

Disc Golf in Support of Scouting

Training Summary

Disc golf is one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities among youth and young adults. This course will teach you how disc golf can help you to improve your Scouting program, including using disc golf as an activity, for advancement, and as a great source of service projects. And, of course, you'll learn how to play disc golf—and teach others to play.

Time Required

50 minutes

Target Audience

Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, Webelos den leaders and den chiefs, Venturers, and Venturing Advisors.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- ∞ Play and teach disc golf
- ∞ Take a den, patrol, troop, or crew on a disc golf outing
- ∞ Tie disc golf to advancement and other Scouting goals

Training Format

- ∞ PowerPoint
- ∞ Lecture
- ∞ Field lecture

Required Materials

- ∞ PowerPoint equipment, if desired
- ∞ Golf discs, 1 per participant + trainers
- ∞ Targets, ideally 1 for every 4 to 6 participants
- ∞ 4-foot sections of rope, tape, or sticks to mark tee lines. 1 per target.
- ∞ Handouts:
 - Disc Golf and Advancement
 - Disc Golf Service Project Guidelines
 - Disc Golf Service Project Ideas
 - The Rules of Disc Golf According to the Scout Law
 - Disc Golf in Support of Scouting Resources

Pre-Training Prep

Go to the course directory at www.PDGA.com and look up one or more disc golf courses near the training site. Check out the camps in your council to see if any have disc golf courses.

Disc Golf in Support of Scouting

Before participants arrive, set up targets and tee lines. *Show Slide 1* while participants are gathering. Distribute the discs. (Do not distribute handouts until the end of the course.)

Introduction (1 minute)

Show Slide 2. Introduce yourself and tell why you know about disc golf.

Tell participants: At the end of this course you will know what disc golf is. You'll be able to play disc golf correctly. You'll also be able to teach people how to play disc golf. Plus, you'll be able to take your den, patrol, troop, or crew on a disc golf outing.

You will also learn how disc golf fits with the mission, aims, and methods of the Boy Scouts of America. You'll be surprised to learn all the ways to you can use disc golf to encourage advancement. And you'll get some ideas for disc golf-related service projects, and how to make them successful.

Part 1: What Is Disc Golf? (2 minutes)

Show Slide 3.

Tell participants: The name of the game is *disc golf*. "Disc" because "Frisbee[®]" is a registered trademark of Wham-O Inc., and "golf" because the rules and strategies are very similar to golf. Disc golf was invented in the 1970s to boost disc sales.

The way you play is to throw a disc at a target. You keep score by counting how many throws it takes to get the disc in the target.

A lot of youth are already playing disc golf. You may have heard your Scouts or Venturers talking about it. According to the Professional Disc Golf Association, the popularity of disc golf is increasing at 15 percent per year. There are a lot of disc golf courses—more than 2,500 in the United States and another 250 in other countries.

Most people who play disc golf are young men, so it is a natural fit for Scouting. However, men, women, and children all play disc golf, from about age 7 into their 90s.

Show Slide 4.

Some of disc golf's appeal is that it requires no certification and no safety equipment, and it presents few safety hazards. In fact, youth can play disc golf without any adult supervision.

Most of the time, disc golf is free to play, because the disc golf courses are in public parks. You can play with as few as one disc, which costs approximately \$10. And, you play in almost any weather, winter or summer. Play stops only for lightning.

Part 2: How to Play Disc Golf (10 minutes)

Show Slide 5.

Now you're going to get a 10-minute clinic in how to play disc golf. Pay attention, so you can give this same clinic to teach others how to play.

In one sentence: To play disc golf you throw the disc from the tee into the basket using the fewest throws.

Instructions to Trainer: *If you are not using the slides, take the group to the tee area and show the front line.*

To play a hole of disc golf, you start at a tee area. At a really good course, this will be a cement pad, about 5 feet by 12 feet. It could also be a rubber pad or a gravel-filled box. It might just be a board set into the ground, or two stakes to mark a line. It could just be a pole or a traffic cone. Sometimes, you just look for where the grass is worn out.

