

Disc Golf: More Than Just A Sport

By Kevin D. Shallat

Disc golf, or frolf, is a combination of equipment and form borrowed from Frisbee, and rules and objectives from golf. Using a Frisbee like disc, one throws a disc into an elevated chain link basket in as few throws as possible. Scoring is similar to that of golf, and you can play most courses for free. Anybody who can walk and throw a Frisbee can play disc golf.

Historically there have been a number of sports that have evolved from two separate games. Table tennis, or ping pong, is no longer being compared to tennis. In addition, football has stopped being compared to the sports that it evolved from, soccer and rugby. For well over thirty years disc golf has been compared to the game of golf and Frisbee. Finally the popularity of disc golf has grown so that it no longer appears as a combination of sports, it is a sport of its own.

With over 1800 courses in the world, and over 1100 courses in the U.S. alone, the sport of frolf continues to grow. The sport started from the introduction of the Frisbee in the 1950's, and evolved into its present form. In 1964 George Sappingfield organized several Frisbee golf events in Southern California. In 1975 the Professional Disc Golf Association was born. The world's first disc golf championships were held in 1985. In 1998 the U.S. held its inaugural United States Disc Golf Championship in Rock Hill, S.C.. Ken Climo was the first to be crowned U.S. champion.

The closest 18-hole course to Lamorinda is in the Berkeley Aquatic Park. We do, however, have a hidden gem right in our own backyard, a nine-hole course in the Moraga Commons Park. It is here on weeknights where you might run into local amateur disc golfer Craig Schott. Schott is an avid disc golfer and willing spokesperson for the game.

Schott plays with nine different discs, three of them for putting. He shoots around two under par and has compiled five hole-in-one shots in his fifteen plus years of playing the game. Schott downplays his expertise and talks more about cleaning up the garbage on the course and setting up new tees. "That's our home, so we clean up the mess and keep it nice," said Schott. He also mentions how playing the sport is great exercise. The more you hike and throw the disc, the more you are able to build up your arm strength and improve your distance.

This is truly one of only a few sports where you can enjoy it at any level, regardless of your age, skill level, or financial means. Even without equipment, a beginner can show up and expect to be invited to play. It's the fun, the experience, and the respect for the game and the environment that make this game special. Schott said, "It's a great excuse to get out of the house for a few hours, exercise a little, get the adrenaline going, and go home." Check out <http://www.moragadiscgolf.org>



Dan showing his form



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