

A Brief History of the Ice Bowl

by Lynne Warren



The first Ice Bowl was the product of a good idea, born out of yearning for the winter of 1987 to be over and for the disc golf season to begin again. While the course in Albert-Oakland Park was always there in Columbia, Missouri, and it was certainly possible to get a buddy or three to go out for a round, it was always more fun to get as many people as possible together for a couple of rounds. Rick Rothstein dreamed up the event and decided that the Sunday before the Super Bowl would be the perfect time, since no one would have to miss any football playoff games on TV, and maybe he could entice some local media to check out the disc golfers playing in the winter weather. Little did anyone know that the Ice Bowl would become a traditional, annual event that would eventually raise over \$3 million in charitable contributions, specifically targeted to fight hunger and feed the hungry.

History of Ice Bowl

Year	Players	Events	Cash	Pounds	Avg Temp °F	Avg Snow - Inches	Leading Fundraiser	Leading Food Collector	Coldest	Snowiest
1987	34	1							Columbia MO 25°	Columbia, MO 5"
1988	150	8							NA	NA
1989	265	14							NA	NA
1990	753	31							NA	NA
1991	433	20							NA	NA
1992	850	30							Milwaukee, WI -2°	Shelby Twp , MI 18"
1993	977	35							Fraser, CO -4°	Frasier, CO 38"
1994	1,250	44							Fraser, CO -6°	Black Forest, CO 20"
1995	2,195	71							Austin, MN -3°	Columbia, MO 19"
1996	1,953	56	\$1,434	3,193			Houston, TX-\$310	West Milford, NJ-300	St Cloud, MN -10°	St Cloud, MN 27"
1997	2,905	75	\$7,973	5,109			Des Moines, IA-\$910	Des Moines-584	St Cloud, MN -29°	St Cloud, MN 50"
1998	3,683	90	\$19,579	12,606			Arlington, TX-\$1,800	Huntington, WV-5,360	Vassalboro, ME 8°	Frasier, CO 40"
1999	3,466	84	\$28,192	14,398	44.7	2.3	Houston, TX-\$3,100	Huntington, WV-6,003	Hoting, SWEDEN -19°	Cascade, OR 40"
2000	3,971	98	\$37,109	35,188	34.8	3.9	Arlington, TX-\$8,000	Huntington, WV-696	Burnboro, ME -1°	Cascade, OR 48"
2001	4,419	113	\$43,403	21,127	35.0	4.7	Houston, TX-\$5,000	Huntington, WV-9,521	Winnipeg, MB -5°	Skowhegan, ME 36"
2002	5,651	137	\$65,531	12,038	41.6	3.2	Arlington, TX-\$5,600	Huntington, WV-25,000	Winnipeg, MB -8°	Skowhegan, ME 30"
2003	6,337	154	\$72,886	26,386	31.1	3.2	Houston, TX-\$6,328	Huntington, WV-9,801	Winnipeg, MB -6°	Skowhegan, ME 30"
2004	6,561	170	\$86,887	17,489	29.0	5.2	Charlotte, NC-\$9,055	Rock Hill, SC & Las Vegas, NV-800	Gatineau, QC -11°	Anchorage, AK 45"
2005	7,062	186	\$128,210	23,268	36.9	2.6	Saint Cloud, MN-\$13,366	Newtown, PA-905	Saint Cloud, MN -5°	South River, ON, CAN 36"
2006	7,821	175	\$164,328	23,548	40.0	1.2	Saint Cloud, MN-\$14,000	Newtown, PA-1,778	South River, ON, CAN -8°	South River, ON, CAN 44"
2007	8,982	201	\$197,995	35,834	34.1	3.3	Saint Cloud, MN, \$21,610	Newtown, PA-4,506	Aberdeen, SD -11°	Anchorage, AK 45"
2008	11,511	228	\$257,642	52,402	36.0	3.2	Saint Cloud, MN-\$21,152	Newtown, PA-12,790	Sanborn, IA -16°	Durango, CO 38"
2009	7,958	212	\$246,936	57,836	35.9	3.5	Arvada, CO-\$14,794	Rocklin, CA-11,601	Edmonton, ON -9°	Kalkaska, MI 42"
2010	11,825	226	\$261,478	67,966	35.3	5.1	Arvada, CO-\$15,078	Newtown, PA-9,713	Helsinki, FINLAND -6°	Brandon, SD; Sanborn, IA
2011	12,430	235	\$276,670	59,668	36.7	6.6	Arvada, CO-\$15,139	Rocklin, CA-5,179	Roseville, MN -12°	Watrous, SK 48"
2012	13,619	234	\$300,907	79,324	38.6	1.6	Tulsa, OK-\$12,519	Rocklin, CA-24352	Edmonton, AB, CAN -5°	Huntsville, ON, CAN 30"
2013	13,407	242	\$312,262	65,216	36.3	3.0	Arvada, CO-\$15,271	Newtown, PA-11,497	Winnipeg, MB -15°	Chugiak, AK 45"
2014	12,664	226	\$302,512	49,026	35.3	4.8	Denver, CO-\$20,000	Troy, MI-2,500	Saskatoon, AB -19°	Kalkasa, MI; Huntsville, ON 36"
2015	13,600	237	\$343,844	13,600	37.1	4.0	Denver, CO-\$30,076	Dundas, ON, CAN-2,741	Sudbury ON -6°	Halifax, NS 80"
Totals	166,732	3,633	\$3,155,778	675,222	36.4	3.6				