Whatever the tee box looks like, there will be a front line—even if it's only imaginary. You throw from behind this line. You can do a run-up to get momentum to throw really hard; you just have to release the disc before you go over the line. It's OK for your momentum to take you over the line after you throw.

Instructions to Trainer: *Go through an imaginary run-up and follow-through. If you are giving the training indoors, do it in slow motion.*

Normally, you'll be playing with a small group. Everyone in the group throws their first throw from the tee area, before anyone in the group throws a second throw. Of course, you should not disturb the person throwing.

Instructions to Trainer: *If giving the course in the field, tee off first. Throw only about 20 feet. Pick two or three participants to be in your "group." Have them tee off. Skip the following narration of the slide.*

Here is what it looks like. The person with the orange disc is throwing. The target is to the right, out of the picture. Notice the thrower is not in front of the sign that marks the tee area.

Note to Trainer: *These pictures were taken on the disc golf course at base camp on Philmont Scout Reservation.*

Show Slide 6.

There are two basic types of throws that most players use: backhand and forehand. I'll describe both. You choose one you want to try, and we'll get a chance to get up and throw in a minute.

Most people have thrown a flying disc using the backhand throw. A disc golf throw is similar, but you want to grip it harder, and throw it harder. To throw backhand, hold the disc like this. The thumb is on top of the disc while your fingers are curled under; grabbing the disc. Press your fingers against the rim for more power. If you want to spread your fingers, that's OK—do whatever feels comfortable.

Instructions to Trainer: *Whether or not you are using the pictures, demonstrate everything shown in the pictures.*

Show Slide 7.

After you've gripped the disc, stand sideways to the target with your throwing shoulder pointed at the target. Reach back and fling your arm forward.

Instructions to Trainer: *Demonstrate the throw. If you are using pictures, flip back and forth between this slide and the next.*

Show Slide 8.

Instructions to Trainer: *Flip back and forth between this slide and the previous.*

Note to Trainer: *If anyone remarks on the COPE course in the background, explain that these pictures were taken on the disc golf course at Tomahawk Scout Reservation.*

Show Slide 9.

Another type of throw is the forehand throw. To throw forehand, hold the disc like this. Your thumb will be on the top of the disc, and your middle finger will be pressing on the inside bottom rim. The middle finger will push the disc forward when you fling the disc.

Instructions to Trainer: *Demonstrate.*

Show Slide 10.

Stand with your throwing shoulder away from the target and the other shoulder pointing toward the target. Bring the disc forward to throw it.

Instructions to Trainer: *Demonstrate the motion. Flip back and forth between this slide and the next a few times.*

Show Slide 11.

Like this.

Instructions to Trainer: *Demonstrate.*

Show Slide 12.

After everyone throws from the tee area, the group moves to the disc that is farthest from the basket. The person whose disc is farthest is “out.”

Instructions to Trainer: *If giving the course in the field, have your group move to the disc farthest from the target (it should be yours).*

Here are the players at the “out” player’s disc. Can anyone think why no one goes past the disc that is farthest from the basket?

Instructions to Trainer: *If no one gets the answer, prompt with “Here’s a hint, it’s a safety thing.” If no one guesses, explain: “It is so no one gets hit in the back of the head with a disc.”*

Show Slide 13.

A key to any kind of golf is that the next throw (or stroke) is made from where the last one landed. All you really need to remember for disc golf is to throw from behind your disc. Draw an imaginary line from the center of the target to the center of the disc. Your foot should be on the extension of that line, behind the back of the disc, like this.

Instructions to Trainer: *If teaching in the field, put a disc on the ground and position your foot behind it (away from the target). If using the slides, point out the target, the disc, and the foot.*

Show Slide 14.

The goal, of course, is to throw the disc into the target, like this.

Show Slide 15.

“In the basket” means either lying in the basket or hanging in the chains. If you are throwing at poles, trees, rocks, or things like that, you just need to hit the object.

Instructions for Trainer: *If teaching in the field, set up some discs like the picture. Point to each disc as you talk about it.*

A disc would not be “in” if it were lying on top. It would not be “in” if it were under the basket. A disc is “in” only if it is supported by the basket or the chains.

Show Slide 16.

