

# PDGA Europe Annual Meetings Draft Minutes

August 26, 2008

Sportshotel Bartolomä, Germany

1900 hrs – 2230 hrs

Present: Brian Hoeniger (HQ), Paul Francz (CH, EuroTour), Sinus Frank (DK, pdga-europe.com), Neil Webber (UK), Sami Poimala (SF, for Jussi Lindberg), Yuri Zelentsov (RU), Erik Schmieman (NL), Frank (D, for Michael Vöglmeyer), Florence Dumont (F, 2030 hrs -).

Absent: Norway, Belgium

Observers: Sweden, Poland, a few other EDGC players.

## 1. Welcome & PDGA Europe/International Overview

Brian welcomed the participants and summarized the International Program (2004 to present) including demographics, Euro structure and communications, Euro continental and national level standards, involvement of Asia and Australasia, PDGA support to new countries. Primary challenges faced by PDGA Europe include a) capacity of the Euro countries for continental level work when same persons are often leading the national level work, b) uniting a wide divergence of national approaches to DG within a continental framework.

## 2. Country Updates – Key Points

Finland – 270 PDGA members by year end, 4 national series events plus 2 x 6 event regional series this year. While the directory lists 30 courses in SF, there are actually more than 100, mostly 9 holes, updating this info is a 2009 priority.

Switzerland – not much change, basically the same player base, need to grow younger players. Using PDGA ratings system for all its events & players.

Russia – A new ski resort with possibly 2 DG courses as summer activity is being built by a Canadian company in the northern region of Karelia (near Finland), this represents a potentially serious breakthrough. DG was taught to prisoners who were pleased to realize discs can be thrown over walls. Russia's 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser disc sold out quickly on ebay to largely USA players, with shipping from USA saving costs. Entry fees are being increased to allow for larger payouts vs player travel expenses over large distances.

Netherlands – membership in the NFB (national disc sports assoc) is working well, with benefits from Ultimate accruing to DG. Under the 06-08 Lipton promo/sponsorship about 10000 persons threw DG for chance to win motorbike/camper, but not 1 of these people is believed to have taken up the game.

Vivi-Anne Äström (Skellefteå/Scandinavian Open) urged PDGA to provide more resources for teaching the game to kids in Europe, and advised the countries to “keep on inviting juniors, eventually some will come.” Introducing the EDGE program to Europe is one answer here.

Denmark – there are still 2 associations. Lots of courses being installed by clubs. Growth is good but the duplication of services and differences between the 2 assocs is challenging.

UK – Installation of a course in Croydon, SE London has doubled the # of people playing in 1 year. “Catch the Spirit” is a company in northern England developing training manuals for DG & disc sports and providing merit badges for teachers of school teachers. The new BDGA competition system = 920+ must play pro, 850-920 = Advanced Am, <850 = Intermediate Am. Having the same entry fees for Pros

and Ams has made this easier. Entry fees of £ 15-20 provides players with lunches, camping, trophies, a few discs to top Ams, CTPs and other “spot prizes.”

Germany – 2 companies are trying professionally to get government funding to install courses. 7 German Tour events this year - plus hosting the Euro DG Championships this week – with focus on local areas and 1 day events in order to overcome challenges of travel and distance. Each event determines its own approach to payout. 3-4 new courses expected by end 2008. Open players get association € support for travelling out of country.

### **3. 2008 PDGA Europe Review**

Brian related that from the side of the countries, 2008 has gone very well to date, with 16% growth in current members (963 vs 828 in 2007), and a terrific 50% growth in sanctioned events (102 vs 68 in 2007). Only 1 event held before August has yet to report. Some countries still need to pay their sanctioning fees including N, SF, DK. In July we had perhaps the biggest DG week ever in Scandinavia, with 8 top USA players attending the Stockholm and Scandinavian Opens, both of which were led from the start and won by local favorite and Europe #1 player Jesper Lundmark. The Euro Committee also took its 1<sup>st</sup> disciplinary action vs Pascal Thioux. One issue is that the Stockholm Open only paid out the top 25% in a huge Open division which they argued was justified because a good % of the players were of Amateur level based on USA protocol and because paying out 33% would've taken away from the top players payout and given the bottom cashers as little as €6.

From the side of PDGA there have been some issues re the timeliness of support, including the mailing of the county support packages, the magazine, and overseeing of rules translations. Promises of several months ago to provide a snapshot of the dbase to Euro Website Manager have also not yet materialized.

In response the Country Reps expressed significant concern re Stockholm not following the prescribed EuroTour MPO payout, despite having their request for a waiver denied by the Committee. It was agreed that the BDGA's 3 tier system of disciplinary action would be adopted to deal with such issues (1. Informal Warning, 2. Formal Warning, 3. Suspension/Removal of event from the ET). The Committee will therefore soon approve these Guidelines, send them to the countries, and advise Stockholm of the course of action to be taken in their case, as well as how they could've handled the “Amateur” issue, and provided a fair 33% MPO payout.

In regards to the suspension of the Belgium Country Coordinator and the seeming unlikelihood of the financial issues in question being resolved, Paul Carels and Michel Bigner of the Brussels club have indicated they are prepared to assume the PDGA position for Belgium.

