

# RiverCity

TV Listings  
Inside

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## Disc Golf Popularity Explodes

BY JUSTIN RUST  
justin.rust@yankton.net

Maybe the only downside of disc golf is the unseasonably wet weather this summer.

However, that could be one of the few excuses residents in the Yankton area have for not playing the sport, as there are two nine-hole courses just outside of Yankton and one 18-hole course in the city limits.

"We are very fortunate to have three courses to play," said Scott Hansen, who along with his son Jordan, spearheaded the design of the 18-hole course at Fantle Memorial Park in Yankton. "Memorial is the only one in town, but as far as availability, we have three, and you don't have that in many communities."

Memorial Park may be the only course in town, but the other two are just a short drive outside of Yankton. The Cottonwood course is located below Gavins Point Dam off Toe Road, and the Gavins Point course is located at the Gavins Point Recreation Area.

Vermillion also has two courses, one at Prentiss Park and the other at Barstow Park.

Hansen said disc golf is a great way for people of all ages to get exercise.

"Nationally, it really has become popular because of the low cost of just buying a disc," he said. "You are able to get outside and get some exercise."

Kevin Luchtel started to play disc golf as just something to do. "In Yankton, there isn't much else to do, and I started to play

few years ago," he said. "It's very convenient to play in town with the course in Memorial. Plus you have the courses by the lake, and to have more than one course is very nice."

"Everyone plays, and you get to be outside often. It's a fun activity and you get to meet people," Luchtel added.

Evan Dykes said he usually plays three to four rounds a week.

"I just started playing this summer. I'm not very good, but it's fun," he said. "My friends got me into it because they always played."

Another factor that drew Dykes to disc golf is how inexpensive it is. There are no tee times required at disc golf courses, so players can go whenever they want, plus only one disc is required, which usually run around \$15 to \$20.

Discs aren't hard to find around Yankton as both Dunham Sports and Ace Bike & Fitness carry discs and other various gear.

Kenny Kopetsky, manager of Ace Bike & Fitness, said he started stocking disc golf equipment around 2004 or 2005.

"I started carrying it because I played and wanted to start stocking stuff at the store, and it's grown from there," Kopetsky said.

Kopetsky said he stocks Disc Craft and Innova brand discs in the store.

"Each company has about five to six different styles, and also different models, so you have about 200 different discs

you can choose from," he said. "Plus there are different things you can buy from carrying cases and traveling targets."

Kopetsky said he sells disc golf gear about every other day, if not on a daily basis.

Even though the Cottonwood and Gavins Point courses are not far outside Yankton, the city didn't have a course in the city limits until Hansen and his son began the course at Memorial Park, which opened in 2005.

"I played it when I lived in Iowa City, but there were no courses in town," Hansen said. "My son was looking for an eagle scout project, and we talked with the city. We then worked with Kevin Kuhl, got it started and got the sponsors for it."

Dion Woods of Vermillion, who has a disc golf certification, then lent his expertise to help design the course, which was originally planned to be a nine-hole course.

But Hansen said he got more than a few recommendations to expand the course.

"Some asked why we weren't doing another nine, and we took it and ran with it because we knew we could get the funding," he said. "We've heard from many people who enjoy the course, and if you drive by anytime, there are people playing."

In fact, the course at Memorial Park is used so often, some work had to be done to it before this summer.

"Due to the number of people who played the course, we were getting ruts because of the frequent use," said Todd Larson,

the director of Parks and Recreation in Yankton. "We put in concrete tee boxes because of the heavy use, and this summer, we've had another good year of people playing the courses."

The third course has also allowed the city to host the annual Yankton Trilogy Disc Golf Tournament, which was held July 10.

The tournament takes place at all three courses with participants playing all 36 holes.

"To be able to put on a tournament that takes place on one day is very unique and special," Larson said.

Luchtel said he hasn't played in the tournament, but it's something he wants to do.

Even though the city has had to put in some work on the courses because of frequent use, Larson is hoping more people pick up the activity.

"If someone has never played disc golf before, I would ask them to try it," he said. "It takes just one disc, it's exercise and gets people out and about, plus people of any age or gender can play, so I think it's a great activity."



JUSTIN RUST/P&D

Evan Dykes "tees off" at the first hole of the Fante Memorial Park disc golf course with his playing partner Kevin Luchtel in the background. The 18-hole course at Memorial Park was created by Scott and Jordan Hansen. Jordan Hansen undertook the creation of the course for his eagle scout badge. The course in Memorial Park is the only one in the city limits, but there are two courses, Cottonwood and Gavins Point Course, that are both located just outside of Yankton.



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