

Course Review: Children's Course

So the first thing to know about the Children's Course is that, despite the name, it is not a golf course solely for kids. The 9-hole, 1,080-yard layout nestled between the Clackamas and Willamette rivers in Gladstone is open to all, including adults.

Here's a little history. The Children's Course originally opened for play as Rivergreens Golf Course in 1961 as an 18-hole, par 3 course under the ownership of Charlie Thomas. In 1989, following the development of apartments on the perimeter, the course was redesigned into a 9-hole, par 3 course and modestly renamed Rivergreens Golf Club.

In 1996, the course became dedicated to children due to Portland business owner Duncan Campbell. During a golf trip to Scotland, Campbell noticed a number of children's golf courses and dreamed of creating one in Portland. Two years later he bought the Rivergreens Golf Club, and operation of The Children's Course began on June 30, 1996. In 2000, The Children's Course became a chapter of The First Tee organization and in April of 2011, The Children's Course merged with The First Tee of Portland and became The First Tee of Greater Portland.

First Tee of Greater Portland is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing golfing opportunities for youth and families — disadvantaged youth in par-



The motley crew ready to go at the Children's Course.



The sign notes adults are welcome (top); typical scene on the course (bottom) — a dad with four kids.

ticular. When you play the Children's Course, part of your greens fees help fund kids programming.

We played Children's Course on a March 2015 weekend. We'd been warned the course would be soggy; again, it's near the confluence of two rivers, so the water table is pretty low. Given the relatively dry 2014-15 winter, it really wasn't too bad, but there were some squishy spots. But we could easily see how the course could stay pretty wet in a more typical Oregon winter/spring. Of course, it's a par 3 course; you're not supposed to be on "fairways," you're supposed to be hitting from tees to greens.

Obviously, the Children's Course doesn't offer the stiffest of challenges for adult golfers. Holes range from 85 yards to 162. There are trees throughout the course, so it's not a complete cakewalk. You can work on your short game. The course was well maintained. The greens were in good shape, and rolled consistently, if not particularly quickly. Again, this track is primarily geared at kids learning the game, so greens rated 12 on a stimpmeter would hardly be appropriate. ☺