After your disc stays in the basket and you take it out, you have finished playing that hole. Let everyone else finish. When everyone has completed the hole, move on to the next tee, so the next group can start throwing at the target. How do you find the next tee? There might be a sign that says “To Next Tee.” You might be able to see the next tee. Or, just follow the most well-worn path.

Show Slide 17.

Before you start playing the next hole, the scorekeeper should record the scores. Players can take turns being the scorekeeper. The scorekeeper calls out the name of the first player listed on the scorecard. That player says his or her score. The scorekeeper repeats the score, writes it down, and calls the name of the next player.

Instructions to Trainer: *If your presentation is on schedule, go through a simulated scorekeeping. Pick three other people, find out their first names and have them make up a score. Say your own name, say a score, write it down. Say the second person’s name, have them say their score. Repeat what you heard and write it down. Say the third person’s name, have them say their score. Say an incorrect score, let them correct you, repeat it correctly, then write it down. Say the fourth person’s name, have them say their score. Repeat what you heard and write it down.*

Show Slide 18.

Before you let anyone start playing, talk about safety. The unique safety factor is those flying discs. Remember, players will be throwing these as hard as they can. The discs weigh about as much as baseballs, and the edges are a lot sharper. You don’t want anyone to get hit by a disc that is traveling at up to 75 miles per hour. A flying disc can cause serious injury.

So, make sure that no one throws when there is the slightest possibility of the disc going anywhere near anyone. If it appears that a disc is about to hit someone, everyone should yell “FORE!”—really loud—as a warning.

To protect yourself, you should always be listening for others yelling “fore” and be on the lookout for flying discs. If you hear “fore,” put your head down and cover your head with your arms. If you see a disc coming toward you, watch it and move to a safe place before it lands.

Show Slide 19.

Of course, all the hazards of being outdoors are still there. In fact, you need to be MORE aware of them. Discs will fly and roll into the worst places. That gives players a lot of temptation to do things they normally wouldn’t do.

Instructions to Trainer: Ask the participants for ideas of unsafe things that youth might do to retrieve a disc. If you don't get enough answers, use the following ideas: Wade into a swamp, chase a disc over a drop-off, reach into a patch of poison ivy, hit a hornet's nest, stick their hand under that rock where a rattlesnake is, climb a power pole, get up on a roof, climb over a fence.

As leaders, you need to establish the safety rules for the area where you are. For example, Safe Swim Defense applies if there is water, which means no one should get wet. Discs don't cost much; just leave them when they land in unsafe areas.

The positive side of this is that the youth will actually interact with, and carefully study, the nature around the spot where the disc landed.

Actually, the manmade hazards may be of more concern than the natural hazards. Don't try to get a disc off of power lines or the poles that hold them. Don't try to climb up to the disc and don't poke at it with a stick. Watch for power lines near any trees where a disc gets stuck. Never climb any tower, fence, wall, or any other manmade structure to retrieve a disc.

A lot of disc golf courses are next to private homes or land. If the disc lands in someone's yard, it is no longer your disc. Don't trespass to get it back. There may be a guard dog. Anyway, it's not good citizenship to break laws.

Part 3: Practice Play (15 minutes)

Show Slide 20.

OK, it's time to get up and have a little fun. We're going to play a very short practice hole. Then, we're going to learn how disc golf can support Scouting.

Instruction to Trainers: Get the participants up and playing for a few minutes. Stop them before they want to quit.

Walk around and guide the participants in their grip and motion.

- ✦ If teaching in the field, or if participants have easy access to outdoors or a gym, use the tee lines and targets you set up before the training began. Let the participants divide into groups and play.
- ✦ If teaching indoors in a medium-sized room, and participants can't get outside (because of weather or time constraints) set up a target by a wall that has no windows, lights, or other breakables. Have participants form a semicircle and drop their discs at their feet. Tell them that was their first throw. Have them throw. If there are 8 or fewer participants, they can take turns, If there are more, have them throw all at once.
- ✦ If teaching indoors in a small room, or a room full of breakables, don't let them throw.

Part 4: Youth Disc Golf Styles (2 minutes)

Show Slide 21.

You probably know that youth go through developmental stages that affect their behavior. This also affects how they play disc golf. By adjusting the style of play to the age of the group, they'll have more fun.

