

Course Review: Charbonneau Golf Club

The Charbonneau Golf Club is a 27-hole executive course complex located in the retirement community of the same name just off of I-5 south of Wilsonville. The course includes three nines — Green, Yellow and Red — that are virtually indistinguishable to visitors like us. While Charbonneau is “semi-private,” anybody can pretty much play there anytime. The Charbonneau community is relatively upscale, and the golf courses are similarly well-appointed and maintained.

Originally designed and built in 1975, those who have played Charbonneau over the years will tell you that the course has matured wonderfully over time. We can't attest to that, we've only played there one time — all three nines to be conquered at once. We can tell you there are lots of trees, water in play on many holes and strategically placed bunkers here and there. It's flat and walkable; this is primarily a retirement community's course, mind you. The greens were above average in speed for a Willamette Valley course, but we wouldn't call them fast. There's also a nice mix of flat greens, sloped greens and tiered greens to help keep you interested.

The three nines are similar in many respects. From the white tees, each nine is about 2000 yards. Play the blues and you're only adding about 100 yards total per nine. Each course has four par 4s and five par 3s, so par for each is 31. Each nine — Green, Yellow, Red — is lined with both trees and private residences. You may hit some of both (see below).

One thing unique about Charbonneau are those 15 par 3s. While the courses' par 4s are generally pretty short, as you would expect for an executive layout, the par 3s are not. From the white tees, the two longest par 4s on the entire complex are both on the Green Course: No. 1 (342 yards) and No. 9 (331 yards) — and they're also the only two holes out of the 27 at 300-plus. Contrast that to the par 3s, five of which are over 180 yards, and the shortest of 15 is still 133 from the whites. No. 6 on the Green Course is 210, No. 7 on the Yellow course is a whopping 220 (from the whites), making them just barely shorter than several of the par 4s. In other words, you get a good golf challenge at Charbonneau, in no way is it a pitch-and-putt course.



Don provided the most memorable moment during our rounds at Charbonneau, which started in bright summer sunshine and ended with us caught in a thunderstorm deluge the last two holes. Long before the rains came, however, on one of the par 4s (again, they all pretty much look the same) Don swung mightily with his driver, hit it off the heel and shot a searing live drive foul down the third base line, as it were. It smacked into the side of a two-story house so hard it echoed back to Newberg. Undaunted, Don teed up a mulligan and did the exact same thing again, hitting the same house in almost exactly the same spot.

At this point, the owner came out onto a second story balcony and just glared down at us. Don thought about pointing at Pete, but he was pretty much caught red-handed, driver still in hand. So he looked up at the man, shrugged, and said, “Sorry, I yelled ‘Fore!’ but your house didn't move.” The homeowner did not seem to appreciate Don's humor, keeping an angry and wary eye on us as we traversed down the fairway. *Some people!*

While an executive course, Charbonneau offers amenities you'd expect at a regulation track, including a large grass tee driving range, putting green and two chipping greens. The pro shop is well stocked, there's an on-site full restaurant as well as a small snack bar, plus a large banquet room and an outdoor event pavilion area if you're ever in need of such.