

# UP FRONT



## WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SPORTS MUSEUM

By Anne Madarasz, Vice President Museum  
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### On Course

This region is home to the nation's oldest surviving continuously played golf course. Established by Joseph Fox in 1887, the Foxburg Country Club and Golf Course celebrates its 130th anniversary next year. Nestled near the Allegheny River about 60 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, this USGA course has welcomed competitors to its narrow, but challenging fairways for more than a century. However, a different kind of golf recently attracted hundreds of athletes from around the world to Pittsburgh—they came to compete in the Professional Disc Golf World Championships.

Disc golf is a relatively new sport. It traces its history to the evolution of the Frisbee, from a metal pie pan tossed for fun on college campuses in the 1930s and '40s, to the hard plastic discs made possible by advances in technology in the 1950s. A southern Californian, Fred Morrison, designed the first plastic "flying saucer," and he later sold his design to Wham-O, which renamed the toy a Frisbee. Popular for beach and outdoor play, the Frisbee also inspired competitive games that included throwing for distance and accuracy. The sport of disc golf grew out of these games.

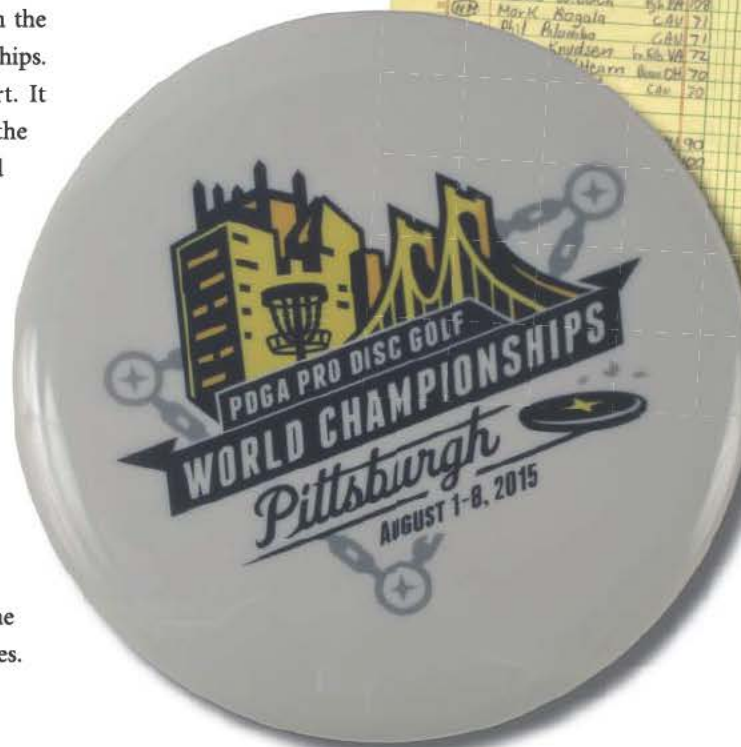
Score card from the  
first PDGA tournament  
in Frick Park, 1984.  
HMC Detrol L&A, gift of Steve Kohman.

RESULTS OF THE PDGA PRO TOUR TOURNAMENT IN  
FRICK PARK  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Date: 4/20/84  
Tournament By: [blank]  
Place: [blank]

RANK	PDGA#	Name	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total	Prize \$
1	11749	Steve Kohman	61	60	62	56	239	20
2	1700	Johnny Sias	60	60	62	56	238	15
3	1914	Dave Griffith	64	55	62	56	237	10
4	969	Dave Griffith	64	55	62	56	237	10
5	1413	Don Thassan	64	60	60	56	240	5
6	1255	Bob Hays	62	60	60	60	242	5
7	294	Bob O. Clark	62	63	61	60	246	5
8	2463	Don Robillard	62	63	61	60	246	5
9	553	H. O. Clark	66	61	61	61	249	5
10	2734	J. Gary Dropke	66	61	61	61	249	5
11	2224	Dave Blumstein	61	64	64	66	255	5
12	2416	Ed Haller	65	64	62	64	255	5
13	1157	Steve Hatal	65	64	62	64	255	5
14	1969	Jeff Spasat	67	64	64	64	259	5
15	1060	Red Whittington	67	65	61	66	259	5
16	165	Jim Housers	67	61	61	66	255	5
17	2718	Don Barred	64	68	64	64	260	5
18	1039	Steve Cull	65	66	67	62	260	5
19	352	R. O. Clark	66	66	61	66	261	5
20	2556	Kerry McDaniell	70	70	70	70	280	5
21	2720	Jim Hay	65	67	67	67	266	5
22	2884	Steve Smyth	67	65	68	67	267	5
23	2753	Steve Orlando	73	73	74	74	294	5
24	1792	Joe Adams	72	72	75	75	294	5
25	2729	John Ray	74	74	71	71	290	5
26	2548	Paul Helling	72	72	72	72	288	5
27	2508	Manus W. Irish	69	68	108	108	353	5
28	482	Mark Bagala	70	68	61	69	308	5
29		Phil Alumba	71	70	69	69	309	5
30		Kristen	72	65	80	108	325	5
31		Heath	72	67	108	108	355	5
32		Can	70	89	108	108	355	5
33			90	88	91	82	351	5
34			100	99	101	94	394	5
35			94	81	81	81	357	5

