

Course Review: Diamond Woods Golf Course

Diamond Woods Golf Course has the typical Monroe identity crisis. Monroe is located halfway between Corvallis and Eugene, and the little town (population 616, give or take) is evenly divided between Oregon Ducks and Oregon State Beavers fans. That split was evident at the golf course as well, located about three miles outside of town, both in the items for sale and the gear worn by those on the course.

Diamond Woods was one of the earlier courses we played once we began *The Quest* in 2007. Our visit there concluded our first “Golf Week,” an event that’s become an annual festivity the second week of each August. That first Golf Week was focused on the central Oregon coast, but we left our Newport headquarters (Don’s in-laws) and headed inland via Highway 20 to Corvallis, then the 17 miles south on Highway 99-W to Monroe.

Diamond Woods was built in 1997, and the course designer (Greg Doyle) created two very distinct nines. Though there are abundant pine trees scattered about the opening side, they’re far enough from the fairways that generally speaking the front nine is pretty wide open. It’s also flat. The back nine, conversely, is built on a hillside and features some exaggerated elevated tee boxes and some holes that go uphill. Water, in the form of a couple of ponds and two small streams, comes into play on seven holes. But overall Diamond Woods is a very playable course with enough difficulty in the layout and slope to make it a challenge. There are few gimme holes, but it’s a well-manicured course that gives you a sense of privacy as you play.

The white tees, which we played, measure just over 6,000 yards. Blues (6,544) and blacks (7,036) offer distinctly more difficult challenges, which we endorse. On many courses, the difference between white tees and blue tees is a single club here and there. At Diamond Woods, your tee box choice will really impact your round. That’s a good thing. No matter what tees you choose, you’ll face some healthy par 5s. From the white tees, the shortest one is 457 yards, and you end your day with 541-yard No. 18. Play the blues or blacks and your finishing hole measures over 600.



We played Diamond Woods with an enchanting senior couple from San Francisco. They were as excited as Don was when, on the 154-yard seventh hole (which was playing longer that day), his 6-iron lasered right at the hole. “Oh, I do believe we’re going to get a free drink!” exclaimed the wife. The ball hit the green, rolled directly at the hole and, alas, stopped maybe six inches short. At the time, it was the closest Don had ever come to a hole in one. *(At this writing, he still doesn’t have one, nor does Pete. Maybe someday.)*

We didn’t eat anything exotic at Diamond Woods — the hot dogs were good — but they brag about making their food from scratch, smoking their own meats and fish and baking their own bread and desserts. They do a pretty good breakfast and lunch trade given their relatively remote location.

Finally, we would dispute one competing online review that includes the following statement: *“Although Diamond Woods Golf Course is hilly, it’s walker friendly, with tees and greens near each other.”* That may be true for the front side, but the back nine is hilly enough to tax anybody. Take a golf car so you can thoroughly enjoy your Diamond Woods experience. As a bonus, the cars include GPS units.