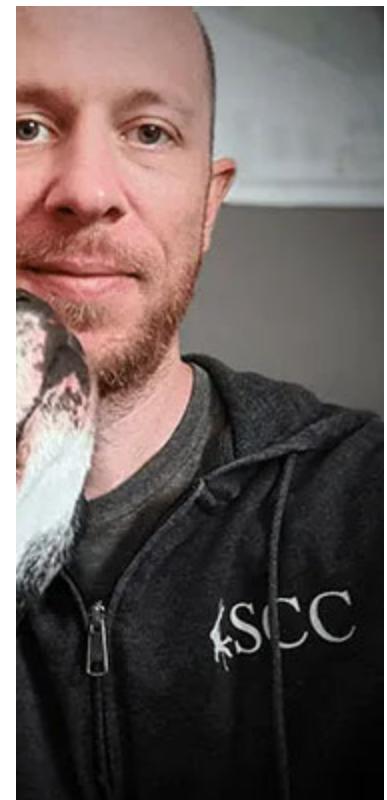


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# Disc Golf Facts, Stats, and Growth Numbers

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The Professional Disc Golf Association has experienced rapid growth since March. In fact, the number of registered players had exceeded 100,000 earlier this month. While the joy of casual play.

I am an avid rock climber, mountain biker, and disc golfer, who loves nothing more than a beautiful day to go play outside like a kid. I love to read and learn new things in order to gain a better

It appears the #growthesport campaign has been effective but begs the questions: can this growth be sustainable, will courses become too crowded, does growing too fast too quick make it a fad?

Let's take a look at some disc golf facts, stats, and growth numbers to help us answer these questions and more...

## A Brief History of Disc Golf

As is often at looking towards the future, one must examine the past. It may surprise those newer to the sport that Disc Golf has been around for some time. In our [beginners guide](#) we noted that disc golf could have a history going back to the 1960's.

"Disc golf arguably started in the 1960's, with the invention of the frisbee and several patents developed representing what we know today as a basket. However, that history is a "blurry" one and could be debated longer than what it would take to play a round at your local course (for more on the history of disc golf, check out the PDGA article here: [PDGA Disc Golf History](#))".

But for the purpose of understanding growth, let's jump ahead to 1976 when the PDGA issued membership #001<sub>(1)</sub>. You may think that over 40 some years disc golf would have grown to staggering numbers. However, only a few years ago, in 2017 did the PDGA reach another milestone and issue membership #100,000<sub>(1)</sub>.

While that doesn't surprise me, as disc golf is still considered a niche sport, what may surprise you is the accelerated rate of

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understanding of our amazing world, and feel honored to share some with you. If you don't find me at my computer typing away for online publications [happylittlehexes.com](#) and [discgolfdash.com](#), you can catch me outside exploring. I wrote this article because I am enthusiastic about helping you improve your disc golf skills and find a passion for getting outside!

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One could argue that what was once a niche sport, is quickly becoming mainstream. This could be due to an influx of money and sponsorship or the ability to connect and organize via technology. Either way, we're not here to debate the "chicken before egg" paradox, but rather look at the rate of our beloved growing sport.



We started this analysis with a brief look at membership numbers reported by the PDGA. Although this doesn't give us a full picture of growth in the sport, it perhaps is the most accurate quantifiable data worth noting.

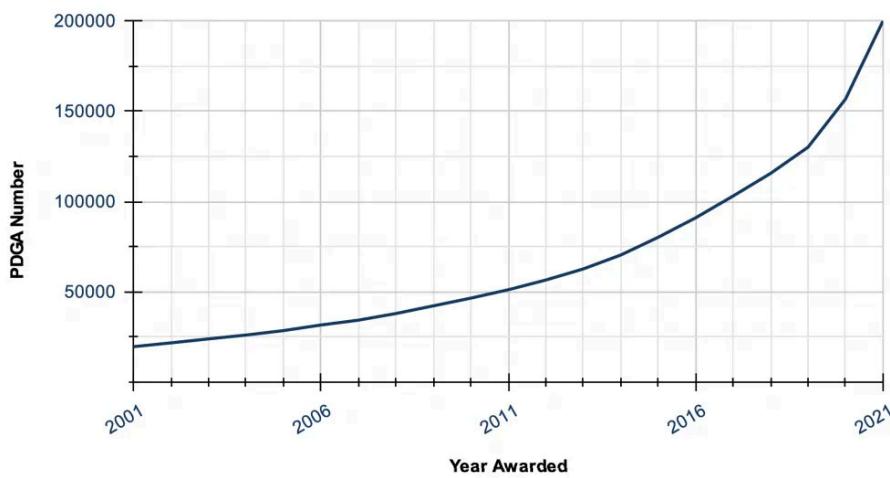


To put it in perspective, as noted above, in its first 41 years as the official organization for disc golfers, the PDGA membership rose by 100,000. **Compare that to the last 4 years, where membership added an equal amount.**



