

The Can-Am series, now in its 25th year, is the longest running series in disc golf, is well over the 300 tournament mark, and has been directed by 9 individuals. Although there are information gaps, the following encapsulated history is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

By summer's end 1985, the 1986 Ontario tournament schedule had been set up, and listed an unprecedented 10 disc golf events, split between St. Thomas, Etobicoke and Ward's Island. At the time, Phil Palumbo was the PDGA Coordinator for Eastern Canada, the course pro at Centennial Park, and the most enthusiastic traveler from the Toronto area. Phil decided to generate interest and competition by assigning and tracking points for 'The Canadian Disc Golf Series'. Only Open division entrants were to be eligible, one point was to be awarded for each player beaten, and a minimum 4 events were to be required to qualify. The series was to be funded by embedding a \$2 fee in each event's entry fee. On October 06, 1985 Phil held the third annual Centennial Park Fall Classic in Etobicoke. In attendance were Tournament Directors Royce Racinowski from Rochester, and Bob Huston, Eric Bramlage and Joe Eagan from the Detroit area. A small meeting was held and these individuals expressed their enthusiasm to have their events included in the series. Phil then re-worked the format to include 3 Detroit area events plus Lewiston and Rochester, for a total of 15 tournaments in what was re-named 'The Can-Am Series'. The number of events required to qualify was increased to 8, and the first event was held on April 26, 1986 on a temporary course in Pinafore Park, St. Thomas. Awards were given out after the 15th event at Centennial Park on October 05. Series winners were Mike Sullivan in Open, and Women's first place was a tie between Torontonians Joanne Gallagher & Elaine King.

Can-Am 2 1987: Phil Palumbo arranges the schedule and changes the Men's points basis to 50 points for 1st place, 49 for 2nd..., Women's points start at 10; this new point tabulation makes small tournaments worth as much as large ones, and is designed to encourage attendance at the smaller events. Series director is Bob Harris of St. Thomas; 11 events, 166 players, \$850 in bonus money, Mike Sullivan repeats as Men's winner, Women's winner is Elaine King, best American finish is Royce Racinowski in 9th.

Can-Am 3 1988: Phil Palumbo again arranges the schedule. Series director is Rob Laurie of Toronto, 8 events, best 6 counted, 104 players, \$760 bonus money (\$220 of which is extra TD sponsorship). Men's winner is Bob Harris, Women's winner is Elaine King, and best American finish is Michigan's Joe Eagan in 4th. Eric Vandenberg co-directs, and computerizes point tracking for the first time, via Lotus spreadsheet. The 5 players who attended all 8 events all cashed.

Eric and Rob search for someone to take over the series, but can't find any takers, so Eric Vandenberg, who is now Regional Co-coordinator for Canada, sets up the schedule and runs it. The Michigan & Ohio Regional Co-coordinators and the newsletter editor contact Phil about the series, and without consulting Eric, Phil erroneously tells them that it will not be continuing. It therefore gets reported in the 'Midwest Flight Paths' newsletter that it has been cancelled, and then later in 'Disc Golfer', that the series has been rescued at the last minute.

Can-Am 4 1989: Series director is Eric Vandenberg of Toronto, 10 events, best 5 counted, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Grand Rapids, Michigan added, 183 players, \$795 bonus money. Men's winner is Jeff Malton (beating Mike Sullivan by 1 point), Women's winner is Elaine King, and best American finish is Red Whittington in 7th. Due to increased attendance and the blending in of the Masters and Advanced divisions, Men's point's basis increased to 60 points for 1st place, 59 for 2nd..., all events PDGA sanctioned for first time. A tournament in Hudson, Ohio was originally included, but was cancelled due to insurance issues; the Great Lakes Open was then made a 2 day event. To try and give the series a higher profile, Eric arranged to hand out the payouts and awards as part of the PDGA World Championship awards banquet in Iowa.

Can-Am 5 1990: Series director is Royce Racinowski of Rochester, 10 events, best 5 counted, Thornhill, Ontario added, 155 players, \$1500 bonus money, Men's first place is a tie between Jeff Malton and Mike Sullivan, Women's winner is Corey Baach of New York (Elaine King is in Sweden for the year), best American finish is Adam Weiss of Michigan in 3rd, Masters and Amateur points are tracked separately for the first time, and the winners are Red Whittington of Pennsylvania, Greg Pinnegar of St. Thomas and Steve Porter. The series is sponsored by Innova Canada and the Flying Disc Pro Shop of Rochester. Fee per entrant is reduced to \$1 per event.

Towards the end of the summer in 1990, Bob Harris attended a one day River Bends tournament run by Duane Utech. Bob was impressed by Duane's organizational skills and laptop computer use, and asked if he would like to get involved with the series. Duane thought it over, saw an opportunity to use the series as a promotional vehicle to bring disc golf to national recognition, and accepted.