First of all, you probably don't want to try disc golf with boys younger than Webelos Scouts. Some kids that age will take to it, but most won't have the patience or physical skills for it to be much fun.

10- to 13-year-olds aren't going to follow the rules, and that's OK. To them it's just a fun way to play. Just tell them that the point of the game is to throw the disc at the target. If it doesn't go in, pick it up and throw it again. They play fast—they won't wait to take turns throwing. They form a rolling herd of kids bumping into each other, swarming over the course. Every few steps another disc flies up out of the middle of it, toward the hole. You'll see all types of throws, from baseball-style to bowling. That's OK. Don't bother correcting them.

With Scouts this age, just play a set amount of time, about 45 minutes. Don't force them to finish a certain number of holes. They won't do more than 6 holes in any case. It's OK to take these youth to most public courses. If you're setting up a course for these youth, the holes should be only 50 to 150 feet long.

Show Slide 22.

For youth ages 14 and above, it's a whole different experience. They treat this just like they do other sports. They want to learn and follow the rules—including the courtesy rules of throwing in the proper order, and keeping score correctly. The very first time they play, it will take about five holes for the rules to sink in.

They take a few seconds to plan their shots. They may have a few different throws and a variety of discs they can select from. They are willing to work on their throwing skills. If you have an expert around, youth this age may be willing to listen. At this age, they might want to complete the course. Even beginners can enjoy any public course you'll find.

Here's a tip: The older the youth, the more they like disc golf. So, it's perfect for retaining older Boy Scouts, as a Venturing activity, or to keep camp staff happy.

Part 5: Disc Golf and Scouting

Show Slide 23.

Like all games, stories, and training, disc golf is a way to create teaching moments at an accelerated rate. The nature of the game forces the players to make choices. Because there are rules, goals, and a winner, there are temptations to cheat. Therefore, opportunities to make ethical choices come up. This is the opportunity for you, as leaders, to enforce the mission of the BSA.

For example, say Amit is the scorekeeper. Billy calls out his score as 4, but Amit thinks it is a 5. Now, Amit, Billy, and the rest of the players in the group have a situation where an ethical choice needs to be made. Your role is not to make the choice for them, but to provide guidance—if they need it—as they work it out. Keep your eyes open, and you'll see an opportunity like this just about every hole.

Show Slide 24.

One of the aims of Scouting is physical fitness. Obviously, when youth are out playing disc golf, they are getting good exercise. But, there is another teaching opportunity here. You can suggest that if they want to play better, they could train for it. Do some extra exercises. Eat better, avoid smoking and drugs. For some youth, disc golf will be that one sport that motivates them.

There are a lot of opportunities to develop mental fitness in disc golf—and the youth will never realize it is happening. To start with, the youth are doing fourth-dimensional physics in their head to figure out where their shot will go. Doctoral dissertations have been written on the aerodynamics of rotating objects. More down-to-earth, players need to learn, interpret, and apply the rules. Even the act of adding up the scores can be quite a mental exercise for youth, especially if they get into some of the more complicated team games. As the players get better, they'll start to think about strategy. You can guide them here.

Show Slide 25.

Another aim of Scouting is character development. Disc golf is a sport; aren't sports all about character development? Players will have opportunities to learn to handle disappointment. When that happens, your role is show them how to act.

The citizenship training in disc golf is actually quite explicit. The courtesy and etiquette rules for playing in a group are a basic form of citizenship.

Show Slide 26.

Now it's time to get down to the nuts and bolts. So, you want to go play disc golf. Where can you play? The best place is a permanent course. The most complete and up-to-date online course directory is at *PDGA.com*. You put in your zip code and get a list of the closest courses, with driving directions and descriptions.

Instructions to Trainer: *Tell the participants about the public course nearest the training site, and about any nearby Scout camps with courses.*

You can also set up your own course. If there is a disc golf store nearby, they might let you borrow some real targets. After all, you're creating new customers for them. You can set out laundry baskets or trash barrels, or just stick poles in the ground. You can mark trees by putting two pieces of tape around them about 3 feet and 5 feet off the ground. You could also go "free-range." Take turns picking out nonbreakable objects to throw at, and find interesting places to throw from. An example of a good place to do this would be on school grounds, where everything is already ballproof.