## PDGA Membership Growth

**PDGA Member Growth Since 2001**



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a beautiful thing. But and sustaining. We all any farmers the crop es will become

overcrowded. This raises the question if the disc golf community can support this growth and how that will play out...

## If You Build It They Will Play

While the membership and player participation has seen staggering growth the last few years, what's even more telling is the infrastructure backing the sport. In *The Definitive Guide To Disc Golf*, Menickelli & Pickens note that "in 1980 there were 60 permanent disc golf courses in the world<sup>(2)</sup>". While years later, "in 2013 there were more than 4,500 courses worldwide<sup>(2)</sup>".

Udisc.com reports that there are an estimated 5.28 disc golf courses being built per day<sup>(3)</sup>. But perhaps more importantly is that number is an increase by 50% since 2020<sup>(3)</sup>.



In our [7 tips for playing disc golf with your family](#) guide, we note that the increase in popularity can cause courses to be crowded. And while our guide can help you navigate some of the issues

is having, **ultimately**  
**is infrastructure.**  
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So what does this growth amount to? Udisc's report shows us that there are now over 13,000 courses built worldwide. With 71% of these courses being built in the last 10 years.<sup>(3)</sup>



But perhaps the most intriguing part of the sport is the low cost to play. We covered the low barrier of entry in our Quick Dash article answering the question [is disc golf free?](#) Showing that **more than half of all disc golf courses are free courses built by the city in which they reside. They are accessible to the public and anyone who wants to use them does not require payment to play.**

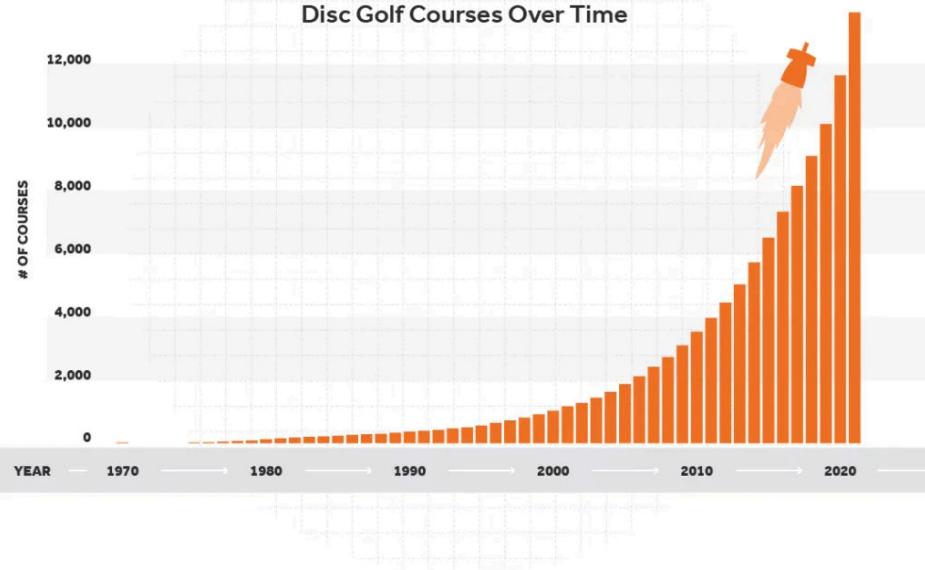
This builds upon a culture of inclusivity over exclusivity. Sure there are pay to play courses, and those are increasing. As the sport delivers opportunities for entrepreneurs to cash in on the demand, new challenges and unique venues will continue to be built. But even those have less of a boujee feel than the country clubs and private courses disc golf's "cousin", ball golf, seem to project.

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One thing disc golf seems to have in common with its golfing predecessor is the appeal for organized tournaments. And where there are large groups of people playing a sport there are sure to be companies looking to hawk their wares, merchandise, and most importantly provide sponsorship.

## Show Me The Money \$\$\$

If the rate of registered players and new courses being built doesn't catch your eye, then perhaps you're a "bottom dollar" kind of person. I get it, let the "Benjamins" do the talking.

