

Course Review: Desert Peaks Golf Club

We'll be blunt here right off the top: we've had two experiences with Desert Peaks Golf Course in Madras, and neither one has been good. Look, we are pro-golf (though certainly not pro golfers!), pro-golf courses and pro-the people who run golf courses. But if we're going to be credible, we have to call things like we see them, and our collective two experiences at Desert Peaks were bad.

The first came during a short-circuited Golf Week 2010. That week was to be spent in Central Oregon, headquartered at Eagle Crest. Don and Pete were going to get a head start over the weekend, to be joined Monday by Don's high school classmates Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack, who have become regular tag-a-longs from that week forward on our annual second week of August outings.

Alas, after Don and Pete conquered Kah-Nee-Ta, the Missing Link in Redmond and Black Butte's Big Meadow in Sisters, Pete's back went gonzo, forcing him to return home for treatment. Don, Dave and Mitch soldiered on, but those courses played didn't count towards Don and Pete's "Quest" — Rule No. 1 is that we have to play the courses together.

So it wasn't Desert Peaks' fault that it was a three-some sans Pete that played the 9-hole layout in August 2010. It was their fault, however, that the course was bone dry and brown everywhere. If you're going to run a golf course in Central Oregon, especially considering the competition there, you've got to water it.

Fast forward to Golf Week 2013, once again set in Central Oregon starring the same foursome, with Pete's back cooperating better three years later. Don, Dave and Mitch were ecstatic on the first tee because the course was green; it was a dramatic improvement from 2010. We all played No. 1 okay, putted out and headed to the No. 2 tee box.

That's when the mosquitoes hit.

Desert Peaks features some large on-course ponds, and they were teeming with what had to be thousands of mosquitoes. For the next eight holes, our time was taken not so much by golf swings as it was



by swatting at skeeters. It was miserable. We had two or three on us almost constantly. You'd whack one and blood would spatter; you'd wonder if it was Don's blood, Pete's blood, Dave's or Mitch's. It was just brutal.

The sixth green is back near the clubhouse. Mitch ran in, saying he was done unless they sold mosquito repellent. He came back with a small vial, the last one they had. It helped some. By the time we teed off on No. 8, all we cared about was finishing, marking Desert Peaks off the list and getting out of there. That evening, Don was the only one who did a full inventory. His mosquito bite count tallied 36, including 23 on his left exposed leg, knee to ankle.

We fault Desert Peaks on two counts. One, a good portion of the mosquitoes seemed to come from their ponds. Spray them, for crying out loud. On the *Off!* chance (mosquito pun intended) there was a reason they couldn't spray and/or the pests were from neighboring land, at the very least they needed to have a huge display of repellent in the clubhouse and a warning that you were going to need it.

Some tidbits about the course. It's city-owned (more reason to think they could/should spray), it measures 3140 from the white tees. The greens are nice, though not as fast as most Central Oregon dance floors. The pro shop people are friendly, if not forthcoming about *culicidae*. The two par 5s are similar and fun to play. No. 5 is 542 yards, No. 9 is 560. Both wind around a bit, and ponds are in play on both. They did have logo balls. And mosquitoes.