional attachment and a sense of belonging to the global community.
- **Community:** Flying Disc Sports provides a unifying spirit that leads to lifelong friendships, camaraderie, teamwork and loyalty which transcends cultural, geographic, political and religious differences.
- **Inclusiveness:** WFDF fully supports diversity and inclusion in our sports and organization. WFDF, as well as its national federations actively promotes participation and accessibility with regard to race, color, religion, ability, national origin, gender and sexual orientation.

Intellectual Impairments

References:

- [Luca Bruni: Una storia di Inclusività per il Flying Disc](#)
- [Uniting Athletes: The Power of Inclusivity in Ultimate Frisbee](#)
- [Integrating neurodiversity in Ultimate Frisbee](#)
- [Disc golf hits a hole in one with Special Olympics hopefuls](#)
- [Autism And The Sanctuary Of The Chains: Father And Son Bond Through Disc Golf](#)

Luca Bruni: A Story of Inclusivity for Flying Disc



How it all Started

The journey of the All-Inclusive Ultimate Frisbee Project began in the early 2010s when Davide Morri started teaching Ultimate Frisbee in high school classes. During this time, they had students with autism and Down syndrome. From 2012 and 2019, parallel after-school practices of Ultimate were created that included students living with disabilities. This led to the birth of the "All-Inclusive After-School Program," a unique initiative that brought together students with autism, and those without.

After a few years, the success of the program inspired Davide to expand the initiative to the Bologna Flying Disc Association. He aimed to create a real team that welcomed anyone interested in learning Ultimate, with the goal of integrating athletes with autism into other city teams for summer and winter leagues.

Bridging the Gap in Inclusivity and Equality

This project plays a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and equality for athletes with autism in Ultimate Frisbee. When they start, their skill levels are often similar to beginner players.

Throughout the year, they achieve significant progress both technically and situationally, enabling them to join practices and tournaments as any other player in the city. This inclusion creates a ripple effect of awareness, as top players and athletes in the city see how those experiencing autism fit into various leagues and events.

Growth and Future Aspirations

The project has seen remarkable growth over time. “We have consistently had 2 to 5 students per school join the after-school practice, and the number of players in the BFD All-Inclusive Team grew from 15 in 2023 to 26 in 2024.” Davide shares. The vision for 2025 is to establish a second group, continuing this upward trajectory.

Looking five years ahead, they hope to see some of the players transition from the All-Inclusive Group to beginners' and U20 teams, further solidifying their place within the broader Ultimate Frisbee community.

Integration vs. Separate Leagues

This project's approach focuses on practicing together rather than creating separate leagues for players with special needs. During practice, players from BFD FOTTA and SHOUT often join, along with volunteers from the U24 and U20 teams. When it comes to league play, their inclusive team participates in mixed leagues with all members of the club and city.

Inspiration Behind the Project

Davide's initial inspiration for creating opportunities for athletes with autism came from his volunteering experience with a special needs basketball team in 2006. This experience, combined with his studies in sports, highlighted the segregation these athletes often faced. “In my adult years, I realized that Ultimate Frisbee has the potential to welcome everyone without boundaries,” Davide says. “The potential of frisbee is unlimited”.

A Spotlight on Luca Bruni

A shining example of the project's impact is Luca Bruni. “I met Luca in 2019 when he was in his second year of high school. Luca has Down syndrome, and he always participated in our all-inclusive after-school practices. In 2021 and 2022, I became a teacher at his school and dedicated more time to the program. After Luca graduated high school in 2022, his passion for Ultimate Frisbee led us to create the team.” Luca is currently one of the only active players in the world with Down syndrome, and his dedication is unwavering. His dream is to one day play for the Italian national team. The project will be used as a tool for bringing a voice and proper representation to neurodivergent athletes around the world. They deserve the same opportunity and privilege as all other athletes.

Focus on Youth and Adult Accessibility

The All-Inclusive Project primarily targets individuals over 16, extending into adulthood. “We recruit adult athletes with autism through various channels. Sometimes, we encounter potential players in schools and invite them to join the BFD all-inclusive team.” Davide Shares. For those over 18, they collaborate with Andrea Sammarchi, who works for the territorial services of the Bologna metropolitan area. Andrea introduces us to individuals who might be interested in joining our team.

What it's All About

The All-Inclusive Ultimate Frisbee Project is more than just a sports program; it's a movement towards a more inclusive and equal society. By providing opportunities for athletes with autism to learn, grow, and compete alongside their peers, we are breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of community that extends beyond the playing field. Davide reached out to BE to join forces and get an important story out to the ultimate community and beyond. We align on open mindedness and a bigger purpose of advancing the sport of Ultimate, community equality and its inclusiveness.