Show Slide 27.

OK, where can you get discs? You might find out that a lot of your youth already have some real golf discs. They usually have more than one and can share. If you're at a Scout camp with a course, they probably lend out discs. You could buy new discs for about \$10. You can find them at camp trading posts, disc golf specialty stores, hobby stores, sports equipment stores, and discount stores. Often, a convenience store near a course will have a stand with a few discs available. Used sporting goods stores sell discs for as little as \$3. If you want to outfit your whole group, you can also buy misprinted discs in bulk for a few bucks each. Look online.

There are different kinds of discs—drivers, putters, midrange—but to get started, each person really needs only one disc, and any kind will do. If you can't get real disc golf discs, anything will do. Sometimes it's even more fun.

Show Slide 28.

You might think that there is no connection between disc golf and advancement. And yet, if you have any disc golf players in your group, you will find a lot of things they can do that are disc golf-related, and which will also help them earn awards and advancement.

For example, Webelos Scouts can earn the Ultimate belt loop and pin by playing disc golf. This would be a good activity to do with a Scout troop. Venturers can use disc golf to earn the Venturing Sports awards. One of the requirements is to teach the sport to someone—like a Scout troop.

Show Slide 29.

With temporary badges, you can do pretty much anything you want. Some Scout camps have disc golf badges or segments. A council could make a troop ribbon or similar award. You can also design your own to commemorate a disc golf outing.

Show Slide 30.

What you might not realize is how you can use disc golf to inspire Scouts to achieve some of the requirements for all these kinds of awards. I'll just give a couple of ideas. One of the handouts will have a whole list, but think outside the box. If a Scout has a stack of golf discs, suggest to him that he might look at the Collections merit badge.

Many of the special awards in Scouting—like the 50-Miler Award—require some trail work or conservation service hours. You can do these on a disc golf course. For rank advancement, playing disc golf with the troop counts as a nonmeeting outing. And of course, a Scout who is also disc golfer would jump at the chance to do service hours or his Eagle Scout leadership service project on his favorite disc golf course.

Part 6: Disc Golf Service Projects (5 minutes)

Show Slide 31.

Here are some ideas for disc golf–related service projects.

If the youth were to teach disc golf to a group of children, or residents of a retirement home, that would be a good service project. And, they'd have a lot of fun doing it. If there is a tournament being held to raise funds for a charity, your youth could help out. Even something as simple as handing out water to the players would be helpful.

If the youth has a favorite disc golf course, it's probably in a park. Most parks could use some improvements—maybe trash cans or benches, or removing barriers to accessibility.

If you remember only one thing from this course, remember this: Before a Scout does anything to a disc golf course, or before he proposes a new course, get a qualified disc golf course designer. Otherwise, the project may actually do more harm than good.

Part 7: Ideas for Action (3 minutes)

Show Slide 32.

OK, your brain is full, that's about all we're going to pump into it today. It's time to regurgitate some of it.

At some point during this presentation, you got an idea. Sometime during talking about how to teach disc golf, how disc golf fits with the Boy Scout ideals, how to use disc golf as an activity, or to promote advancement, or for service projects, you thought, "Hey, I could..." or "I know a Scout who..."

Now everyone wants to hear your idea. Who has an idea they thought up, or heard here, that they're going to use?

***Instructions to Trainer:** Take ideas for about three minutes. E-mail original ideas to supplementaltraining@netbsa.org. If no one volunteers, prompt with: Who has ever played disc golf, either in Scouts or not? If no one volunteers, read a few ideas from the handouts.*

Part 7: Resources (1 minute)

Show Slide 33.

To help you with those ideas, here are some places to get more information. These are all listed on the handouts, but here's is a quick introduction.

The first, *PDGA.com* has everything you need to know about disc golf, or at least a link to it. There, you can find the rules book, a course directory, how to find a course designer, and a list of local clubs.

The Educational Disc Golf Experience is a group that develops educational programs around disc golf—including packages for summer camps. Their instructional video is an excellent introduction to the sport for everyone, not just Scouts. If you don't feel comfortable teaching disc golf, show the Scouts this DVD.