Rick, #2458, had joined the PDGA in 1983, and jumped in early on to get a disc golf club started in Columbia, to start a publication that provided communication and connected disc golfers throughout the country, and to organize and run a national tournament each year in Columbia. He was a member of the PDGA board of directors, and a touring pro during the spring through the fall seasons, but in Missouri, it was he who was responsible for running weekly events and monthly two-round tournaments that drew disc golfers from St. Louis and Kansas City as well



Winter weather in Missouri is unpredictable, but more times than not in January, one can count on some pretty miserable conditions. Rick made a telephone blitz to the disc golfers in St. Louis and Kansas City and spread the word in Columbia. He also called the local newspapers to see if any reporters would come out just to see what we were doing—he made sure that everyone knew there would be something going on no matter what Mother Nature had in store for us. Even the day before the Ice Bowl, the disc golfers in Columbia were still hemming and hawing, that it might be too cold, or the weather might be bad. Therefore, Rick came up with the perfect challenge—no wimps and no excuses! If you don't make it out for the Ice Bowl, you can consider yourself a wimp!



With that, the official rules and credo of the Ice Bowl were etched in ice—No excuses, no wimps, and no whiners was added eventually, thanks to the Indianapolis Disc Golf Club.



Snow started falling on Saturday night and was still coming down when the first of the 34 hearty Ice Bowl participants arrived. A reporter from the *Columbia Daily Tribune* showed up with his camera during the second round, took some pictures, and talked with several of the disc golfers who were having a blast playing in the five inches of fresh snow. There were still about 17 players out there in the cold as dusk approached, and we awarded Alex Dadant of Columbia the Ice Bowl trophy, which was an ice bucket mounted on a wooden base with room for future Ice Bowl champions' names. We all vowed to return and have as much fun again the next year.



Much has changed in the world of disc golf since that first Ice Bowl. To say that disc golf was not widespread in 1987 is quite an understatement. There were fewer than 200 courses in the ground—as compared to over 5,000 today, and the PDGA numbering system was right around 4,500, as opposed to the current number that is closing in on 80,000. There were pockets of players wherever there were courses, and many of those players were willing to spend weekends, during the rest of the year, traveling back and forth to other cities for the chance to play a different course, friendly competition, and camaraderie. This was the way that skill levels grew, discs were purchased, and news was spread. The off season was a lonely time—and those who were used to traveling to tournaments or to nearby monthlies were very hungry to throw and get together with other disc golfers. We all wanted more courses and players, and the only way for that to happen was to find ways to let other people know about disc golf and how much fun it can be. So, we were thrilled that Monday following the first Ice Bowl to find a photo in the *Columbia Daily Tribune* with a short write-up about how we defied the weather to play our favorite sport. Disc golf in Columbia got some free publicity in the Sports section!



March of 1987 marked the debut issue of Rick's quarterly publication, *Disc Golf World News*, the primary communication that connected the dots between the disc golf players that were speckled across the country and parts of Canada. Rick included a picture from the Ice Bowl, reported on the success of the turnout and the media opportunity, and declared the intention of *Disc Golf World News* to promote Ice Bowl Sunday as a day of disc golf solidarity in the middle of winter. The seeds of the idea were thus thrown out and planted in other states. When a dozen or so Ice Bowls were held in 1988, the Ice Bowl, as a series of events, was truly born.



Through the years, of course, Ice Bowl has evolved greatly. Because it has become so widespread, there are both local flavor and traditional activities that make each community's Ice Bowl unique. There are bragging rights for such things as the number of players, low temperatures (or high temperatures in Sun Belt states), and charity money raised, which is now worth prizes. There have been chili contests, ice sculpting, various games to play, and courses full to the brim with people playing on Ice Bowl day! Eventually, Ice Bowl had to expand from single day that everyone everywhere played because Saturday worked better in some areas or some communities wanted to hold their event on one weekend so that they could support another community's Ice Bowl on the following weekend. Some players started traveling out of state to attend particular Ice Bowls. It expanded first to an Ice Bowl Weekend and



eventually to what it is today—and Ice Bowl Corridor that encompasses every weekend in January and February.