Autism and the Sanctuary of the Chains: Father and Son Bond Through Disc Golf



In 2015, an ESPN year-in-review show was playing on the television in the Maryland home where Tom Rowse lives with his wife and his son, Cush. One clip in the show was Nate Doss' 2015 ace of hole 1 in the final round of the Memorial Championship.

With its epic water carry and the hard smash of disc into chains, the shot fascinated Tom's son, who has autism.

"The first time Cush heard the chains speak, he was like, 'Whoa,'" Tom—who often refers to disc golf basket chains speaking and singing—said. "He rewound it about a hundred times. Giggling and rewinding; giggling and rewinding."

Something about the sport had clearly caught his son's attention, and Tom turned and asked Cush a question.

"Do you want to learn to play disc golf?" he asked.

"Yes," Cush replied.

These were the first steps in a journey that, just over three years later, has resulted in father and son playing over 800 rounds together. Each one of those rounds has helped a young person relax

and be himself and, bit by bit, created a father-son bond tighter than Tom ever imagined possible.

Why Try It?

Tom had been looking for a physical outlet for Cush for years before the ace caught his son's eye.

"We were in a really bad, bad place when we started playing," Tom said earnestly. "He had escalating violence against me and my wife. He was angry; it was puberty. He had all those hormones going off inside of him and he didn't know how to express himself. He could only express himself with lashing out in anger."

And, before, there hadn't been much of a solution to these outbursts. Tom said that if he didn't do an activity with his son, he'd become angry. However, though hiking and swimming were occasionally effective, most activities Tom tried to do with Cush also caused his son to become frustrated. But now there's a relief valve in these situations that almost always works.

"Any time we have behavioral issues—he acts out, he tries to hit me—I always say to him, 'What's next?'" Tom said. "And he says, 'Disc golf' every time. And I ask, 'Are you gonna be good?' He says, 'Yes. Disc golf.' And we go, and he is. The best word for it would be 'sanctuary.' It's the sanctuary of the chains."

A Healthy Addiction

Tom's wife bought him a disc golf starter set for Christmas in 2015, and though it took three months before Tom and Cush first set foot on a course, the realization that they'd be back took just one hole.

"We got to about five feet on that first hole and I threw the disc in, and his eyes got wide," Tom said. "I asked, 'Do you want to do that?'"

Cush did, and after a few tries, he got a putt in the basket.

"He made the chains sing and then smacked them a little bit with his hands to make them sing some more," recalled Tom fondly. "Then I threw the disc in hard and made the chains sing real loud. His eyes went huge. By the end of the round, he'd made the chains sing a few more times himself, and that did it."

Now, Tom says that hearing "chainspeak"—as he refers to it—is one of the biggest pleasures of his and Cush's lives. They've developed a routine that when Cush returns from school on the bus, they immediately pack water and head out to the course. Usually, their destination is Seneca Creek State Park, just five minutes away from their home.

"Every day we go out, play nine holes, and get an hour outside," said Tom. "He gets out any kind of aggression or problems from the day. We go out, throw some discs, laugh at each other and with each other. It's an addiction that's healthy."

All of this happy, relaxed time spent together has helped deepen Tom and Cush's relationship.

"We've always been close, but it wasn't this close," Tom said. "I'm proud to say that on this day, we have the strongest bond I've ever seen between a father and son, and it means so much to me."

A Special Moment

Though Tom clearly relishes every time he and Cush get to play, he described one moment that stands out to him above all the rest.

"One time I went out with all the guys from our home course, and we played an impromptu tournament that some of the guys put on," Tom said. "We played all day, and they included Cush in everything—making sure he was carrying the bag and being my caddie and doing his putting when we got close. He had a great time with it; they were encouraging him and giving him high fives."

Afterwards, the group retired to one of the players' houses for refreshments and the awards ceremony. Tom and Cush went, too.

"They did announcements and announced the winners and everything, and then they announced the MVP," Tom said, needing to pause a little before being able to continue. "They said the MVP was the Most Valuable Putter. Then they started talking about how he carries his dad's bag and all that stuff, and that made me cry. It was a great moment. Those are the friendships—the times I remember."

Despite being profoundly touched, Tom was likely not surprised by this show of love from his fellow disc golfers. He said that one of his favorite things about disc golf is how "everyone is passionate about including everybody," and that passion for inclusion means disc golf has become a social outlet Cush has never had before.

Advice for Other Parents of Children with Disabilities

Tom believes that disc golf has the potential to help many more people with similar challenges to his son's. To that end, he's run disc golf classes for both children and adults with autism and even helped install a disc golf course at a local school for autism. He says it's amazing the effect that "chainspeak" has on the students there and the others he's taught the game to.

"They're quiet, their eyes go wide, and you know what the first thing they want to do is? Try it."

There's even an aspect of disc golf that many see as a nuisance that actually mimics a common practice used with those with autism.

"For children with autism, they often put on a weighted vest or ankle weights and it's supposed to bring them into the here and now and make them be in the present, in their body," explained Tom.