Can-Am 6 1991: Series director is Duane Utech of Michigan, 10 events, best 5 counted, Columbus, Ohio added, 1000 players, \$13890 bonus money, Men's winner is Steve Valencia of California (Mike Sullivan is 2nd), Women's winner is Elaine King, Masters winner is Red Whittington, Tom Gloss wins Advanced, Am 2 not tracked. Duane institutes a \$5 US registration fee to participate in the series and strongly encourages pre-registration for all events.

Can-Am 7 1992: Series co-directed by Duane Utech and Royce Racinowski. 12 events, best 5 counted, Peru, Indiana & Dayton, Ohio hop on to the bandwagon (it is the only year they are part of the series), Elaine King wins Women's, Duane increases registration fee to \$10 US, but offers \$5 off per event to registered participants.

During 1991 & 1992 Duane did a major promotional blitz advertising thousands of dollars for each event, and engaging in a friendly advertising rivalry with John Houck's Texas series. This generated travel from all over the continent and Duane shelled out tens of thousands of dollars through the series. He also hosted the PDGA World Championships in 1992. After disc golf did not receive the media attention, sponsorship and huge growth spurt that Duane envisioned, he dropped out, and the series returned to being a vehicle to spur local competition and camaraderie.

Can-Am 8 1993: Series director is Royce Racinowski, 10 events, Scott Stokely wins Men's, Elaine King wins Women's, Fred Salaz wins Masters, Bob Pollak wins Advanced. Am Women tracked for first time – Donna Brown wins.

Can-Am 9 1994: Series director is Royce Racinowski, 11 events, 4 required to qualify for pro and Advanced, 3 for Am and Grandmaster, Women's winner is Elaine King, Masters winner is Brian Hoeniger. \$3 series registration fee, \$1.50 per entrant embedded fee, Grandmasters and Am Masters tracked for first time.

Can-Am 10 1995: Series director is Bob Harris, 12 events, 4 to qualify. Men's winner is Jeff Malton, Women's winner is Kristi Vandebosch (Elaine King is sidelined with a hand injury), Masters winner is Dave Chapman of Etobicoke. Bob adds Am Masters, re-introduces Am 2 Men, and manually tracks all 9 divisions. Winners are Royce Racinowski, Karen Crosbie of Ontario in Advanced Women, Cathy Adams of Rochester in Am Women, Dave Northrup and Mark McGregor of St. Thomas in Advanced and Am Master, and Glenn Forbes in Am2.

Can-Am 11 1996: Series director is Bob Harris, 11 events, 3 to qualify in Advanced. Chapman repeats in Masters, Women's winner is Elaine King, Eric Vandenberg wins Advanced. Men's first place is a tie between Jeff Malton and Greg Pinnegar. Pinnegar thus nominally becomes the first person to win in more than one division, having won Advanced in 1990.

Can-Am 12 1997: Series director is Eric Vandenberg, 12 events, 4 needed to qualify, best 5 counted in pro; 3 needed to qualify best 4 counted in Advanced. Series registration fee is eliminated. Per entrant fee is reduced to \$2 Canadian or \$1.50 US, but a \$50 fee per tournament is instituted to cover ads in the publications 'Disc Golf World News' and 'Disc Golf Journal'. To recognize the difficulty in placing well, a larger point spread is instituted at the top. Men's points' basis increased to 99 points for 1st place, 95 for 2nd, 91 for 3rd, 87 for 4th, then 2 point decrements to the bottom (99 instead of 100 points is used in order to minimize page width on printouts). Due to the previous year's acrimony, tie breaking rules of number of events and total points are put in place.

At the Pinafore Park Can-Am finals tournament on October 04, 1997, Eric approached Jim Kenner for title sponsorship of the 1998 series. Jim was very receptive, and for 1998 it became the Discraft Can-Am Series. This sponsorship significantly increased the series profile and payout.

Can-Am 13 1998: Series director is Eric Vandenberg, 14 events, 4 required to qualify, but the 2 added are in Michigan bringing the number of events there to 4. Since theoretically Michiganders could now qualify without

leaving the state, an initial idea is to limit the number of Michigan events that can be counted. This idea is met with resistance by Michigan representative Mark Ellis, so in order to make the traveling requirement equitable, a requirement to play at least one event in each country is instituted, thus making it a true Canadian & American series. This causes Mike Moser of Delaware to travel 10 hours to a St. Thomas event in order to fulfill his quest to win both the MADC & Can-Am Series in the same year. He is successful and Elaine King and Dave Chapman repeat in Women & Masters.

Paul Belyea had traveled to quite a few tournaments, and was getting quite active in promotion in Toronto, and when approached, agreed to run the 1999 series

Can-Am 14 1999: Initial Series director is Paul Belyea. Paul loses interest about halfway through, and Rich Bevins runs it the remainder of the year. 14 events, Gordon Holton, Elaine King and Doug Corea take first. Dan Smith and Nick Cassidy of St. Thomas win Grandmasters and Advanced; American transplant Tim McCurry wins Am Master. Paul makes attendance at the Can-Am finals mandatory for payout – this is carried forward through 2001, but still causes people confusion. Paul generously provides Can-Am T-shirts for all finals attendees.