And, if you are looking for a book printed on actual, old-fashioned paper, there is one.

This training module is available at Scouting.org under Boy Scouts/Adult Leaders/Training/Supplemental Training Modules.

Part 8: Conclusion (1 minute)

Show Slide 34.

Disc golf is popular among youth. You might not realize how many youth in your group are already playing it.

As we've seen, you can use disc golf to further the leadership training of your youth.

It is easy to get started in disc golf, and it's inexpensive. The initial learning curve is steep, which is satisfying for both youth and adults.

Most importantly, you now have all the tools you need to use disc golf in support of scouting. So have fun.

Part 10: Handouts and Adult Leader Putt

Now, you can stand up and pick up your handouts. If you want to stick around, I'll show you an adult leader putt. Your youth won't know about it, and it's dead-eye accurate from about 15 feet away.

Instructions to Trainer: Say good-by to anyone who wants to leave. Demonstrate the adult leader putt for the rest, then let them try it for themselves.

Show Slide 35.

Hold the disc up by your head, kind of like a waiter carrying a tray. Balance the disc on your thumb, with your fingers along the back rim.

Instructions to Trainer: Demonstrate as you explain.

Show Slide 36.

To putt, throw the disc down and hard, right at the basket. The action is like shooting a free throw in basketball. Put a lot of back spin on it. If you get the disc spinning fast enough, aerodynamically, it will act like a ball. Only use this putt when you are about 15 feet away from the target.

Instructions to Trainer: Demonstrate as you explain. Flip back and forth between this slide and the previous.

Show Slide 37.

Instructions to Trainer: Put this slide up after demonstrating the adult leader putt.

Disc Golf and Advancement **(2008 Requirements)**

Here are some ways disc golf can be used for advancement in Scouting.

Cub Scout Ultimate Pin and Belt Loop. Recently, the requirements were changed to allow these to be earned by playing disc golf OR Ultimate.

Venturing Awards. The Quest Award, which is the sportsmanship award for Venturing, specifically mentions disc golf. Disc golf can also be part of earning the Sports Bronze Award.

Temporary Patches. Disc golf-related temporary badges or segments can be earned at some camps. You can also design your own disc golf temporary patch.

Merit Badges. Many merit badge requirements can be geared toward the interest of a Scout who likes disc golf:

- ∞ *Citizenship in the Community*
Requirement 2a(3). On a map of your community, locate and point out . . . other interesting points. *Where's the disc golf course?*
Requirement 4. Choose an issue that is important to the citizens of your community . . . *Whether to install—or what to do with an existing—disc golf course.*
- ∞ *Collections.* Discs are collectable.
- ∞ *Communications*
Requirement 6. . . . Develop a plan to teach a skill . . . *Teach disc golf.*
Requirement 7b. Create a Web page for your Scout troop, school, or other organization . . . *for the local disc golf club.*
- ∞ *Engineering.* **Requirement 1.** Select some manufactured item . . . investigate how and why it works as it does. *Use a disc golf target or flying disc.*
- ∞ *Entrepreneurship.* **Requirement 2.** Identify and interview an individual who has started his or her own business. *A disc golf store owner or course designer.*
- ∞ *Environmental Science.* **Requirement 3d(3).** Photograph an area affected by erosion . . . and discuss why the area has eroded and what might be done to help alleviate the erosion. *Find erosion on a disc golf course.*
- ∞ *Graphic Arts.* **Requirement 3.** Design a printed piece (flier, T-shirt, program, form, etc.) and produce it . . . *for an upcoming disc golf tournament.*
- ∞ *Journalism.* **Requirement 4.** Attend a public event and [report on it].” *Attend a disc golf tournament, or a community meeting about a disc golf course.*
- ∞ *Orienteering.* Set up an orienteering course at the disc golf course.
- ∞ *Reading.* Read a book about disc golf.