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a hobby. Something you like. You might play an means to get outside

To others, Disc Golf is considered a game. Something you do to fulfill your competitive nature in trying to best your friends. Often betting on who buys the next round at the pro shop afterwards.

While neither is wrong in the assessment of “what disc golf is”, to most, a hobby or game becomes a sport when sponsorship and professional leagues start putting up big money...say somewhere in the range of 7 figures or more.

“How much can athletes really make in niche sports? A whole lot more than you might think. Disc golfer Paul McBeth set a new standard by signing an eight-figure endorsement contract—and his deal might only be the beginning<sup>(4)</sup>”.

In fact Ultiworld’s sponsorship chart for 2022<sup>(5)</sup> shows the top players in the sport having received contracts or extensions. Some receive multi year agreements. To see the full chart check it out here: [2022 player sponsorship news](#).

## 2022 Player Sponsorship

Player	Type	2021 Sponsor	2022 Sponsor	Terms
Drew Gibson	Extension/Business	Infinite Discs	Infinite Discs	Year-long/1 year/L
Kristin Tattar	Extension	Latitude 64	Latitude 64	4 years \$500k through 2025
		ic	Infinite Discs	Early termir

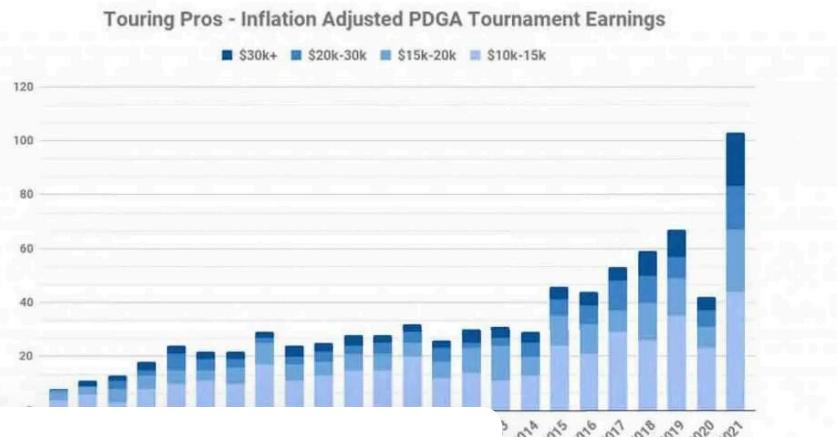
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Gavin Rathbun	Move	Discmania	Dynamic Discs	1 year through 2022
Niklas Anttila	Extension	Discmania	Discmania	2 years through 2023
Matt Orum	Move	Prodigy	Westside Discs	2 years through 2023
Gregg Barsby	Extension	Innova	Innova	3 years through 2024

Sponsorship aside, winning tournaments can be lucrative as well.

**The Disc Golf Pro Tour Championship had a cash purse of \$250,000 in 2021.** Further, the number of players able to earn \$10,000 or more in a single season has grown, as represented by the graph below:



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n Cleghorn<sub>(6)</sub>.

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Even more telling isn't in the individual sum but rather the influx of prize money overall for a short period of time. "In 2020, the purse total was about \$3.25 million; one year later, it almost doubled to \$6.4 million. Compared to 2018, the Disc Golf Pro Tour payouts were 58% higher in 2021, with National Tour payouts up 61%<sup>(7)</sup>".

## How Much Do Professional Disc Golfers Make?

Below is a chart showing a summary of earnings the top players in the sport have accumulated over time as a professional disc golfer.

**Top 10 professional disc golf players prize money**

Rank	Name	Events	Wins	Total Earnings
1	Paul McBeth	364	135	\$599,583
2	Ricky Wysocki	361	120	\$506,832
3	Ken Climo	466	229	\$436,230
4	Barry Schultz	601	266	\$428,529
5	Dave Feldberg	571	119	\$428,066
6	Nikko Locastro	458	123	\$368,239
7	Paul Ulibarri	521	106	\$317,596
8	Paige Pierce	307	144	\$308,919
9	Steve Rico	535	145	\$297,281
10	Cale Leiviska	407	142	\$289,304

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If the above stats don't do it for you, perhaps a few superlative data points will peak your interest...

## Random Disc Golf Stats, Facts, and Growth Numbers

Enough with the Disc Golf jargon or as they say across the pond, banter. Below I have compiled a set of random data for your R2-D2 unit to process, while you spend a moment "hydrating" with your favorite beverage in one of our [Disc Golf designed tumblers](#). Queue the obligatory self promotion and thank you in advance for supporting our addiction to new discs!