In regards to pdga-europe.com, Sinus expressed his frustration over the delays in receiving a dbase snapshot from HQ and of the recent advice from HQ that a direct link will not be provided. He has no problem with signing a confidentiality agreement, as he does with his business clients. Such info would facilitate plans to incorporate the entire Euro schedule into the website, player profiles, and other features. In view of the HQ decision possibilities are 1. Sending a copy of the Euro section of the dbase to him on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month, or if this fails 2. Europe would consider building their own dbase = an unnecessary duplication of effort.

### **4. Guide to Europe Review**

While the more detailed review of this core document will occur in autumn, some of the changes and additions to be incorporated are:

- the long advised dues raise of \$10 per player which will enable PDGA Europe to become a break even or possibly a small profit position for PDGA, with any such profit affording new Europe/International activities and support. Netherlands expressed concern over the % increase

and PDGA was advised to provide justification of this before end September to the countries to facilitate this change.

- More countries will come on board including Austria and Poland; Czech Rep, Hungary, Slovakia, and Italy are other possibilities.
- Standardized timeframe for opening registration in EuroTour events all of which are filling quickly
- Tournament disciplinary system (see above)
- Ams will once again be able to take merch in lieu of Pro division cash, per USA
- Countries will take responsibility for translating the Guide into their languages

## **5. PDGA – Europe Structure/Relations**

Brian asked for analysis of where Europe stood today re assuming more responsibility and leadership for PDGA Europe from HQ and himself, and the vision of its eventually becoming a largely self-sufficient/stand-alone entity within the PDGA family. Neil advised that this is becoming ever closer, and that having access to the database is the key next step in the process. That step will in turn enable Europe to 1. manage its own Events, then 2. manage its own Memberships. Some services, notably Ratings (“3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3 large issues”), would likely remain with HQ, and be purchased by Europe.

## **6. 2009 & 2010 Leading Euro Events**

Jussi Meresmaa has advised that the 2009 European Open will be held in Tampere, August 27-30; the Presidents Cup will be on Aug 26.

Skellefteå will be meeting shortly to discuss potential Scandinavian Open 2010. Sinus indicated DK was also interested in hosting the EuroMajor as early as 2010.

Deadline for submission of bids for the 2010 PDGA EuroMajor and the 2010 Euro DGCs is January 1, 2009.

Brian outlined the PDGA’s desire for a European Pro Worlds. Skellefteå has been specifically asked to review such a possibility for 2011 or 2012 and a general answer has been given to Vivi-Anne re her question: “What could a Euro Worlds host expect from PDGA ?”

Bob Mohl requested that a Amateur structure paralleling the Pro-centric EuroTour be created. This was seen as difficult due to the differences in levels of play and organization between the different countries. However starting a European Amateur Championships event was viewed with favor and will be discussed in more detail. The PDGA was also requested to take the leadership in fostering Amateur competition opportunities in Europe in view of its extensive Am experience in USA.

---

## **7. Other Meetings** (dinner with 4 Country Reps, other meetings by PDGA Rep during the week)

Brian met with Michel Bigner on , Belgium’s only EDGC competitor, who advised that Paul Carels from Brussels, who works in sports and was recently part of the Belgium delegation to Beijing Olympics was prepared to assume the PDGA country rep position from Pascal. With no resolution in sight to the 2007 EDGCs payout issue, this is the best solution to continuing Belgium’s involvement with Europe and PDGA.

Pierre Kristoffersson (former Swedish rep) suggested that if Peter Lundmark of the Svenska Frisbee Forbundet could undertake the PDGA memberships and events admin work (a big task in Sweden) this would enable the volunteer Country Rep to work more on growing disc golf, and he might consider the

Country position again. The distances in Sweden (1200+ km from Skellefteå to Göteborg) contribute towards regional ways between the south, Stockholm and the north and this is also becoming challenging. At the same time, for 2008 Sweden switched from a national ranking system based on events played to rankings based on player ratings which has resulted in increased #s of sanctioned events and this trend will continue in 2009.

In the spring of 2008 a Russian National Series event in Novgorod was filmed by a national channel. Next month's event will take place on the grounds of a Kremlin (fortress) in the city of Nizhny Novgorod. The Russians are also preparing to start events for the physically challenged, and reported that they received great assistance from Stork on this subject. Permanent courses need to be in gated parks, otherwise baskets will disappear.

Austria was oriented into PDGA Europe and indicated they will join for 2009. A key point for them was being able to run non payout events, and this is accommodated in EuroChallenge C Tier standards.

There is a new 3300 m (!) course in SW Poland built by a Dutch family on their horse farm. Brian spent 2 mornings orienting their visiting rep Robert Jaskolka to DG, the EDGCs event, and discussing their facility and its development. Their leaders will be joining PDGA as Poland in 2009. This site has the potential to host a EuroTour event by 2010. For more info: <http://www.frisbeegolf.pl/>

Czech and Italian team members were also oriented into PDGA Europe and will review this opportunity for 2009. There is a DG course now near Firenze (Florence), Italy's first. Slovakian player Stefan Dobrev, who worked and played disc golf in Ottawa for 7 years, wants to run a PDGA sanctioned event in Slovakia next year.

Brian recommends with only 1 international Major in 2009, that funds be used to bring Sinus and possibly 1 other person from overseas to the spring summit.

---

END