A disc golf bag seems to serve the same function as these weights, and Cush loved carrying one from the beginning. Now he's the permanent caddy, happily toting his and his dad's 35 discs along each round.

For other parents of autistic children who may want to try disc golf with their own sons or daughters, Tom also had a few tips. He said to start just with putters, and the parent may want to do most of the longer shots and then get their child to finish out the hole once the distance is short (approaches or putts). Tom also put disc golf in Cush's Individual Education Plan at school and said that the physical education teacher has helped Cush learn to throw correctly.

But the principle underlying all Tom's advice on this topic is simple: "Make it fun." And this is a tenet he's followed with his own son from day one. However, at least in the case of Cush, it isn't one that's hard to abide by.

"'Steady' Ed [the father of disc golf] supposedly said, 'He who has the most fun wins,'" Tom said. "And when we're on the course, I know who's having the most fun. It's not me or anybody out there playing tournaments; it's my boy. He's got a smile a mile wide, and he loves it."

Physical Impairments

References:

- [Changing the Game: Germany's Wheelchair Ultimate Team](#)
- [Pajuniitty MultiGolfPark - A wheelchair accessible course](#)

Changing the Game: Germany's Wheelchair Ultimate Team



When we last introduced the German Wheelchair Ultimate Team, they were preparing for their first World Championship. Since then, the squad has grown—welcoming new players, hitting milestones, and setting even bigger goals. Wheelchair Ultimate carries the spirit of the game—teamwork, fast-paced throws, and creativity—while opening the door to athletes of all abilities. It's a powerful example of true inclusivity in sport.

A Brief History of Wheelchair Ultimate

The idea of Wheelchair Ultimate began to take shape in the early 2010s, with discussions first emerging during the 2013 WFDF Congress. The sport gained momentum in 2023, culminating in the inaugural World Wheelchair Ultimate Championship in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy, on September 29–30, 2023. Four teams competed, including Germany, Italy, and an international team primarily from Japan—a milestone moment for the sport.

From Bronze Medal to Bigger Goals

At that first World Championship, Germany made history by bringing home the bronze medal. What began as a small school-based project near Frankfurt has since grown into a thriving program at VSG Darmstadt, an inclusive sports club. The expansion has brought in new athletes, broadened training opportunities, and united players both with and without disabilities, aged 12 to 20.

Now 11 players strong—including two young women expected to join them at the next World Championship—the team's weekly practices are about more than skill. They're a space for laughter, connection, and support, where teammates push each other to grow both on and off the court. Each player adds something unique—skills, personality, and the spirit that defines Ultimate. Together, they form not just a competitive squad but a family.

Strength in Diversity

Every athlete brings a different mix of abilities, making the team stronger together. Some draw from other sports like wheelchair basketball; others contribute creativity, leadership, or communication skills. Coaching requires flexibility—traditional instructions don't always apply, so drills are adapted with visual cues, colors, and demonstrations. Each player has a clear role, helping them focus on their strengths.

As coach Tanja Gebert explains: "Everyone has 'special abilities' that drive the game and the team forward."

Shining a Light on Non-Visible Disabilities

This year, the team is also raising awareness of non-visible disabilities—conditions like rheumatism, epilepsy, autism, visual impairments, muscular weakness, perception disorders, heart conditions, and cancer.

These challenges aren't always obvious but can significantly impact daily life and sports participation. Unlike visible disabilities that fit into systems like the Paralympics, non-visible disabilities are often overlooked. For some athletes, running long distances isn't possible; for others, perception disorders or autism make standard gameplay difficult. In wheelchair sports, those barriers fade. As Tanja explains, "Inclusion is more than just wheelchairs and ramps—it's about recognizing the many disabilities that aren't visible at first glance. We really need to integrate everybody."

Many of the players grew up playing from a chair and, as Tanja notes, "everyone carries their own package." Within this team, they've found comfort and acceptance in a space designed for them. The court levels the field, letting them focus on the game without the demands of traditional running play.

Tanja emphasizes: "Only by recognizing and respecting non-visible disabilities can we ensure that everyone has access to sport, that no one is left behind, and that we all work together for a diverse and inclusive community. Especially in the Frisbee world, we should stand up for this."

Why the Sport Matters

For these athletes, Wheelchair Ultimate is more than a game—it builds confidence, belonging, and resilience. The teamwork they develop extends far beyond the court. Their story also underlines a larger truth: inclusion in sport matters. At a time when disability programs face funding cuts, this team shows what's possible when athletes are given the chance to play and be seen.

More than a Team

Many of these athletes have known each other since childhood, their bond strengthened by shared challenges and experiences. Newcomers are welcomed with warmth, but the foundation of trust and support runs deep.

Practices are filled with laughter and encouragement. For most, the World Championship will also mark their first flight, making it as life-changing as it is competitive. Meeting adult athletes with disabilities at the last Worlds left a lasting impression, offering role models who showed that a full and joyful life is always possible.