### Disc Golf Stats

From 2003 to 2012, the number of disc golf courses in the US alone grew by 190 percent (2).

The first disc golf tournament was held in Pasadena, Ca. during the 1975 World Frisbee Championships.

The average disc golf enthusiast has more than 20 different discs, with many surpassing 100 plus in their collection.

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In 2013, about 20,000 players participated in what is thought to be the “largest event in disc golf history”, during Discrafts promotional 400 Ace Race events (2).

Nearly 1 million players utilized the Udisc app in 2021 to score rounds of play (3).

## Disc Golf Facts

In 1983 Dave Dunipace, pioneer of golf disc design, created what is considered by most people to be the first true golf disc: the Innova Eagle (later called the Aero)(2).

The original “hole” for disc golf was a pole. Known as a “pole-hole” the target helped standardize the game by giving players something to hit with their discs.

Ken Climo is considered to be the best disc golfer of all time. Having won more professional level tournaments than any other player.

The PDGA International Disc Golf Center (IDGC) is located in Augusta, Georgia and open to visitors. It also features 3 courses for play and a disc golf museum.

## The Future of Disc Golf

Everyone is always looking to what's next. If only we had a crystal ball to tell us what lies ahead. For certain, the above facts, stats, and growth numbers lead to a conclusion that disc golf is in demand.

At the end of the day, people want to know if disc golf is a legit

sport. One of the main things that people seem to imply

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niche sports such as

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While disc golf has grown exponentially in the past several years, there is a long way to go. I for one look forward to the journey more than the outcome. But my hope is to one day see disc golf follow in the footsteps of rock climbing and be featured in the olympics.

Hobby, game, or sport, play as you will...

Keep Throwing,

Corey

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ng Disc Family

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Over the past several years disc golf has become increasingly popular. With over 13,000 courses world wide and 5 new ones being built daily<sup>(1)</sup>, you're sure to be near a playable venue. Since this game is one for any ages, you can share it with the entire family. But with the increase in popularity comes a downside of crowded courses and busy public parks. This begs the question, how can families enjoy a day of disc golf together?

Disc golf provides a great opportunity for families to spend time together. And since disc golf has a low startup cost, with over 90% of courses being free<sup>(1)</sup>, disc golf is perhaps one of the most accessible activities. But this all culminates in some issues and concerns you may have when taking the family out for a round.

Never fear, with Discgolfdash.com we got your back, keep reading to learn 7 tips for playing disc golf with your family, you'll

be active and having fun.  
day of disc golf with the

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# 1. Play Where Others Aren't

Perhaps the easiest way to play with the family is in one's own private backyard. An ever growing movement and outcome of the pandemic is finding new ways to enjoy our own slice of paradise. And while the corn hole set might be suitable for some, others need a little additional stimulation.

You can always create your own backyard course given the inexpensive [portable baskets available](#) on the market. This allows you to move the basket around giving an endless variety of challenges and games. Being close to home has other advantages when playing with the family. Imagine a day of barbecue, beer, and still having access to all of your creature comforts...all while you get in some short game practice and time with the kids.

## Splurge on the MVP Black Hole Basket:

*Black Hole Pro*

At a reasonable current price of \$160, the [MVP Black Hole Pro](#), all metal basket construction, 24-zinc chain basket is deserving of a top spot. It has 12 outer, and 12 inner chains oriented perfectly for zero weak spots. It's highly portable and built to the PDGA standard height and size regulations. This basket checks all the

enthusiastic about helping you improve your disc golf skills and find a passion for getting outside!

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## Fuel Your Game!



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iscatcher:

## Innova Discatcher Traveler Target.

Perhaps the lightest of the targets, at just 15 pounds, the **Innova Discatcher** is an Amazon favorite with over 86% five star ratings. The simple setup is as easy as a camping chair, beach umbrella, or portable table. Speaking of camping, this might be the perfect option for those that love the game and want a little entertainment around the campground. The Discatcher comes with a tote bag for storage and packability. Coming in multiple colors, with a quick release for take down, and thoughtful features such as anchor points to resist any wind, this might be the ultimate portable disc golf basket.

**DGD Tip:** make up 10-15 cards with various ways of throwing the disc. Use this as a means to keep the kids interested while they draw a card to see what next crazy throw to make. Or try a night game of glow disc...lighting up the backyard with some **LED** basket markers and **glow in the dark discs**.