In 1994 Rick started vending discs and clothing featuring the Ice Bowl logo and coordinating the events wherever they were held. The mission to fight hunger by raising money and food for local food banks, which was put into place in 1996 (thanks to the Indianapolis Disc Golf Club who had raised money for their food bank in 1995), helped to expand the numbers of participants, communities involved, and media coverage. Networking for charity and publicity through the media have had lasting results that have helped increase the number of people playing the sport and the number of courses within many communities.

After the 9-11-2001 tragedies, Disc Golf World started to allow Ice Bowls to raise money for charitable purposes other than just fighting hunger. Two years ago, Disc Golf World trademarked Ice Bowl® to better ensure that tournaments using the Ice Bowl® mark for their events would raise funds for charities consistent with the goals of Ice Bowl. Today, the emphasis continues to be on having fun, raising money for local charities (ideally for fighting hunger), and garnering upbeat local publicity that integrates the disc golf community with the community at large in positive ways. To date, disc golfers have raised over \$3.1 million for charity through the Ice Bowl.

The Ice Bowl has been good for disc golf, disc golfers, and communities. Players pull together to organize and run the event in their towns and cities. It is a good day to new players out for the first disc golf experience. Since there is no pressure to know how to play, they can throw just for fun while making their charitable contributions. The camaraderie is still an important part of why Ice Bowl serves as a winter reunion and celebration. With whining prohibited, everyone is cheerful, but being cheery is easy when you know that you are part of an event that is for a good cause; it is something in which everyone can take pride. The Ice Bowl is truly one man's dream that has come true, and in the process, it achieved far more than he could have ever envisioned.



