

Course Review: Broken Top Club

Our visit to Broken Top Club was set to be the highlight of Golf Week 2015 — and ultimately it was. The week was like no other, given that we drove, stayed, picked up and drove every day (as opposed to playing out of a hub on other Golf Weeks) ... dodged forest fires the entire week ... visited the site of one course we knew had closed (Ontario) and came upon another one we didn't know had closed (South Fork) ... and played what is our consensus worst golf course in Oregon (Bear Valley Meadows).

So when we arrived at Broken Top, a private course in Bend that our Chehalem Glenn managing pro had arranged to get us on, we were excited to cap off a weird Golf Week on a high note. Except ... they forgot we were coming that day. Rather than "Hey, welcome to Broken Top!" our initial greeting was more like "Really, was that today?" It was that kind of a week.

The frazzled staff were in the midst of a friends and family event that featured lots of kids and occasional golfers, but they understood we couldn't exactly just stop by the next day and within 90 minutes or so we were teeing off. They were gracious and courteous about the situation and did the best they could — we have no complaints whatsoever. Our foursome that day included Pete's son, Max, and Newberg friend Don Clements; both were in the Bend area.

Broken Top is one of Bend's many high-end courses. It's a full-on country club with an excellent restaurant (open to the public), swimming pools, tennis courts, wedding hosting, spa, etc. In other words, not an every day Don & Pete venue.

The course itself is very much what you'd expect:



upscale, highly manicured, exceptional greens. It was challenging but not overly punitive — if you can hit the ball remotely straight, you can have a nice round at Broken Top.

We played the silver tees, the equivalent of white tees at most courses, which measured 5907 yards. They have gold, green and black tees as well, plus Silver/Gold, Green/Silver and Black/Green combinations, so the scorecard gives you seven options ranging from 5281 yards all the way up to 7161. Your tee box selection really makes a difference on the par 3s, adding as much as 80 yards. You can definitely pick an experience that suits your level of play at Broken Top.

There's some water in play here and there at Broken Top. There are also plenty of bunkers, some nastier than others. The signature hole is No. 11, a par 4 that plays 311 from the silvers. Easy enough, right? Not so fast. You tee off to a landing area that's really larger than it looks, then you make a 90-degree right hand turn to a highly elevated green (photo above) that's also guarded by deep bunkers. Never mind birdies, par is a good score here.

Our favorite hole may have been No. 13. It's fairly short (136 from the silvers) and offers a spectacular view of the Cascades. But the tee box is no place to be admiring the view, as the green is guarded by bunkers short and long, while hit it right and you're underwater in an adjacent pond. No. 9 is also fun. A short (298 yards) par 4 on the scorecard, it's even shorter as the crow flies given its sharp dogleg left. We were tempted to take aim at the green, but bailed out and took the safe fairway route.