

# PDGA Course Design Guidelines for each Player Skill Level

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Element		All Divisions			
<b>General Principles</b>	In Pro events, the Men's Open & Masters criteria should be the primary guidelines for design since they typically account for 3/4 of the field. At Am events, the Advanced Men criteria should be the primary design elements. For many courses, it will not be necessary to have alternate course configurations for each division group indicated below except sometimes for the very oldest and youngest groups. However, a course with several holes: (a) requiring significant power to throw across water or valleys, (b) long throws to forced doglegs or, (c) long throws through nasty terrain to reach a decent landing area, is a candidate for alternate tee or pin placements appropriate for the division groups as shown below. If it appears you need to have at least one hole with a different setup, try and plan for at least 4-6 different holes for a lower division group, even some which may be longer if the lengths are appropriate for that group. Different setups on just 1 or 2 holes might get missed by some groups. But 4 to 6 different holes will put divisions on alert to check that they are playing the right setup on each hole.				
<b>Par</b>	Courses will typically have pars marked on tee signs ranging from 3 to 5. For sanctioned events, it's necessary to indicate pars on the event flyer for all holes to provide for the proper penalty if a player is late. For tournament play, holes from the Gold or Blue tees up to <b>550 feet</b> will be mostly <b>par 3</b> based on their difficulty. Holes with effective lengths <b>over 500 feet</b> are candidates for <b>par 4s</b> and holes <b>over 800 feet</b> are candidates for <b>par 5s</b> . There are a handful of <b>par 6</b> holes in the World over 1200 feet. Some challenging holes in heavy woods could have a par higher than 3 or 4 even if they aren't as long as the reference lengths stated above. Not every length is good for all divisions. There are certain lengths that are better than others depending on the skill level intended to play the hole. For example, holes where most players in a division/skill level would likely shoot the same score probably should be lengthened, shortened or toughened to provide a better challenge to spread their scores.				
<b>Signs</b>	At minimum, the hole number and length(s) should be indicated either on a sign or painted on the tee pad, board or marking stone. On wooded courses and blind holes, it's valuable to indicate the flight path(s). If the hole has multiple pin placements, their locations should be indicated on the sign. If all placements are blind on a hole, recommend using a magnet, peg or pointer system to indicate on the sign where the pin is located that round. Make sure there are appropriate signs at all tees being used. A week prior to tournament time, it can be helpful to paint arrows on the ground directing players to the next tee, especially on courses with temporary tees or routing for an event with many out-of-town players expected. If possible, provide some form of fairway markers such as paint, ribbons or posts indicating distance from the basket possibly at the 100' and 200' positions.				
<b>Tee Pads</b>	Ideally the tee pads should all be the same type (i.e. all natural grass/dirt or all hard surface). If permanent, make them near <b>5'x12'</b> with some pads longer on long holes. Consider making tee pads even wider at the back.				
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Gold tees: Over 969 rating</b>	<b>Blue tees: Over 924 rating</b>	<b>White tees: Over 874 rating</b>	<b>Red tees: Under 875 rating</b>	
<b>Majors Am Majors Pro</b>	<b>MA1 MPO &amp; MPM</b>	<b>MM1, MJ1, MJ2 FPO, MPG, MPS</b>	<b>FW1, MA2, MG1, MS1 FPM</b>	<b>FW2-3, FJ1-4, MA3-4, MJ3-4 FPG, FPS, FPL, MPL</b>	
<b>Daily Am Daily Pro</b>	<b>Open (if tees available)</b>	<b>Advanced Open, Master &amp; Grandmaster</b>	<b>MM1, MA2, MJ1 &amp; MJ2 Open Women &amp; Sr GM</b>	<b>All Females &amp; other Males Women over 39 &amp; Legends</b>	
<b>Effective Length*</b>	The <b>effective lengths</b> for reachable holes typically range from <b>230 - 360 feet</b> . Ideally several holes will be <b>over 510 feet</b> with a few <b>over 830 feet</b> . Courses are usually <b>over 7000 feet</b> for 18 holes. A Majors course layout should ideally have a <b>Scratch Scoring Average at least 50</b> .	The <b>effective lengths</b> for reachable holes typically range from <b>185 - 310 feet</b> . There should be several holes <b>over 430 feet</b> with a few <b>over 725 feet</b> . Courses will typically be <b>over 5000 feet</b> for 18 holes.	The <b>effective lengths</b> for reachable holes range from <b>150 - 270 feet</b> . There should be several holes <b>over 375 feet</b> , some which likely are <b>par 4</b> . Course length will typically be <b>under 6000 feet</b> for 18 holes. If they're the shorter tees on a Gold course, the length could be up to 8000 feet.	The <b>effective lengths</b> for reachable holes typically range from <b>130 - 230 feet</b> . There should be some holes <b>over 325 feet</b> , which might be considered <b>par 4</b> . The total course length will typically be <b>under 5000 feet</b> for 18 holes.	
<b>Approach Throws</b>	The lengths for open approach throws ranges from <b>150-290 feet</b> with a maximum of <b>320 feet</b> from the desired landing area. More constrained approaches range from <b>100-225 feet</b> .	The lengths for open approach throws should range from <b>120-240 feet</b> with a maximum of <b>275 feet</b> from the desired landing area. Relatively constrained approaches range from <b>80-180 feet</b> .	Approach throws should typically range from <b>90-180 feet</b> with a maximum of <b>230 feet</b> from the desired landing area. Relatively constrained approaches range from <b>65-135 feet</b> .	Approach throws should typically range from <b>70-140 feet</b> with a maximum of <b>185 feet</b> from the desired landing area. Relatively constrained approaches range from <b>50-120 feet</b> .	
<b>Water &amp; Doglegs</b>	Players should ideally be given the option to throw around water. However, if the terrain forces a throw across water, the far side of the water should be no more than <b>265 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee/mark. A player should not be forced to make an open throw <b>over 295 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee to the corner of a dogleg where a shorter throw will not allow the player to reach the basket (or next landing area) with a good next throw.	Players should ideally be given the option to throw around water. However, if the terrain forces a throw across water, the far side of the water should be no more than <b>230 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee/mark. A player should not be forced to throw <b>over 260 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee to the corner of a dogleg where a shorter throw will not allow the player to reach the basket (or next landing area) with a good next throw.	Design an alternate flight path where this route does not cross water. A player should not be forced to throw more than <b>200 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee to reach the corner on a dogleg hole where a throw any shorter will not allow the player to reach the basket (or next landing area) with a good next throw.	Design an alternate flight path where this route does not cross water. A player should not be forced to throw more than <b>170 feet</b> (effective length) from the tee to reach the corner on a dogleg hole where a throw any shorter will not allow the player to reach the basket (or next landing area) with a good next throw.	

\* *The Effective Length is a hole's measured length (by laser, tape, foot/GPS or wheel) plus or minus the elevation adjustment. The elevation adjustment is calculated by taking the vertical elevation change, multiplying it by 3, then adding it to the hole's measured length for upslopes and subtract it for downslopes to calculate a hole's effective length.*