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## Vibram Open Wrapup

BY JEFF\_LAG | AUG 16, 2009

The 2009 Vibram Open, the last PDGA National Tour Event of the year, wrapped up without any dramatic flair on Sunday, but still with a sense of accomplishment and a fitting closure to an outstanding series of NT events this calendar year. With hundreds of spectators on hand, there were considerable galleries following the competitors, perched around the 18th green, and most impressively, following the live video coverage and live commentary by Billy Crump on the internet. With friends, family members, and hundreds of fans of the sport watching from around the country and even from Europe and elsewhere around the world, disc golf reached a new level and set a bar not previously attained in the history of the sport. Jack McCluskey, an editor from ESPN.com, was even on hand to interview Steve Dodge and some top players and to see what disc golf is all about. A piece will be put together and, if all goes well, an article about the Vibram Open and disc golf will be on ESPN.com in the next week or so!



In the Pro Grand Masters division, Dean Pfeifer lead wire to wire and was never really challenged on Sunday, finishing the tournament at one under par with a very respectable round of 64. The hottest battle in the division was for second place, where California's Kevin Couch overcame a two throw deficit to Canada's Eric Vandenberg going into the round with a smoking round of 61, unofficially rated at 1012. Vandenberg had a hot stretch of three deuces in a row on holes #13 through 15, but his round



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was ultimately derailed by a triple bogey 7 on the par four third hole, a few discs in the drink on the pond holes, and a double circle 6 on the closing 18th hole.

Perhaps the surprise of the tournament was Sarah Stanhope's convincing win in the Women's division. Stanhope, originally a Rhode Island native but now living in South Carolina, had her parents on hand caddying for her on Sunday and rose to the occasion with another strong round, and well above her 947 rating. Despite a disc in the pond on her opening drive and a circle 6 on hole#1, she never lost her composure and played smart and consistent golf to finish with a whopping 9 throw victory over three time PDGA World Champion Val Jenkins, who was unable to record a birdie during her round and just could not apply any pressure to her opponent. For her performance, Sarah took home a \$1500 paycheck, which more than doubled her 2009 PDGA tour earnings.

In the Open division, Barry Schultz cruised to victory with a 55, which was bested by only one competitor today, and he would finish at an amazing 25 under par for the three rounds and a 7 throw victory over his closest competitor, earning him a fat \$2500 winner's check. Finishing second at 18 under par was Nikko Locastro with another round of 57 to match the same score he took on Friday. With a round of 54 on Saturday, Nikko's second place finish would net him a cool \$2000 payout to add to the over \$15,000 in winnings he has earned this year. The hot round of the day was fired by Arizona's Paul Ulibarri, who delivered an amazing round of 53 (9 under par) and unofficially rated at 1070, which vaulted him into third place. Fourth place was rounded out by North Carolina's Jeremy Koling who won \$1300 for his efforts, which according to him, was a full thousand dollars more than any tournament check he has received in his brief pro career.

Still being broadcast over the internet, the awards ceremony was kicked off with a tribute to the recently departed Tim Selinske, and Jay Reading delivered some emotional words before asking for a moment silence, followed by a group howl to Tim up in the heavens. Tournament Director Steve Dodge brought nearly the entire tournament staff up for recognition, before starting off the awards. The ancillary events were awarded first, with an impromptu pie eating contest to settle a disputed finish the previous evening. Steve had oversized checks for the award winners, along with beautiful maple wood trophies and a stone tree trophy designed by Steve Brinster with metal maple leaves which will have the winners' names engraved on them each year. Most competitors were extremely gracious with thanks to the Steve, the tournament staff, and the hordes of volunteers who labored to resuscitate the Maple Hill course after the devastating ice storm which damaged it the previous winter. Superlatives like "TD of the year" and "Best disc golf tournament I've ever attended" were thrown out many times, but the real winner this weekend was the course. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, with efforts by some amazingly hard working volunteers the course was reborn in 2009 to deliver a world class challenge and tournament disc golf experience like no other, and the contagious smiles all around seemed to confirm that.

Later that evening, remaining competitors and tournament staff adjourned to a local venue for "candlepin" bowling, a New England tradition. Using a bowling ball which is about 1/3 the size of a standard ball, candlepin bowling is much more difficult than its brother; a score of 100 is considered exceptional and "professionals" average about 130. Seeing some of the best disc golfers in the world frustrated by the thin candlepins was an experience in itself, but a great time was had by all!

## Links

[Vibram Open Scoreboard at PDGA.com](#)  
[Vibram Open Official Website](#)  
[Vibram Open Blog](#)

[Worlds Live Scoring, 7/31/09: MPO, FPO, MPG Round 6](#)

[Tee times for the M & N pools for 7/31/09 poste](#)

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## Updates

[PDGA Radio Program: 8/13/09](#)

[Vibram Open Preview Video](#)

[Disc Golf Magazine #63](#)

[PDGA Radio Program: 8/6/09](#)

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