Looking Ahead

This year, the team's goals are clear: win a medal, keep improving, and above all—have fun. But beyond competition, their journey carries a much bigger message: inclusivity in sport matters. With disability programs under pressure, the German Wheelchair Ultimate Team proves what's possible when athletes are given space, resources, and respect.

Pajuniitty MultiGolfPark – A wheelchair accessible course



Pajuniitty Disc Golf course in Nummela, Finland expanded into a MultiGolfPark during the summer of 2021. The course has 18 holes and consists of two 9 hole entities. The first 9 holes vary between 23 and 57 meters. The latter 9 holes are short, 10–15 meter holes. In a MultiGolfPark, you can play disc golf, park golf, ball golf and soccer!

Disabled people have been taken into consideration during the designing process of the holes. The shorter holes are really short and those with a wheelchair can move on an asphalt road along the fairways. The field is also fit for blind and visually impaired people thanks to the high contrasts of baskets and tee signs and the ability to ring the baskets chains. Braille isn't used in this course, because finding the course blind without an assistant is practically impossible.

The opening ceremony of the new MultiGolfPark attracted a crowd of disc golfers and locals. The crowd consisted of Henry Manni, who is a Paralympics bronze medalist in wheelchair racing, and Erkki Eerola, Vihti's mayor, who played disc golf in a wheelchair. Leevi Pursiainen, Vihti's municipality committees chairman, Mikko Kaakinen, representing Finland's Disc Golf Union and Spin18, and Leo Piironen, who is the youth- and education coordinator, played disc golf blindfolded with the assistance of Finland's Disc Golf Unions chairman Laura Heikkilä. Vihti's exercise services representatives Joni Honkala and Sari Sarpaneva played soccer in the MultiGolfPark.

To a regular disc golfer, the different play style brings a new perspective to the sport. If you are interested in accessibility and sports of the disabled, there is a chance to participate in Disc golf for everyone -education weekend at the sports college in Kisakeskus, Raasepori. During the weekend you will learn the basics of accessibility, sports for the disabled and disc golf, and you will be able to use your knowledge when teaching disc golf to very different groups of people.

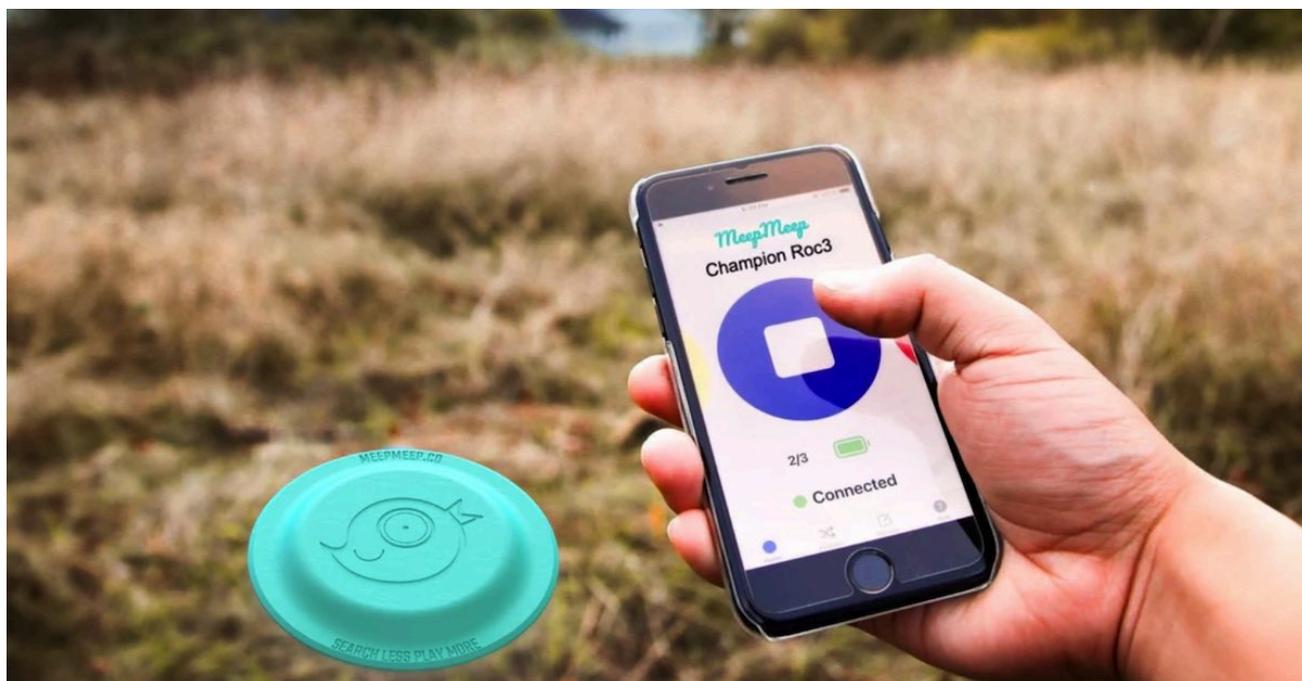
On top of the course being accessible with a wheelchair, there were also lots of young disc golfers putting and throwing on the course. It seems that the Pajuniitty course continues to be a popular place for youngsters and also a great place for people to get to know the sport!

