

Course Review: Alpine Meadows Golf Course

Nestled in the upper right-hand corner of Oregon sits Wallowa County and the city of Enterprise. Some 60 miles or so northeast of La Grande on Highway 82, you don't happen by Enterprise unless you're going to Enterprise. And Enterprise, population 1,888, is home to Alpine Meadows Golf Course.

Believe it or not, they've been playing golf up there in the boondocks since 1926 at Alpine Meadows. However, Mother Nature dictates a golf season that only spans April through October. Old Man Winter takes a harsh toll on Alpine Meadows' winter rye fairways and bent grass greens. Given the climate beating the course takes every year, the fairways and greens are in remarkably good shape. This is not a highly manicured course, to be sure, but the maintenance staff at Alpine Meadows does a great job of keeping the course nicely playable during the seven months each year it's open. It's set in a lush (in the summer) valley framed by the scenic Wallowa Mountains.

We played Alpine Meadows during Golf Week 2009. We were stationed that year in Pendleton, thanks to a friend of Don's who has an "extra" house. Alpine Meadows was the middle link to an ambitious golfing day that also included Buffalo Peak in Union that morning and the La Grande Country Club in the early evening.

The Alpine Meadows staff enjoyed hearing about our Quest and quickly agreed to take the accompanying photo you see here. The 9-hole layout features white/blue tees that measure a respectable 3100 yards. It's a flat course that you can easily walk. There are trees on the course, but they're generally not in play. You'll encounter only the occasional sand trap. However, little Trout Creek does meander through the course, and it does come into play periodically.

The course layout is a little funky. You begin your round with a simple 154-yard par 3 at Alpine Meadows. A healthy 412-yard par 4 follows. No. 3 is a dogleg left par 4 of 366 yards, and here trees will be in play if you push the ball left. A short (130 yards) par 3 comes next, followed by back-to-back par 5s.



No. 5, 476 yards, has a small grove of trees protecting the green on the right side. No. 6 is longer (505 yards) but easier, a gentle dogleg right and really no trouble save one bunker at the green.

You finish up with three par 4s, including No. 9, the course's No. 1 handicap hole. It's also Alpine Meadows' best hole. A daunting 394 yards, the fairway breaks about halfway down so the aforementioned Trout Creek can pass through. You've either got to lay up or really bomb it, then once you've cleared the creek, a good-sized stand of trees protects the green on the right side. It's an excellent closing hole.

Incidentally, the Alpine Meadows scorecard handily warns you that the "New Zealand wire" out-of-bounds fences that line portions of the course are electric. A local course rule allows you a free drop if your ball is within normal swing distance of a fence, no penalty. Gee, thanks!

For the record, the ride from La Grande to Enterprise is windy at times, but the scenery is spectacular. And one other note: another 13 miles down Highway 18 from Alpine Meadows, through Joseph, is Wallowa Lake State Park. If you've never been there you owe it to yourself to go. The lake is beautiful, and there's a lot going on up there for such a remote location. Oh, and you can feed adult deer by hand, they'll come right up to you just like a dog.