TOTAL PRIZE \$ 567  
PRO ENTRY FEE \$ 54



Disc from the 2015  
PDGA Pro Disc Golf  
World Championships  
held in Pittsburgh.  
HMC Collections, gift of Pittsburgh  
Flying Disc Society, 2015.55.1. Photo by  
Nicole Hayduk.



**Red Whittington trading card, 1993.**  
HHC Collections, gift of Red Whittington, 2015.54.1. Photo by Nicole Hayduk.

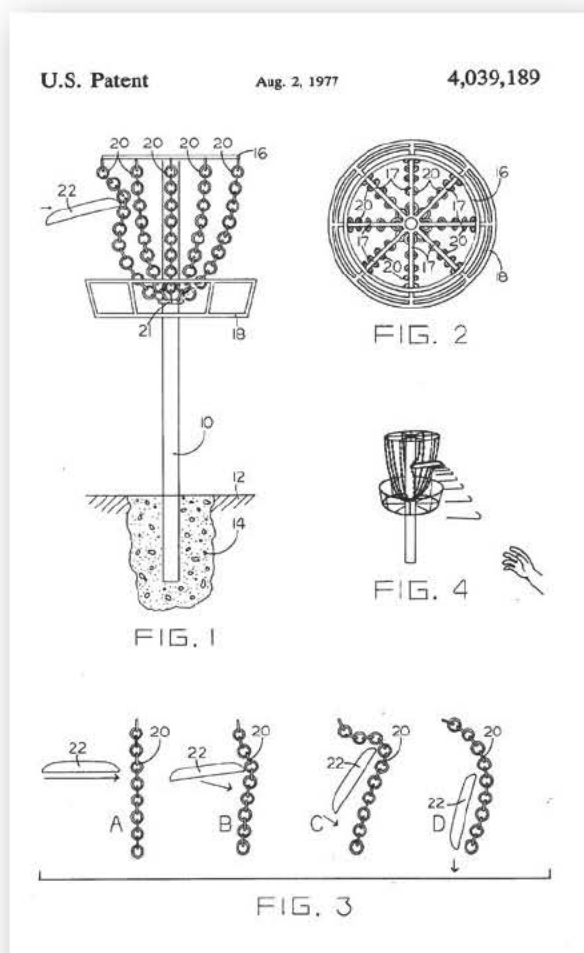
marketing director, later hired the tournament's winner, Dan Roddick, to head the company's new Sports Promotion Department. With Roddick's leadership the sport gained visibility, and with "Steady" Ed Headrick, it evolved into the form that is played today.

Headrick left Wham-O to found his own company, the Disc Golf Association, and in 1977 he patented a disc golf catching device he called the "Pole Hole." This addition turned a back yard game into a formalized sport. Players compete on a "golf" course by throwing their disc into the pole hole target with the goal of having the fewest possible throws. More than 23,000 active PDGA members now compete in 1,500 sanctioned events on almost 5,000 permanent disc golf courses around the world.

The sport of disc golf took off in this region about a century after the Foxburg Golf Club opened, with the first sanctioned PDGA tournament held at Frick Park in 1984. The winner, Steve Kohman, went on to design the region's first 18-hole course at Schenley Park with Keith Clark, Red Whittington, and John David. Whittington, a Pittsburgh native who still competes at the Masters level, has won state, national, Can-Am, and World Championships. Along with hundreds of others, he took part in the World Championship matches played here in August, bringing this new kind of golf to a regional audience.



**Steven T. Kohman trading card, 1993.**  
HHC Collections, gift of Steve Kohman.



**Ed Headrick's patent drawing for the Pole Hole helped to formalize the game.**  
US Patent 4039189 for a "Flying disc entrapment device."