Visual Impairments

References:

- [Disc Golf For The Blind & Visually Impaired: New Disc Tracker Helps Make It Possible](#)
- [Modified Disc Golf](#)

Disc Golf For The Blind & Visually Impaired: New Disc Tracker Helps Make It Possible



Though it's difficult for many to imagine, it's possible to play disc golf with acute visual impairments. There are even people who enjoy the sport despite being completely without sight. Blind and visually impaired disc golf communities are fairly early in their development, but there are resource groups who want to help them grow.

One of those is Sports4TheBlind, which put together an event in 2019 in Spokane, Washington, to give blind and visually impaired individuals the chance to try out disc golf. As the attendees learned the sport, they got to talk with a member of the local Parks and Recreation Department about a little device that could make disc golf more accessible to them.

That device is MeepMeep, a small tracker that adheres to the underside of a disc and can sound an alarm when activated through an app. Even if players can't see the disc, they can hear it. While almost any player could benefit from this invention (don't we all wish our discs would call to us from the tall grass after an awful shank?), this little piece of tech is especially powerful for those in the sport who have vision impairments.

MeepMeep Finds Its Focus

MeepMeep's founder, Eve Olynyk, got interested in the idea of an audible disc retrieval aid while in an incubator program, but she wasn't thinking beyond how such a device could help the average disc golfer.

"Originally, I just wanted it for myself," said Olynyk. "I was a casual player and just hated losing my disc all the time. I didn't have the accessibility feature off the bat on my mind, but early on we had a mentor, Mike Shannon, who saw the need for accessibility in different sports. He connected us

with others who quickly identified just how impactful this could be for individuals with visual and cognitive disabilities."

Olynyk and her mentor then researched if those with visual impairments had already found their way to disc golf, and their digging turned up the Blind Disc Golf Association (BDGA). The group helps connect those with visual impairments who are into disc golf and shares resources to make the hobby easier and more enjoyable for community members. To Olynyk's surprise, a little scrolling on BDGA's page showed that the group had already expressed a desire for exactly the sort of device she was imagining.

Building with Accessibility as the Top Priority

Once Olynyk realized her idea could help those with visual and other impairments enjoy healthy recreation, everything about the project focused on fulfilling that potential.

"We didn't build the app and then add accessibility: We built it with accessibility as the forefront," said Olynyk. "It had to be easy to use and not impact your game. We focused on software design for our app to make sure it was a pleasant experience for all players, so we had to ensure it could follow best blind practices such as font size or contrast and have the ability to be usable with screen readers."

From product design to packaging to the app design, every part of the MeepMeep experience was built with inclusivity and accessibility as the priority.

Finding Support in the Disc Golf Community

After entering the market during the disc golf boom at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, MeepMeep was welcomed so warmly by disc golfers that the crew behind it has already grown from just Olynyk and a mentor to a team of eight with an advisor. The company's missions are "do what excites us, leverage our influence, and be genuine humans," and Olynyk wants those goals to stay at MeepMeep's core no matter how large the team gets.

"When you're early on building a company, you have a lot of choices in how you build it," said Olynyk. "You have so many decisions. I think we all felt really strongly that we wanted to focus on our mission statements since these were the things we felt most passionately about. From hiring to what material we use to our packaging, every decision is based on our mission statements."

Despite their vision, it wasn't always a clear path forward.

"We are bootstrapped, not backed in any way," said Olynyk. "It was a lot of blood, sweat, and tears that got us here. We got various grants and support from colleges and others, plus lots of support from the disc golf space that were willing to take a chance on us. You don't see a lot of women in disc golf or hardware. It was the overwhelming support that let us do this."

MeepMeep didn't know how they were going to be embraced by the disc golf community as a whole, but they were happily surprised.

"People in disc golf are willing to support vision," said Olynyk. "In other sports, you might not get that. Players get that this is a new company and want to help out. I love that people are supportive of what we're doing. People in disc golf are so welcoming. Everyone in the disc golf community knows we're building this together. It extends to the businesses – it's not just on the course or consumer level. It's everywhere. It's across the board."

The support from disc golfers is what continues to drive the team.

"I'm brand new to both MeepMeep and to disc golf," shared Brittany Michaud. "What keeps me going and so passionate about supporting this is the community. Every day I talk to the most amazing people and organizations. The community is everything for me."

