

# Course Review: Agate Beach Golf Course

Agate Beach Golf Course in Newport is a decent little 9-hole track that, alas, doesn't offer any views of Agate Beach or any other — although the course's website features a cover photo that implies you can. That's misleading; you can't. Don and Pete played Agate Beach as part of our initial "Golf Week" in 2007, when we were headquartered in Newport at Don's in-laws and played up and down the central coast. Don's first post-college job was in Newport, where he spent three years and met his wife, so he's played Agate Beach numerous times, but it was Pete's first experience there.

Agate Beach features two sets of tees, designated for men and women, that may encompass the least amount of yardage difference you'll see. The men's tees measure 2900 yards, the women's just short of 2700. Two hundred-odd yards isn't much spread over nine holes. The course is generally in pretty good shape, but this isn't a "manicured" course by any means. The constant moisture at the coast, even in the summer, translates into relatively slow greens. You think "beach," you think "sand," but there aren't a lot of traps at the Agate Beach course.

One thing we'll never forget was our playing partner that day. He was a local "artisan" who made jewelry. He was quick to tell us how pleased his golf pro was with his game and, basically, that he was a very good player. That's rarely a bright thing to say, and indeed it wasn't in this instance. This guy was no better than we are, if as good. He hit plenty of bad shots, after which he would take five or six follow-up practice swings, exaggerating his "great" form. He got madder and madder as the round progressed, and ultimately stormed off in a huff midway through the seventh hole. It was definitely a case of "good riddance."

Mr. Artisan aside, it was a fun round. Agate Beach is really a course of two halves, though obviously there aren't true "halves" on a 9-hole course. Holes 1-4 include three straight-forward par 4s, the longest of which is 351 yards, plus a 157-yard par 3. There are trees lining most of Agate Beach's fairways, but you've got to be off track quite a bit for them to be in play, especially on the opening foursome of holes.



Things pick up from a difficulty standpoint on No. 5, and Holes 5, 6, 7 and 9 are all good challenges. No. 5 is a 378-yard par 4 that plays harder than it should. It bends ever-so-slightly to the right at the end — just enough that if you go right off the tee, even on the edge of the fairway, a stand of trees can block your approach shot. No. 6 is a 500-yard par 5 that has a cluster of trees right in the fairway up on the right. If you push the ball right, like so many of we non-southpaws tend to do, it's gonna be right in the way.

No. 7 is only 324 yards, but it has a pretty decent dogleg right at the end that calls accuracy into account. No. 8 offers some relief as you wind down, a 115-yard par 3. The finishing hole features an elevated tee, 448 yards and a mild turn to the right as you approach the green. Hit a good tee shot here and it's not a hard hole.

If your expectations aren't too high — and we don't mean that to sound as negative as it might — you'll have a nice little round at Agate Beach and plenty of time to enjoy other activities at the coast.

And a free plug here: if you're looking for a great bowl of clam chowder, skip the most "famous" chain on the coast and head to the Chowder Bowl in Newport's Nye Beach area. Trust us on that.