## 2. Play at Non-Peak Hours

There are busy times and busier times to go play a round at the local course. Finding that sweet spot might take a little experimentation.

The busiest tee time is at 10:00am especially on weekends.

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and try to show up a  
g errands and show up  
o start the weekend off



## Rogue Iron!



BEST  
PORTABLE  
BASKET!

Disc golf courses tend to pick up at 6:00pm, especially during the weekdays. That afterwork round you want to play, so does everyone else. Have the kids ready to go or meet you at the park. Once you're familiar with the course and layout, consider trying a round of glow disc...you don't have to wait until it's completely dark out, but after dinner always makes for an adventurous excursion.

**DGD Tip:** be sure to check your local park hours and confirm access. Look for courses that are more wide open as opposed to going back into the woods.

### 3. Have a Backup Plan

This should go without saying, and being that you're a parent you probably do this instinctively, but consider taking the soccer ball, bikes, or [spikeball set](#) along for the ride.

Did you know that you're a superhero, and superheroes save the day. So if that rowdy group of local league players just make the course uninviting, don't ruin the outing by giving up. A quick ride on the bikes, or alternative game will give them time enough to get down the course, allowing your family to hop in and get some disc throwing in.

**DGD Tip:** combine the outing with food and you're a sure bet for good times. Whether it's a cooler packed with some popsicles to beat the summer heat, or a full on barbecue of hot dogs and chips, the kids will love it. Remember to them, a park is a place of wonder and imagination regardless of the activity.

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Officially, disc golf etiquette calls for the furthest away from the basket to throw first. With less experienced players this can cause a bit of delay in the game. And nothing is worse than a slow game.

To keep things moving along, try playing the best shot format. This allows everyone to throw from whichever disc is the closest to the basket. Often the most experienced players drive off the tee will be the furthest throw. You can have everyone then throw from that placement.

**DGD Tip:** you'll be surprised at how good kids can be throwing discs. Throughout the round, let them shine occasionally and make the basket shot. Everyone likes to hear those chains ringing from their throw.

## 5. Don't Make it Competitive

Quality time is the name of the game. Sure there might come a time when the family team is keeping up with you, and there is nothing wrong with betting on a basket for who mows the lawn next. But making the experience enjoyable and fun is the key to repetitive play.

Like the above mentioned tip says, you have to let others win a basket or two or they will lose interest. Take this as an opportunity to bust out that camera and make some memories.

**DGD Tip:** instead of playing against each other try playing

doublets. Keep a record of how well you and your partner do and

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makes it less about  
about teaming up to try

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## 6.Know When to Call It

Kids don't have the attention span adults do. And at times, know matter how fast the game is moving, it's going to slow down. If any sign of lethargy or tiredness creeps into the moment, it's time to pack it up.

There is no shame in stopping a round early. I have played many 12 hole rounds, 15 hole, and of course just a 9 hole half round. I have even gone out and played just my favorite 5 baskets over and over.

One of the most common mistakes parents make is pushing their kids in an activity that should be more about spending time with the family. Not only will this turn the kids off from the sport but it will also diminish their outlook on family time.

**DGD Tip:** set a time limit, not a number of baskets. Be upfront about how much time you have on the course to play and call it quits when that time is up. This will result in everyone having an understanding of when done means done.

## 7.Let Other Players Play Through

Our final tip is more of another **disc golf etiquette**, but might not be obvious to beginners. When you're on the course, with or without the family, and a group of players comes up behind you, let them play through.

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not only put less  
the kids time to grab a

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snack or drink. They might also be inspired by the other players and therefore gain a bit more interest in the sport.

Good karma aside, the players you let pass will be appreciative, if not a little jealous that you can bring your family out to the course and make a day of it...pretty much everyone's dream.

## Family Time for The Win!

Sports and activities don't have to be you watching them play. An active family is a healthy family and disc golf makes for a low cost, easy way to make some memories.

**You might be surprised at what you learn from your family members while out on the course.** The tranquility of nature, long walks from basket to basket, and the natural camaraderie a sport inspires will bring out the best (or worst) in an individual. This can make for great opportunities to set an example or make connections with all.

Keep disc golf fun and exciting for the family and you're sure to be playing round after round. Who knows, perhaps you have the next pro PDGA player in the ranks.

Playing at the right time of day, with the flexibility to focus on fun and not serious play, will make for memories that can be shared for a lifetime!

Keep throwing,

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