Top 100 Cash Donations				Top 25 Coldest Ice Bowls							
1	Littleton (Denver), CO	\$30,076	2015	1	Saint Cloud, MN	\$10,877	2013	16	Springfield, IL	-6	2007
2	Saint Cloud, MN	\$21,610	2007	2	Jefferson, NC	\$10,556	2008	17	Anchorage, AK	-6	2002
3	Saint Cloud, MN	\$21,152	2008	3	Charlotte, NC	\$10,123	2006	18	Winnipeg, MB, CAN	-6	2009
4	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$20,000	2014	4	Saint Cloud, MN	\$10,070	2012	19	Winnipeg, MB, CAN	-6	2014
5	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$15,271	2013	5	Saint Cloud, MN	\$9,932	2008	20	Coeymans, NY, NY	-6	2014
6	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$15,139	2011	6	Waterbury Center, VT	\$9,504	2014	21	South River, ON, CAN	-6	2004
7	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$15,078	2010	7	Saint Cloud, MN	\$9,442	2015	22	Sudbury, ON	-6	2015
8	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$14,794	2009	8	Channahon, IL, IL	\$9,334	2014	23	Edmonton, AB, CAN	-5	2012
9	Saint Cloud, MN	\$14,766	2011	9	Channahon, IL	\$9,332	2013	24	Kamloops, BC, CAN	-5	2008
10	Saint Cloud, MN	\$14,000	2006	10	St. Cloud, MN	\$9,323	2014	25	Kamloops, BC, CAN	-5	2009
11	Saint Cloud, MN	\$13,366	2005	11	Saint Cloud, MN	\$9,316	2009	26	Winnipeg, MB, CAN	-5	2001
12	Tulsa, OK	\$13,082	2015	12	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$9,262	2007	27	Saint Cloud, MN	-5	2005
13	Charlotte, NC	\$12,798	2007	13	Buffalo, NY	\$9,215	2013	28	Edmonton, AB, CAN	-5	2012
14	Tulsa, OK	\$12,519	2012	14	Buffalo, NY	\$9,200	2014	29	Edmonton, AB, CAN	-5	2010
15	Waterbury Center, VT	\$12,143	2015	15	Kansas City, KS	\$9,055	2004	30	Edmonton, AB, CAN	-5	2011
16	Huntington, WV	\$11,922	2009	16	Charlotte, NC	\$9,055	2004	31	Winnipeg, MB, CAN	-5	2012
17	Charlotte, NC	\$11,701	2005	17	Buffalo, NY	\$8,825	2015	32	Hibbing, MN	-5	2011
18	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$11,629	2008	18	Huntington, WV	\$8,700	2008	33	Fernie, BC, CAN	-5	2006
19	Tulsa, OK	\$11,389	2014	19	Channahon, IL	\$8,600	2012	34	Kalkaska, MI	-5	2014
20	Tulsa, OK	\$11,100	2013	20	Tallahassee, FL	\$8,440	2010				
21	Saint Cloud, MN	\$10,877	2013	21	Huntington, WV	\$8,386	2010				
22	Jefferson, NC	\$10,556	2008	22	Buffalo, NY	\$8,255	2012				
23	Charlotte, NC	\$10,123	2006	23	Saint Cloud, MN	\$8,210	2010				
24	Saint Cloud, MN	\$10,070	2012	24	Grand Junction / Palisades, CO	\$8,000	2008				
25	Charlotte, NC	\$9,932	2008	25	Kansas City, KS	\$8,000	2012				
26	Waterbury Center, VT	\$9,504	2014	26	Arlington, TX	\$8,000	2000				
27	Saint Cloud, MN	\$9,442	2015	27	Kansas City, KS, KS	\$8,000	2015				
28	Channahon, IL, IL	\$9,334	2014	28	Oswego, IL, IL	\$8,000	2015				
29	Channahon, IL	\$9,332	2013	29	Charlotte, NC	\$7,700	2009				
30	St. Cloud, MN	\$9,323	2014	30	Orchard Park, NY, NY	\$7,500	2014				
31	Saint Cloud, MN	\$9,316	2009	31	Troy, MI, MI	\$7,400	2015				
32	Arvada (Denver), CO	\$9,262	2007	32	Tallahassee, FL	\$7,230	2011				
33	Buffalo, NY	\$9,215	2013	33	Chattanooga, TN	\$7,228	2011				
34	Kansas City, KS	\$9,200	2014	34	Tallahassee, FL	\$7,111	2009				
35	Charlotte, NC	\$9,055	2004	35	Arvada, CO	\$7,107	2006				
36	Buffalo, NY	\$8,825	2015	36	Chattanooga, TN	\$7,104	2012				
37	Huntington, WV	\$8,700	2008	37	Charlotte, NC	\$7,042	2012				
38	Channahon, IL	\$8,600	2012	38	Oswego, IL, IL	\$7,000	2014				
39	Tallahassee, FL	\$8,440	2010	39	Buffalo (Orchard Park), NY	\$6,805	2011				
				40	Lockport, IL, IL	\$6,548	2015				
				41	Troy, MI	\$6,400	2013				
				42	Eugene, OR	\$6,400	2013				
				43	Houston, TX	\$6,328	2003				
				44	Kansas City, KS	\$6,292	2013				
				45	Waterbury Center, VT	\$6,126	2012				
				46	Troy, MI	\$6,000	2012				
				47	Troy, MI	\$6,000	2014				
				48	Grand Junction / Palisades, CO	\$5,944	2006				
				49	Oswego, IL	\$5,885	2013				
				50	Saint Paul, MN	\$5,745	2012				
				51	Tallahassee, FL	\$5,720	2008				
				52	Buffalo, NY	\$5,704	2010				
				53	Channahon, IL	\$5,700	2011				
				54	Tulsa, OK	\$5,643	2011				
				55	Charlotte, NC	\$5,630	2015				
				56	Grand Junction / Palisades, CO	\$5,620	2011				
				57	Arlington, TX	\$5,600	2002				
				58	Tulsa, OK	\$5,570	2010				
				59	Chattanooga, TN	\$5,526	2007				
				60	Buffalo, NY	\$5,500	2009				
				61	Houston, TX	\$5,500	2002				
				62	Clagary, AB, CAN	\$5,462	2011				
				63	Calgary, AB, CAN	\$5,431	2008				
				64	Charlotte, NC	\$5,362	2002				
				65	Charlotte, NC	\$5,359	2003				
				66	Kansas City, KS	\$5,335	2010				
				67	Huntington, WV	\$5,297	2006				
				68	Norwalk, CT	\$5,272	2002				
				69	Charlton, MA	\$5,216	2010				
				70	Calgary, AB, CAN	\$5,194	2009				
				71	Charlotte, NC	\$5,193	2010				
				72	Grand Junction / Palisades, CO	\$5,173	2013				
				73	Tulsa, OK	\$5,081	2009				
				74	Waterbury Center, VT	\$5,055	2011				
				75	Sarasota, FL, FL	\$5,015	2015				
				76	Houston, TX	\$5,005	2004				
				77	Grand Junction / Palisades, CO	\$5,000	2012				
				78	Houston, TX	\$5,000	2000				
				79	Houston, TX	\$5,000	2001				
				80	Chattanooga, TN	\$4,841	2013				