Special Awards

- ∞ 50-Miler *Do the 10 hours of trail work by improving a disc golf course.*
- ∞ William T. Hornaday Awards. For “Invasive Species Removal,” pull buckthorn from a disc golf course.
- ∞ Paul Bunyan Woodsman. “Clear trails...trim a downed tree”... *do it for a disc golf course.*
- ∞ Den Chief Service Award. **Requirement 12(a)** Serve as a staff member of a Cub Scout special event... **Requirement 12(f)** Help to plan and carry out a joint pack-troop activity. *Either could involve a disc golf tournament or seminar.*

Rank Advancement

- ∞ Second Class 1b. Take a 5-mile hike to a disc golf course.
- ∞ Second Class 2a and First Class 3 Play disc golf with your patrol for one of the outings.
- ∞ Second Class 4, Star 4, and Life 4. Improve a disc golf course, or help at a charity tournament for a service project.
- ∞ First Class 2. Set up the orienteering course at a disc golf course. It is open, out in nature, and has places already marked.
- ∞ First Class 11. Invite a non-Scout to play disc golf with your patrol.
- ∞ Star 4 and Life 4. Do service projects for a disc golf course.
- ∞ Eagle. For the leadership service project, establish or improve a disc golf course.

Disc Golf Service Project Guidelines

What do I need to know if a Scout wants to do a disc golf–related service project?

Disc golf service projects have become popular in recent years, especially as Eagle Scout leadership service projects. Many Scouts are interested in disc golf. They get excited about the opportunity to make a visible, permanent impact on the sport they love.

The Scout may get to create a new course from the ground up. More likely, he will make improvements to an existing disc golf course. Either way, the result could be an amenity for the community that will provide thousands of hours of enjoyment.

However, disc golf has some unique aspects. There are certain things the Scout needs to know to make sure the project gets finished, satisfies the needs of the beneficiary, has no erosion or safety problems, and is fun for everyone.

What does the Scout need to know about disc golf? It depends on the type of project he is going to do. The key question is *will the project affect how the course is played?*

Projects that do not affect the play of an existing course. Many disc golf courses need improvements that are not directly related to playing area of the course. Some examples would be adding benches, building a bridge or boardwalk over a water hazard, adding protection for trees that are frequently hit by flying discs; installing a rain shelter; or setting up a “welcome center” with rules, a course map, and a score card dispenser.

Before changing anything on or near a disc golf course, the Scout should consult with someone who is familiar with the course. Just getting permission from the course owner is not enough. The course owner (who probably represents a city, school, or religious organization) may not play disc golf. The Scout should make sure that the project will not adversely affect how the course plays. For example, a poorly placed hedge row might block the flight path to the target. Safety is also a concern. An improperly placed bench might be located where flying discs tend to land.

Projects that do affect how a course is played. A new course falls into this category. Other examples include adding or removing targets, installing signs, installing (or removing) hazards like ponds and plants, or upgrading the tee areas.

For this type of project, the Scout will need to bring in an expert called a qualified disc golf course designer. A new course, or changes to a course, should be executed according to a design that meets the Professional Disc Golf Association Disc Golf Course Design Standards.

For an Eagle Scout leadership service project, it is acceptable to have an expert provide the design for the course-related aspects of the project. The Scout is not supposed to do all the work, but instead to provide leadership.

Sometimes a Scout will be reluctant to let go of the design responsibility. Often, this is because the Scout has some great ideas of his own. Suggest that the Scout discuss his ideas with a disc golf course designer. Most designers would be happy to incorporate the Scout's ideas into the design. The designer will make sure the course is safe and appropriate for the skill level of the intended players, and that it meets the goals of the beneficiary.

Some Scouts may have spent a lot of time to learning about the principles of disc golf course design. They may feel they are ready to design a course. In such a case, the Scout should have his design reviewed by a disc golf course Designer. Point out to the Scout that even professional disc golf course designers with years of experience rely on peer review to make certain their designs comply with standards and to provide the best course for the location, the players, and the landowner.

A Word About Baskets. Although it may seem that the Scout or a volunteer could build workable disc golf targets from scratch, it is not a good idea.

Homemade baskets are not as durable as manufactured baskets. In a few years, your rusty broken baskets will not reflect well on the Scout's project.

Homemade baskets are not as safe. Manufactured baskets have been designed to avoid sharp edges, pinch points, and choke openings.

