

SPORTS

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Disc Golf: More Than Just A Sport

By Kevin D. Shallat



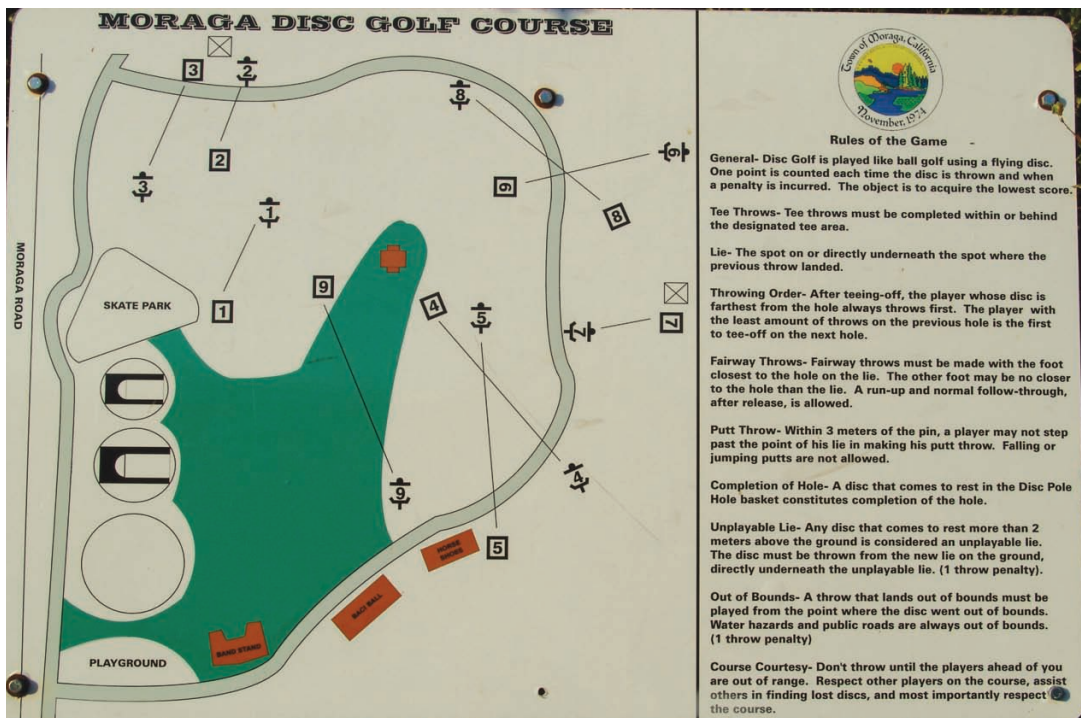
Dan showing his form

Disc golf, or frof, 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

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

ner 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,



The rules of game are on a sign next to the skate park

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 frof 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

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 begin-

ner can show up and expect to be invited to play. It's the fun, the adrenaline going, and go home." Check out <http://www.moragadiscgolf.org>



Heads Up, Lamorinda Players, Coaches, and Fans We want your game scores, highlights, and photos. Please send your game reports, including player names and digital photos to sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com.

Orinda's Incredi-Ball Wraps Its Season

By Chris Lavin

Incredi-Ball, a baseball program sponsored by the Orinda Youth Association, wrapped up its season earlier this month with 142 first and second graders stomping over home plate for the last time.

The game, one step up from T-ball but one step below keeping score and making outs, fielded 12 teams this year. It's coach-pitched. The OYA has been hosting the program for more than 20 years.

"Our focus is always on fun first," said recreation supervisor Jerry Johnston. "Yes, the kids might start to learn some basics, but we're mainly focusing on team-building, and showing the kids what it's like to be on a team."

Parents, armed with digital cameras to capture broad grins on their batters' and runners' faces, all seem to endorse the program.

"I wanted something physical," said Marla

Williams, whose 7-year-old daughter McKenna participated. "We've done Girl Scouts and piano, but we wanted to try something like this, too. It's great to get out and be a part of something."

Williams began playing softball as a child, and continues to actively play to this day. She wants to McKenna to be exposed to sports, as well. "This is a great stepping stone for that," Williams said.

Ashwini Oak, whose 6-year-old daughter Apurva played for the Mariners, liked that her daughter got her first experience with baseball. "She has really liked it," Oak said.

Second grader Stephen Tse rounded the bases while his father, Frank, watched from the sidelines.

"We like the approach this league takes," Tse said. "We all come out here for the kids and just want them to have a good time. If they learn some basics, that's good, too."