Helping People Find More Than Discs

While MeepMeep is proud to help all current disc golfers better enjoy the game, they also hope their invention will inspire groups supporting visually impaired communities to try the sport out for the first time.

"We work partner by partner," said Olynyk. "We believe in building the right partnerships. People referring potential vision impaired partners to us is always going to be the biggest help. People reading this will be disc golfers, but if they know where recreation accessibility in their community exists and might be interested in connecting with us, we'd love to hear from them to see what they can do to bring disc golf to their community. We want to be connected to organizations that have never heard of disc golf and help them love it."

Other

References:

- [Mental Health Disc Golf Events Build Support, Compassion, & Awareness](#)
- [Canadian Disc Golfer Teams Up With UDisc To Show Courses That Are 'Accessible For Everybody'](#)
- [Adaptive Rules for Disc Golf](#)

Canadian Disc Golfer Teams Up With UDisc To Show Courses That Are 'Accessible For Everybody'



An avid player since 1997, Dion Eden has long felt the draw of disc golf. But after a car accident in 2009 left him with lasting pain and hampered his mobility, he had to approach the sport in a different way. His mind was still in peak condition for tackling courses of all types, but the game now took a physical toll he hadn't previously experienced.

"I had to teach my body to play again," Eden said.

That shift was the catalyst that would eventually lead to creating his design company, All Accessible Disc Golf, and the upcoming Playing In My Shoes, a region-wide event that takes place at 30 different courses in British Columbia, Canada, on May 26.

The events, which run in conjunction with Canada's National AccessAbility Week, will aim to help participants experience what it's like to play disc golf with a disability or limited mobility. Players will take to the course in a wheelchair, with a blindfold, with ear plugs, or by using their non-dominant hand to raise awareness, which aligns with AccessAbility Week's goals to "recognize and celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities, as well as to promote accessibility and inclusion in all aspects of life."

Eden has partnered with companies like MeepMeep, which makes a disc tracking device for players who are blind or visually impaired, as well as the BC Disc Golf Association, the Village of Keremeos, and a number of local disc golf clubs to bring the event to life on a wider scale.

"Accessible for everybody"

Playing In My Shoes is one step toward Eden's greater vision, which is to build disc golf courses that are "accessible for everybody."

And he means more than some of the conventional forms of access, like adding ramps or walkways.

"So if you're deaf or blind, you'll be able to see or hear the discs in your world or within your ability level," Eden said. "A course can be wheelchair accessible and [include] all those other elements as well – a sound locator, a basket that lights up...that's where I'd like to go.

"It makes it fun for everybody," he continued. "For us (the hearing community), we can hear the basket. But for someone who is deaf...let's make it light up when they hit it! That will give them the same reward as the sound of the chains."

While the universally accessible course concept is still in the planning stages, Eden has already designed his first truly wheelchair accessible course, Pine Park in Keremeos, Canada. The nine-hole course "has all the elements – trees, challenges, things to throw around – but is still wheelchair accessible," Eden said.

Eden has also created an "Accessibility Rating System" that buckets courses into one of three categories: wheelchair accessible, cane accessible, and not easily accessible. Each of the categories is designated with an easily identifiable green, yellow, or red icon, and Eden now assesses and certifies courses that fall under the scope of this system.

UDisc's Role in Accessible Courses

Eden's hope is that eventually all courses around the world will have an accessibility rating, which led him to reach out to UDisc. And since one of the company's core values is "include everybody," it made for a fitting collaboration.

As a result of several months of conversation and a series of design interviews, as well as input from touring pro Scott Stokely, UDisc recently added new tools for Course Ambassadors that let them indicate the level of accessibility players can expect to find at their course. These options mirror Eden's Accessibility Rating System in both language and iconography:

- Wheelchair accessible: Courses with this designation have been assessed and comply with wheelchair accessible standards for at least most or all holes.
- Limited mobility/cane accessible: This symbol indicates a course may have some accessibility features, but it is not fully wheelchair accessible.
- Not easily accessible for players with mobility limitations: This disc golf course is not recommended for individuals with limited mobility.

Course Ambassadors can find these designations under the Accessibility section of a course's details. Each category has information on how to determine the best selection for your course. Additionally, we have an overview of what a wheelchair accessible disc golf course looks like.

Once a Course Ambassador assigns this attribute to their course, it makes the course searchable in new accessibility filters that are available in the app and on the web version of UDisc's course directory.

Since the release of these new indicators in March 2024, 2,370 UDisc courses have been updated with accessibility information. This means you can now filter for "Accessibility" in the Course Directory and find a course to suit your level of mobility.

Why are these distinctions important?

As Eden put it, elevating this information for Course Ambassadors aids in understanding and helps encourage them to reflect on what small changes can be made to their courses to make them welcome for all.