Homemade baskets would not meet the standards for holding a sponsored tournament.

Homemade baskets are not really much less expensive than manufactured. Wouldn't it be better for the volunteer to spend all those hours on other aspects of the Scout's project?

Disc Golf Service Project Ideas

- ∞ Run a tournament.
- ∞ Teach a group how to play.
- ∞ Help out at a charity tournament.
- ∞ Set up EDGE—Educational Disc Golf Experience—for a school.
- ∞ Improve the trails from each target to the next tee.
- ∞ Install safety nets or fencing.
- ∞ Install cement tee pads.
- ∞ Put a fountain in a pond or lake.
- ∞ Add a lost-and-found message board.
- ∞ Build a bridge or boardwalk over water.
- ∞ Add shoe scrapers near the tees.
- ∞ Put in benches.
- ∞ Add trash cans along the course.
- ∞ Plant grass on the fairways.
- ∞ Lengthen or shorten holes to meet current design standards.
- ∞ Implement erosion control measures.
- ∞ Add a second set of anchors for the baskets.
- ∞ Change the tee colors to the standards for each level of difficulty.
- ∞ Add protection for trees that get hit by discs.
- ∞ Set up a “welcome center” with rules, course map, score card dispenser, benches, and water.
- ∞ Add flowers or native plants beside the fairways.
- ∞ Remove barriers to make more holes universally accessible.
- ∞ Add another set of tees for greater (or easier) challenges.
- ∞ Theft-proof the baskets.
- ∞ Add rain shelters.
- ∞ Install a practice putting green—one or two targets for warm-ups.
- ∞ Build a cement pad and screening for portable toilets.
- ∞ Replace broken or stolen baskets.
- ∞ Install signs—tee number, distance, par, next tee this way, suggested flight path, rules, map.
- ∞ Build a “Nine Around” game—one target with nine tees.
- ∞ Mark an “object course” where the targets are marked poles, trees, or rocks.
- ∞ Add more holes to bring a course up to 18 holes.
- ∞ Install a new course.

The Rules of Disc Golf According to the Scout Law

Trustworthy. Keep track of the number of throws you make. Report your score to the scorekeeper after every hole. If you are the scorekeeper, accurately record everyone's score. Make your throws from the correct lie.

Loyal. Be loyal to yourself or your team by continuing to try for your best score on each hole through the whole round.

Helpful. If someone loses their disc, help them find it. Explain to other players the best way to play a hole. If another player asks, give them advice to improve their game.

Friendly. Compliment other players' good throws; do not tease them about the bad throws. Have fun, and make it fun for the other players.

Courteous. Do not distract anyone while they are throwing. Watch other players to help keep track of where their discs land.

Kind. Be gentle with the equipment. Do not scare animals. Never throw when your disc might hit someone!

Obedient. Follow the rules of disc golf; it is more fun that way. Throw from the exact spot your previous throw landed. If you lose your disc, throw from where you threw before, and add one extra to your score.

Cheerful. The number one rule of disc golf is HAVE FUN! Laugh when your throws do something unexpected.

Thrifty. The fewest throws wins. Starting at the tee box, get the disc into the basket in as few throws as possible.

Brave. Each time you play, try a throw or two you do not think you could ever make.

Clean. Leave the course cleaner than you found it. Do not leave any of your trash. Pick up some trash, if you see any. Wipe the mud off your disc—it will fly better.

Reverent. Respect nature. Do not destroy plants, or cut limbs off trees.

Disc Golf in Support of Scouting Resources

Professional Disc Golf Association

www.PDGA.com

- Rules
- Course Directory
- Design Standards
- Course Designers

Educational Disc Golf Experience

www.EDGEdiscgolf.org

- “Getting the EDGE” instructional video
- Camp Programs

Disc Golf: All You Need to Know About the Game You Want to Play

by Michael Steven Gregory

Boy Scouts of America National Council

<http://www.scouting.org>

- Boy Scout Advancement and Awards Requirements
 - Mission and Value Statements
- “Disc Golf in Support of Scouting”
- Boy Scouts/Adult Leaders/Training/Supplemental Training Modules