

Disc Golf – Windows

Developed by: Sundial Interactive (<http://www.sundialinteractive.com>)

Published by: Wizard Works (<http://www.wizardworks.com>)

Reviewed by: Tim Maxwell

Official Site: http://www.wizardworks.com/disc_golf.htm

Genre: Sports – Frisbee/Golf

System Requirements:

OPERATING SYSTEM: Windows® 95 or 98

CPU: Pentium® 233 or faster processor

VIDEO CARD: DirectX® 7.0 compatible 2MB or higher video card

SOUND CARD: DirectX® 7.0 compatible sound card

CD-ROM DRIVE: 4x CD-ROM

MEMORY: 32MB RAM minimum

INPUT DEVICE: Microsoft® 100% compatible mouse, keyboard

HARD DRIVE: 75MB free hard drive space

Multi-player: Internet access required for Internet play
(33.6 Kps modem minimum for head-to-head play)

Supports: N/A

ESRB: Everyone

Overall Rating: 3

Graphics: 4/10

Sound: 3/10

Documentation: 2/10

Getting Started: 3/10

Gameplay: 3/10

Value: 2/10

The Good Press: The game only takes up 75MB of disk space; it uninstalls without a hitch; makes a nice coaster.

The Bad Press: Graphics; music; sound; gameplay; options; replay value; courses.

Overview: Wizard Works continues to set new standards for incompetence in game creation.

Tips:

If you're having trouble aiming your throws, set the game to novice. This pretty much guarantees a straight shot.

If you're stuck directly behind a tree or other obstacle, try altering your view in the options menu.

The folks who design games over at Wizard Works must be a troubled group of individuals. They seemingly try desperately to fathom an idea for a game that no one in their right mind would create, sit down in front of *Microsoft Visual Studio* and program it in an hour or two, slap a \$20 price tag on it and ship it out in the hopes of selling a copy or two so they can pay their production costs. That brings us to *Disc Golf*, the next title in their what-the-hell-is-the-point-of-this line of games that already includes gems like *Swamp Buggy Racing* and *Emergency Rescue Firefighters*. And if I have anything to say about it, you won't go near a copy of this game.

As the name implies, *Disc Golf* has you playing a standard round of golf, except you use Frisbee discs instead of balls and clubs. While listening to perhaps the most annoying music track in the history of PC gaming, you can choose to play a single exhibition round, play in a tournament or feebly attempt to find other players online. The game features four similarly-designed, fictitious courses and a handful of players to choose from. It makes little difference which player you choose, since the only distinguishing feature is their first name. If you're really feeling adventurous, you can even create your own player by entering your name and skill level—talk about customization!

When you hit the course, you'll notice that the game's graphics and sound borrow heavily from the *Links LS* series. As such, the courses don't look all that bad. Unfortunately, all you get to see throughout the whole game are static images with an occasional flying circle whizzing by. That's right, the golfers themselves don't show on the screen, instead, your disc simply materializes in front of you when you throw. The game's sound effects also scratch the absolute bottom of the barrel. First off, the environmental effects (birds mostly) were sampled way too loudly and really become an annoyance as you play. The infamous duck and repetitive post-shot comments are especially intolerable and had me reaching for the volume control just a few rounds in.

Depending on the skill level you've chosen, aiming your disc is handled using a similar interface to that in *Links LS*. You simply move the cursor where you want to aim, hold down the mouse button to determine the distance, and attempt to release the button just as the cursor reaches aiming line. There are 11 different discs to choose from and each one behaves differently in flight. For example, the Banshee is a straight flier in high-wind conditions, and the Aviar is useful for putts and short drives. When you hover the mouse pointer over a disc, a brief description of its flight characteristics are displayed. While many of them say they are useful for short, medium, or long shots, there is no indication of how many feet these distances represent. So, if you're faced with a 250-foot shot, it's difficult to tell what disc would be best suited to handle it. This effectively renders many of the discs useless since you never really know how much force to put behind your throws. The elevation of your terrain also has an effect on the way your disc flies. This aspect, although realistic I suppose, causes a lot of shots to come up well short of the target. I'd be able to look past this problem if there were some explanation on how to handle these situations, but sadly, much of the learning done in *Disc Golf* is through trial and error.

Another problem I have with this game is the fact that it doesn't matter if the basket is 250 or 750 feet away, all the holes are par three's. This makes it nearly impossible to keep pace in a tournament where some players are sailing along at -9. While it's possible to achieve distances upwards of 550 feet in one throw, medium range and short shots are often an exercise in frustration—especially when you play on the pro level with the wind turned on. Even if, by some act of God, you manage to aim the disc just right and gauge the distance correctly, most short-range shots will simply clank off the chains and fall harmlessly next to the basket. As a result, unless you resort to extensive mulligan use, finishing a round below par and thus winning the tournament is simply not feasible. Not that winning a tournament would be all that exciting anyway.

Here's the bottom line: *Disc Golf* is one of the most insulting, half-assed pieces of software I have ever used. Wizard Works has cut a multitude of corners to get this game out as quickly and as cheaply as possible. The graphics and gameplay are pathetic attempts to copy the respected *Links LS* series, the sound effects will make you wish you were deaf, the interface is inexplicably clunky and unforgiving, and the game is about as entertaining as partaking in hour-long sessions of watching grass grow. Having said that, I'd recommend taking this CD-ROM and setting up your own real-life game of disc golf. It's bound to be better than playing this.