

Course Review: Coquille Valley Elks Golf

The first thing to keep in mind about the Coquille Valley Elks Golf Course is that it is a *private* course. You can't necessarily just walk up to the clubhouse and expect to get on. In theory, you need to be the guest of an Elks Club member. Although ... that's not always the case.

Knowing that the Southern Oregon Coast was going to be the site of Golf Week 2012 that August, Don took advantage of a coincidental business trip in June to Coos Bay to stop by Coquille Valley Elks and inquire as to just how restrictive the course really was. Don explained The Quest to play every golf course in Oregon to an elderly gentleman named Nolie, and asked about the possibility of playing in August. Nolie said that decision would be up to Molly, who serves as the course manager and gatekeeper, but promised to give her our card and "warn" her we'd be coming. Nolie said that unless the course was busy, it was likely we could get on by ourselves without an attending Elk.

Not that it appeared a fivesome would be a problem. As Don drove up the Coquille Valley Elks' short driveway, the hole adjacent to the road had a *sevensome* playing!

Fast forward to Golf Week 2012, and after a morning round at Coos Bay's Watson Ranch course, Don, Pete, Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack (our frequent Golf Week tagalongs) trekked over to Coquille. Sure enough, Molly was holding court in the clubhouse. We're not sure Nolie actually remembered to inform her of our impending arrival, but Molly turned out to be a friendly and sympathetic soul — plus, on a



hot August afternoon, there weren't many golfers, Elks or otherwise, out on the course. \$20 each later, we were set to tee off, following an extended photo op session — Molly was a good-natured and well-intentioned photographer, if self-admittedly perhaps not the most competent one.

Coquille Valley Elks has been around since 1938. It's a par 33, 2200-yard track featuring three par 3s and six par 4s. The longest par 4 is No. 7, measuring 352 yards. It follows what is a relative monster for Coquille Valley Elks, the 211-yard par 3 No. 6 hole. The other two par 3s are 163 yards (No. 1) and 148 yards (No. 9). Yes, you both begin and end your round at Coquille Valley Elks on a par 3.

There are some tight holes framed by evergreen trees at Coquille Valley Elks; others are more open. Water creeps into play here and there as well. Obviously at 2200 yards it's not the world's toughest course, but it's no cakewalk, either. It's hilly; we got a good workout hiking up and down the fairways.

The best anecdote from the afternoon revolved around, as usual, Mitch. He's highly allergic to bee stings, and No. 4 features a warning sign about bees in a bushy area near the green. Which is right about where he hit it, and of course he went in after his ball. This is the same Mitch who once stared down a bottle rocket that didn't fire on a Fourth of July. Fortunately the fuse really had gone out, and somehow Mitch avoided the Coquille Elks' bees, too.

