

# Course Review: Bear Creek Golf Course

*(Note: We understand that Bear Creek Golf Course underwent an ownership change in 2012. This review does not incorporate any changes that may have been made.)*

Our visit to Bear Creek Golf Course in Medford was memorable for many reasons, few of which actually involved golf per se. It was Golf Week 2008, our second one. We were based in Grants Pass, free-loading at the home of Charles and Cindy Fletcher — Cindy is Don's cousin. It was August in Southern Oregon, and it was hot — very hot.

Bear Creek was the final 9 in a 27-hole day. The morning began at Centennial; we teed off there around 10 a.m. and the temperature was 107. A bank time-and-temperature clock near the Bear Creek entrance as we approached the course in the late afternoon read 111. While those bank clocks are notorious for reading high, we're pretty sure this one was accurate. It was H-O-T.

To make matters worse, Bear Creek Golf Course sits in an urban lowland adjacent to the actual Bear Creek. The result was a sauna-like experience. Despite the hotter than you-know-where temperature, Centennial hadn't been all that bad. A light breeze helped cool us there, and it was a dry heat. At Bear Creek, the combination of the river lowland, high temperature and adjacent water teamed to create a very high humidity on the golf course, so what little energy we had after the earlier 107-degree 18 was quickly sapped. It showed in how we played.

Bear Creek is an executive course, thank goodness. The layout's pretty straight-forward and it's short — just 1600 yards. There are only two par 4s (320 and 248 yards); the rest are seven par 3s ranging in distance from 93 to 190 yards.



Bear Creek Golf Course, which has been around since 1960, works hard to distinguish itself from the other full-size and/or upscale courses in the Medford area, most of which are considerably newer. The atmosphere is very relaxed — you'll read a little more about that here in a bit — and there's a nice full-line pro shop, a covered driving range, two practice greens and a snack bar. You can walk it.

There are some trees here and there, there's some water occasionally. With mostly short par 3s, the layout is certainly geared toward beginners, senior citizens or those looking for a quick round, but there are just enough challenges to keep most golfers interested. If you are truly a low-handicapper, this likely isn't a place for you, however.

No. 7 is a 147-yarder that runs parallel to I-5, so you do have the opportunity to show off your game to several hundred southbound cars. Since you're generally hitting only a 7-iron or so, they're relatively safe from errant tee shots.

Pretty much just flat done by heat and humidity, we struggled through our round, gloriously nearing the end, when we passed a threesome of teens playing several holes behind us. There's no dress code at Bear Creek, at least not when it's 111 apparently, and two of the three were shirtless. We had to look haggard, and they thought they could hustle us. They actually challenged us to play for money. The heat hadn't completely taken hold of our senses, fortunately, and we were quick to decline — but amused all the same.