

Course Review: Condon Golf Course

The Condon Municipal Golf Course was the second leg of Don and Pete's "Golf Week 2009" opening day trifecta of China Creek in Arlington, Condon and Kinzua Golf Club in, well, let's say "greater Fossil." You'll have to read that review separately.

Golf Week 2009 was a great week in that we got to see so many out-of-the-way places that we'd simply never seen before. It's amazing that no matter how far away from what most of us would consider civilization, somebody somewhere built a golf course. 2009 was the year that really enforced that.

For the uninitiated, Condon is the county seat of Gilliam County. It's about 40 miles south of Arlington and I-84, at the junction of state highways 19 and 206. Hwy. 19 doubles as the main street through "downtown Condon" (about three blocks), which does have a nice handful of well-kept historic buildings. The city's official population hovers around 700, though it serves a greater hinterland. As you might imagine, ranching, farming and other agricultural pursuits dominate the local economy.

The first thing you notice as you pull up to the Condon Golf Course is that there's no true clubhouse. There's a building somewhat bigger than a double outhouse to greet you; you deposit the modest greens fees (\$5 for nine, \$10 for 18) in a locked "honesty box." Dishonesty is an infrequent trait in Gilliam County. The course is located just north of "city center," so to speak, so we caught a passerby on the sidewalk to snap a picture. We by-and-large had the place to ourselves, though there were a handful of others out. Many of the regulars have noticeably ancient motorized carts stored on site.

If you somehow miss the fact that this is an agricultural center, the giant grain silo adjacent to the small putting green provides a strong clue. Doves are known to gather in the silo recesses and coo at you as you practice.

Built in 1967, the Condon course has two sets of tees: men's and women's. The men's tees come in at a hair over 3100 yards, so it's a decent layout lengthwise. It goes without saying, this is a pretty



pedestrian course. It's a simple back and forth track. The only water was a few over-irrigated depressions. The greens were OK, albeit predictably slow. You start on a 472-yard par 5. No. 2 is only 28 yards shorter (444), but it's a par 4. Not to worry much if you're playing in the summer, you get plenty of roll.

Kudos to the city for maintaining a decent, clean and usable real bathroom in the middle of the course. There are many "better" courses all over the state that employ stinky porta-potties, an actual restroom with a flush toilet and a sink was a welcome change at Condon.

Interestingly, the back side of the scorecard notes that the course — a city-owned, municipal course, remember — "can be rented and closed to the general public for private tournaments and outings." That struck us as amusing.

Final note: we had a great lunch sitting at a sidewalk table at a deli downtown. Alas, the name of the restaurant has been lost to posterity. But if you're in Condon, it can't be that hard to find!