Combine that sentiment with the eyeballs of players who use UDisc, and it has a multiplying effect that can already be felt.

Mental Health Disc Golf Events Build Support, Compassion, & Awareness



Andrew GottWorth said after he and his wife got interested in moving to Europe from Kentucky, his partner used a simple method to compare possible new homes.

"She literally made a pro/con spreadsheet of London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, and a few others, and we decided to make a big jump," GottWorth said.

Berlin, the capital of Germany, won out. And shortly after the two arrived, GottWorth found his way into the disc golf division of a Berlin sports club called Pfeffersport.

One of Pfeffersport's missions is inclusion. When GottWorth saw them following through on that mission in the form of events and activities aimed squarely at groups sport often excludes (e.g., those in wheelchairs, the very young, seniors, etc.), he felt inspired.

Helped by Pfeffersport's Johannes Kropf, GottWorth decided to create a disc golf event series that would support people facing mental health struggles and educate those who don't about what such struggles are really like. It's a cause close to his heart. Diagnosed with depression over a decade ago and with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and ADHD within the last seven years, GottWorth has long volunteered with organizations that help those whose mental health, like his own, requires constant, conscious management.

So far Mental Health Disc Golf events have been held in Dublin, Ireland; Vienna, Austria; and Berlin. While attendance has been modest, the results for participants have been significant – and

interest appears to be growing considering the multiple requests GottWorth has received to run more events in other countries.

We talked with GottWorth and Bob van Ruggie of the Dublin Disc Golf Club to learn more about how the events are organized, what players have gotten out of them, and plans for Mental Health Disc Golf events in the future.

How Does a Mental Health Disc Golf Event Work?

GottWorth told us that Mental Health Disc Golf events have two main goals.

"One is for disc golfers who may or may not have mental health disorders to learn more about it, start to appreciate what disc golf can bring, and maybe start discussions that break down stigma around mental health disorders," GottWorth said. "The other side is people with mental health disorders who may or may not know disc golf to come into it and maybe find a tool that can help them and then have a space that is stigma-reduced with people talking about mental health – a safer space."

Engaging in any sort of play is good for mental and cognitive health no matter your age, but disc golf lends itself particularly well to GottWorth's aims. Typically played at a leisurely pace and in areas big enough to allow groups to spread out, disc golf allows time and space for intimate conversation. Another bonus is that disc golf doesn't require players to directly oppose others like when you block a shot in basketball or get someone out in baseball. This reduces the likelihood of adversarial feelings occurring between players and tainting discussions.

Players at Mental Health Disc Golf Events take on the course in a doubles format with two nine-hole rounds. Instead of the typical two-team, four-person playing groups, though, GottWorth puts three teams (six total players) on a card.

"It moves slower but it has bigger discussion," GottWorth explained. "You can really have a variety of comments. People can speak up if they want to and also sort of wait and not have to speak if they're not comfortable. It also builds community."

Of course, GottWorth doesn't just send groups out with a general mandate to discuss mental health while they play. He prepares facts and questions designed to catalyze discussion, and one gets read out at the beginning of each hole. One player in each group is a facilitator who gets these discussions started and greases the wheels of conversation if necessary.

Because the events focus on a weighty topic, it's also important to include elements that lighten things up a bit.

"We've had prizes like closest-to-the-pin and longest drive," GottWorth said. "Just trying to have some fun because mental health discussions can be quite heavy."

So far all events have been free to play with a suggested minimum donation that's given to a local organization dedicated to mental health.

Results from Mental Health Disc Golf Events So Far

Van Ruggie, head of the Dublin Disc Golf Club and designer of Dublin's sole disc golf course in Corkagh Park, helped facilitate a Mental Health Disc Golf event and was impressed with the outcomes.

"Andrew prepared some really insightful and thought-provoking questions to help guide the conversation during the round," van Ruge said. "Mental health can sometimes be quite difficult to talk about, especially with strangers, but by asking questions that bridge mental health struggles with disc golf struggles and the insights that can help us understand or grow in either or both of these facets of life really made us realize the extent of our own knowledge and understanding of many of the mental health struggles that Andrew was hoping to bring to the fore."

Discussion at a Mental Health Disc Golf event.

GottWorth is always considering ways to maximize the benefits van Ruge pointed out. For one, he's noticed that playing a full 18 holes mixed with all the discussion can leave some participants drained – particularly beginner disc golfers not quite ready to spend most of their day out on the course.

"It's really pitched as casual best-shot doubles that can be for beginners," GottWorth said. "In Dublin we thankfully had quite a few beginners and I think 18 holes was a little much."

But even if the amount of disc golf could use a bit of scaling back for this context, van Ruge believes the events perfectly showcase why disc golf can be such a powerful addition to anyone's mental health toolkit.