Johnston actively works with the Positive Coaching Alliance to attract coaches who will focus on team-building and not get too serious about the game itself.

"These kids are just learning how to function as a team," Johnston said. "If it so happens that, by the way, a coach might say here is how to throw a ball and how to hit it, well that's good, too. But that's not our priority at this stage."



First-grade slugger Quinn Rochette of the Mariners in

Oakland Strokes Championships/Summer Camp

By Zack Farmer



In boat: front to back: Andrew Ramos (Alameda High), Will Provost (Albany High), Billy Deskin (Campo), Michael Schier (Miramonte) and Leslie Chou (Miramonte) in coxswain seat.



Standing: left to right: Michael Schier, Billy Deskin, Andrew Ramos, Will Provost, Coach Ivan Smiljanic and Leslie Chou in front.

Oakland Strokes Men's Novice Lightweight's Row like Champions

For the first time ever, a team of four novice rowers competed in a varsity event at the US Rowing Youth National Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio and came to within tenths of a second of bringing home a medal with a final time of 7:12:09.

The Oakland Strokes Men's Novice Lightweights, which is comprised of three Lamorinda rowers, stunned the competition on June 10 with their gutsy performance on the 2,000-meter course and realized after their first heat of competition, that they could dream for more that just getting into the finals, they were solid contenders for a medal.

In Sunday's final, the team raced what one parent described as "the most inspirational race" he had ever witnessed in three years at Nationals. Marina Aquatic Center had a decisive lead on the pack and secured a gold medal finish with a time of 7:02:11. After that it appeared to be anyone's race. Oakland Strokes came in fifth behind local Berkeley High and Mercer, but the times were so close that the crowd had to wait to hear the official scores to know for sure how they had all placed.

Leslie Chou (Miramonte HS junior) was in the coxswain seat as she commanded her crew

through three remarkable races. Andrew Ramos (Alameda HS sophomore) was in the fourth seat followed by Will Provost (Albany HS sophomore), Billy Deskin (Campolindo HS freshman) and Michael Schier (Miramonte junior). Men's Novice Head Coach Ivan Smiljanic admitted that the Strokes organization questioned the logic in sending a group of novice rowers into a competition against experienced varsity teams, but they rowed with a fearlessness that amazed Smiljanic, himself a former team captain for the highly successful Cal Men's rowing team.

Smiljanic was a member of the Serbian National Rowing Team that competed in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. He received two gold medals in the World Championships in 2000 and 2001 as well as three silver medals in international competition.

To qualify for finals the Lightweight Four's had to compete in a preliminary heat on Friday afternoon where they placed second behind the team of Wayland Weston. On the morning of June 9, they astonished the crowd with a first place finish in the elimination round known as the Repechage. They finished with a time of 7:09:50, well ahead of the second place team from Cincinnati at 7:14:82.

The crew from Marina Aquatics, all seniors, let the Strokes novice men know how relieved they were to know they wouldn't be facing them again next year.

The Oakland Strokes Junior Rowing Club is a nationally recognized club that has serviced the Bay Area for 33 years and has had rowers earn scholarships to Harvard University, Univer-

sity of California Berkeley, Yale University, and many others. With close to 50 Lamorinda young men and women rowing on novice and varsity teams, the Strokes have a long and proud history. Both the men and women's teams have won gold, silver and bronze in competition and the women have won the Peabody Cup for two years running at the historic Henley regatta in England. Last year, five of the Strokes women's varsity team were selected for the U.S. national junior women's crew.

Final Results:

1. Marina Aquatics 7:02:11
2. Wayland Weston 7:08:94
3. Berkeley High 7:10:11
4. Mercer 7:11:99
5. Oakland 7:12:09
6. Cincinnati 7:23:57

Summer Rowing Camps

Held at the Jack London Aquatic center (JLAC) along the Oakland estuary just south of Jack London Square, the Oakland Strokes will be offering expanded summer camps this year. Two camps for beginners will be held July 9-13 and August 13-17, an intermediate rowers' camp will be held August 20-24, and a conditioning camp is offered for all levels August 27-31.

Morning and afternoon sessions are offered from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Campers must be able to swim and should not be afraid of deep water.) The registration fee per session is \$250. For more information and a camp application, visit the Oakland Strokes website www.oaklandstrokes.org, e-mail summercamp@oaklandstrokes.org, or call camp registrar Marilyn Weber at (510) 652-6445.

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