

Freestyle.

The intent of the game.

The intention of freestyle is performing creative, artistic manoeuvres with a flying disc (one, or more if you want). In competition freestyle is played by teams of two or three players who perform a routine to music. A routine consists of throws, catches and moves and has a fixed length of 3-5 minutes. The players themselves choose their music and built up their routine. The routines of all participants are compared by judges, who evaluate them on difficulty, execution and presentation. The team with the best joint score on these three aspects wins the competition.

In between the "official" routines you will often find players who are performing freestyle just for fun. They are improvising with each other, often in large groups. This is called *jammig*, and to most players it is an important part of the sport.

Below some basic techniques are listed. Also the judging system is explained.

Some basic techniques.

As you would expect, throwing and catching the disc are basic parts of each routine. There are a lot of ways to throw a disc and even more ways to catch it. You can use a backhand or side-arm throw (see also the info sheet on throwing techniques). By changing the angle of the disc it will curve to the left or to the right. By flipping the disc with your thumb when releasing a backhand throw you can make the disc "bounce" to the ground.

The easiest and most safe way to catch the disc is the "pancake catch" (with both hands). In a freestyle routine you will mostly see more difficult and therefore more adventurous catches. A few examples: one hand low, one hand high, under the leg, reverse under the leg (the other way around), under both legs, around both legs, around the extended angle, around one leg, behind the back, behind the head, around the body. Take your pick. It is more spectacular when you jump high in the air.



Then there is the *delay*. Basically this is spinning the disc on your fingernail (although some people can also do it on their teeth). You can move the spinning disc around: under your legs, behind your back, etc. For this technique it is very important that the disc has a very smooth surface. Most players are using silicon spray for the inside of the disc and a fake fingernail. It is allowed to do this.

When you hit a spinning disc from below exactly in the middle it will go up. You can repeat this a number of times. This manoeuvre is called *percussion*. Also here there are numerous variations. And the experts: they can also kick the disc with their foot.

Another way to keep a disc spinning is *brushing*. By repeatedly hitting the disc with your hand (or foot for the experts) on the outside rim it keeps spinning and therefore remains in the air.

The final manoeuvre is the *body roll*. Spread your arms, tilt your torso a bit to the back and let the disc roll from your fingertips over your arm and chest towards your other hand.



Finally in a routine there must be co-operation between the players. For instance a player catches a disc thrown by another player or the disc is passed between players while performing one of the other manoeuvres. You can combine a body roll of two or three players.

The judging system.

In a competition the routines are evaluated by a team of judges on the aspects of *artistic impression*, *difficulty* and *execution*. The scores for each aspect are added and the team with the best score wins.

Following is more detail on the three categories. Additional information can be found at the following websites: www.wfdf.org and www.freestyledisc.org.

Artistic impression.

For the *artistic impression* the judges watch the following aspects: form and originality, relation of the routine with the style and content of the music, the flow of the routine (or does it contain many breaks), co-operation between the players and finally the general impression.

You can also score points for *variety*. This aspect relates to the diversity shown in throwing, catching, disc handling and co-operation between the players. As you have seen in the section "basic techniques" a large variety is possible. As you will demonstrate more techniques, you will get a higher score.

Difficulty.

This aspect mainly relates to the risk of failure in the routine. Demonstrating a technically challenging move can cause such a risk. Or you can perform a complex sequence of consecutive manoeuvres and co-operations, which needs exact timing. Also the duration of the risky parts are taken into account. Note that for this aspect it is important what was *attempted*, not what actually did succeed.



Execution.

For each error some points are deducted, depending how severe the error was. There are four categories of errors, ranging from a break in the flow of the routine to dropping the disc or completely disrupting the routine.



Text: Peter Cornelissen
Photo's: Henk-Jan Koier