

Course Review: Colwood National Golf Club

Here's the most important thing to know about Colwood National Golf Club in Northeast Portland: if things go as planned, it's closing sooner rather than later. The timetable isn't exact, but if you've never played Colwood National, don't put it off for long.

Let's talk a little about what's happening before we actually talk about the course. We won't go into great detail; you can easily Google "Colwood National" and find all the information you need. But the nutshell version is as follows. The Hawaii family that currently owns the course wants to turn it into industrial property, which is in short supply near Portland International Airport — and parts of Colwood virtually border the airport. A 2008 effort to sell the entire parcel was rejected by the city, but a current deal involves the Trust for Public Land and a plan to split Colwood into industrial land and a public park of up to 90 acres. That deal (as of early 2014) appears on track to eventually go through.

Colwood National is on NE Columbia Blvd., not all that far from the I-205 interchange. Many people don't know that Colwood started out as Meadowbrook Golf Course in 1929. The Depression wasn't the best time to open a new course, and financial difficulties lead to bankruptcy in 1932; the course was sold and reopened as Colwood National.

Colwood's layout is strikingly similar to Broadmoor Golf Club, located a couple of miles west of Colwood at 33rd and Columbia Blvd. In both instances, you tee off near the road, heading north for holes that wind out over sloughs and near the airport. No.



9 and No. 18 are the two holes at the courses that bring serious *deja vu*, as on both courses those two tees are north of a slough and you tee off over the water toward greens back up near the clubhouse.

But before you get to No. 9 on the front or No. 18 on the back, you'll have trekked out and about a wild-life rich near-wetlands involving both the Columbia and Whitaker sloughs — and you'll have bumped up ever-so-close to the airport. Colwood features broad, forgiving fairways and a gentle rolling terrain that's easy to walk. The greens are generally in excellent shape and very much medium speed — not too fast, not too slow. Fingers of the sloughs do come into play on several holes, and you'll find bunkers scattered throughout the course as well.

For now, Colwood offers a full-service clubhouse with a well-stocked pro shop, full bar, casual restaurant, seasonal snack bar and an expansive banquet room facility.

Again, at this writing the Colwood national closure is *pending*, but appears inevitable. The only reprieve on the horizon looks to be a temporary one. If the proposal moves forward as planned, a portion of the future park would become a temporary 9-hole course and driving range while the park is being designed. That would certainly be some collection of the current 18 Colwood holes, as no one would build new holes for a short-term course (at least not very good ones). Get out there while you can.