"I think what's really critical is not only the mental health that was spoken about during the event but the reminder that disc golf can be used as a mental health tool as well," van Ruge said. "Sometimes if we're feeling down, frustrated, anxious, or anything else, coming to the course and playing a round can really go a long way in helping center ourselves and contextualizing the problems or struggles we may face."

Adaptive Rules for Disc Golf: Appendix F to the Official Rules of Disc Golf



On June 15, 2023, the PDGA Global Board of Directors approved the addition of a new Appendix F to the Official Rules of Disc Golf (ORDG), to be implemented as soon as was practicable. We are pleased to announce that this Appendix is now available for use at PDGA-sanctioned events.

This Appendix contains rule enhancements designed to be used in adaptive disc golf, such as at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in July. These rule enhancements are in effect where a Tournament Director specifies that an event or certain division(s) will be played under adaptive disc golf rules. The last time an Appendix was added to the ORDG was in 2018.

This groundbreaking move forward can largely be credited to the passion and hard work of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and 2019 United States Women's Disc Golf Championship TD, Jeff Shattuck #23454, who are also organizing the disc golf competition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and have been giving adaptive disc golf clinics to veterans around the country.

"This year at the 2023 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Portland, Oregon, we will be introducing the new rules and regulations," said Jennifer Purser of the PVA, adding that they expect 120 participants in the adaptive disc golf section of the Games and intend to sanction the disc golf portion in 2024.

The impact of this addition extends far beyond this year's Games, and began years ago, when Shattuck began working with PVA to bring disc golf to the disabled veteran community.

"My favorite event was our very first disc golf event at Loriella Park in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 2014," Purser recalled. "Jeff Shattuck and I put the first program together, and we had several veterans come out and learn disc golf. They were excited from the beginning."

Purser and Shattuck eventually brought disc golf training to the Richmond VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia. Purser explains that "we are showing them that their disabilities won't hold them back in life." When asked about what makes working with veterans and developing adaptive sport so rewarding, Purser cited "the long-term friendships that come out of adaptive sports and the encouragement and support [the participants] all give each other."

"No one is left behind," added Purser.

Purser and Shattuck approached PDGA staff with a list of proposed rule enhancements and a description of why each enhancement was necessary.

"We felt it was important to go to the leaders in disc golf to become partners in supporting legitimate rules and regulations," Purser stated. "We wanted to create consistency throughout the adaptive disc golf program."

At that point, Policy & Compliance took those concepts and drafted the new Appendix, which was then vetted by PDGA staff and the Rules Committee, as well as undergoing legal review.

"We knew we wanted to do this right the first time," said Mike Sullivan, PDGA Senior Policy & Compliance Officer, "and between the expertise brought by Jeff and PVA and the insight of the Rules Committee and PDGA staff, we are confident we hit the nail on the head."

The PVA and Shattuck approved the final draft prior to the Board's consideration of the topic at the recent Spring Summit, where the Appendix was approved.

"Appendix F adds much-needed clarity to the game of adaptive disc golf," said Shattuck. "It defines important points and considers not only the positioning of mobility devices during play

but also adverse conditions, which affect mobility devices. It also makes the sport accessible to quadriplegic and visually impaired players, who have limited hand and wrist movement or require beepers and other sound-emitting devices. In short, it includes people with disabilities and ensures their assistive aids are permissible in all sporting events and divisions.”

Where possible, the Appendix does not create new rules, but endeavors to instead codify assumptions that the Tournament Director has used their discretionary powers as already written in the ORDG. Here is a summary of the enhancements now available for use in adaptive disc golf.

- Defines “supporting point” as both the wheels of the player’s propelled mobility device and the space between those wheels, allowing the player to center their body on the lie.
- Greatly extends the depth of the lie from 30cm to 2m to allow the player to legally position their propelled mobility device behind the lie.
- Declares adverse conditions for propelled mobility device use, such as deep mud, unnavigable terrain, or steep slopes as obstacles physically preventing the player from taking a legal stance under 803.02.B.
- Declares that the Director of the event has authorized up to three meters of relief from out-of-bounds areas.
- Makes the sport accessible to quadriplegic players who have limited hand and wrist movement by giving TDs an option to create a hoop-based target that allows roller throws to hole out.
- Allow visually-impaired players to use beepers or other sound-emitting devices as if the Director had declared snow or night play.
- Specifies that the use of a propelled mobility device is permissible at events or in divisions using the provisions of Appendix F.

The PDGA looks forward to continued partnership with the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and any other organizations that can help us make disc golf more accessible to everyone, regardless of disability status. While the development of these rule enhancements was in concert with a specifically American organization, this Appendix is available worldwide to any TD who wishes to help adaptive disc golf grow in their community.

“The PDGA is the leading partner for disc golf and well respected throughout the world. We knew partnering with them was best for the adaptive disc golf community,” concluded Purser. “We also hope in the next few years, it will grow to be a competitive sport that the PDGA will support and create true competition with rankings.”

Additional Information



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