Can-Am 15 2000: Series is co-directed by Rich Bevins of Rochester and J. Gary Dropcho of Pittsburgh. Avery Jenkins of Ohio wins Men's, Elaine & Doug Corea repeat, Tom Moeller of Pittsburgh wins Am Master.

Can-Am 16 2001: Series is again co-directed by Rich Bevins and J. Gary Dropcho. 16 events, 6 required to qualify. Mike Raley of Michigan wins Men's, Elaine & Doug Corea repeat, Mike Brown of New York wins Grandmasters, Mike Burtch of St. Thomas wins Advanced, Tom Moeller repeats in Am Master. Tagline 'Can-Am Rocks' used in advertising and promotion.

Can-Am 17 2002: Series is directed by Rich Bevins. 15 events, 5 required to qualify. Dylan Morgan of St. Thomas wins Men's, Elaine, Doug Corea and Mike Brown all repeat, Jason Sonier of St. Thomas wins Advanced, Glenn Forbes wins Am Master. Tagline 'Can-Am Rolls' suggested the previous fall by Eric Vandenberg is used in advertising and promotion. A Crude depiction of a steamroller chasing a pole-hole is hot-stamped on discs. Eric Vandenberg becomes first person to 'double dip' in series payouts, by playing enough tournaments to qualify for 3rd place Masters and 4th place Open. Rich decides to use a carrot rather than a stick, drops the mandatory finals participation, and institutes a 50 point bonus for attendance at the Finals.

Can-Am 18 2003: Series is directed by Rich Bevins, 18 events. Gordon Holton of Ohio wins Men's, Elaine and Mike Brown repeat, Tim McCurry wins Masters, Tony Gerling of Ohio wins Advanced, Mary Opiela and Andy Austin of New York win Advanced Women and Am Master. Tagline 'Can-Am Reggaes' had been suggested by Kevin Stewart of Columbus, Ohio, but was not adopted.

Can-Am 19 2004: Series is directed by Rich Bevins, 19 events. Mike Raley wins Men's, Elaine, Doug Corea and Mike Brown win other Open divisions, Josh Romine of Michigan wins Advanced, Mary Opiela repeats in Advanced Women, Jeff Rzepka of Ohio wins Am Master.

Can-Am 20 2005: Series is directed by Rich Bevins, 21 events. Doug Opiela wins Men's, Elaine wins Women, Leroy Jenkins of Ohio wins Masters, Rich Bevins wins Grandmasters, Ryan Hand of New York wins Advanced, Canadian Dawn Pengally wins Advanced Women, Paul O'Keefe of New York wins Am Master. For the first time, one bonus point per team beaten is awarded for participation in the Can-Am Cup team tournament. These extra points allow Leroy Jenkins to barely edge out Eric Vandenberg in the Masters division.

Can-Am 21 2006: Series is directed by Rich Bevins, 16 events, 5 required to qualify. Kim Scott-Wood of Toronto wins Men's, Elaine wins Women, Bart Scheer of New York wins Masters, Rich Bevins wins Grandmasters, European Stefan Dobrev wins Advanced, Dawn Pengally repeats in Advanced Women, Jeff Rzepka wins Am Master.

Can-Am 22 2007: Series is directed by Rich Bevins, 17 events, 5 required to qualify. Kim & Elaine repeat, Eric Vandenberg wins Masters. Elaine King becomes first woman to qualify in Open Men. Rich Bevins becomes first

person to win 2 divisions in same year, taking Grandmaster and Am Master. Andy DiFronzo of New York wins Advanced; pregnant Ontarian Melissa Lancaster wins Advanced Women.

Can-Am 23 2008: Series is set up by Rich Bevins, Eric Vandenberg takes over after 3 events. 15 events, 5 required to qualify. Kim Scott-Wood becomes first man to win Men's Open 3 times in-a-row, Elaine & Eric repeat in other Open divisions. Grandmaster tracking is eliminated due to limited participation. Simon Newman is Advanced winner, Am 2 winner is Dan Sweeney, Rich Bevins repeats in Am Master. Too few Advanced Women compete to qualify or declare a winner. Requirement to play in both countries is removed due to the number of players with border crossing difficulties, a minimum of 2 states/provinces is instated.

Can-Am 24 2009: Series is run by Eric Vandenberg with assistance from Bob Harris. 14 events, 5 required to qualify. Bonus points for Can-Am cup team play are eliminated. Brad Schick wins Men's Open, Elaine & Eric repeat in other Open divisions. Amateur winners are Eric Centanni in Advanced, Lori Merriman in Women, Scott Hartle in Am2. Too few Am Masters compete to qualify or declare a winner. Rochester rescheduled their event until after the finals and dropped out of the series. The top 5 Advanced Men retroactively receive invitations for the 2010 Amateur Nationals in Michigan.

Can-Am 25 2010: Series is run by Eric Vandenberg with assistance from Bob Harris. 16 events, 5 required to qualify. Series debuts on Facebook. Canadians are required only to travel outside of St. Thomas to qualify. The Series leader after the 8th event qualifies for the Vibram Open in Leicester, Massachusetts.