

Course Review: Eagle Creek Golf Course

Finding Eagle Creek Golf Course can be a bit of a challenge. Our GPS unit did fine, but we couldn't help but notice that if we hadn't had "Emma" (Don's GPS bears that name, long story) to guide us, it could have been tricky. What signs there are to the course are small and non-descript, you've really got to keep your eyes peeled. Eagle Creek is an unincorporated burg between Clackamas and Estacada, and if you miss the initial turn off of Highway 224 to the course you're in trouble.

We should note that perhaps this difficulty is appropriate: portions of Eagle Creek Golf Course were part of the Oregon Trail, and those pioneers didn't always know *exactly* where they were going, either.

Once you arrive and actually tee off, you're greeted by a layout that doesn't always "flow" well. It feels for all the world like a course that was 9 holes and then expanded to 18, but apparently that's not the case. We say that because there are about 9 holes that are cut out of a treed area that are challenging, and another 9 that are built on wide open pastureland that lack a lot of intrigue.

Here's what you do get at Eagle Creek: a perfectly "fine" golf experience that's relatively cheap, if a little underwhelming. There are views of Mt. Hood and the Clackamas River to be found, mature fir, oak and cedar trees on the holes that have trees and a large variety of wildlife, including numerous nutria, big rodents that are sort of a cross between rats on steroids and beavers.

Here's what you don't get at Eagle Creek: much service after you tee off. We (Don, Pete and friends Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack) played the course on a hot summer day. There's no drinking water on the course, no "cart girl" bringing drinks. This is particularly troublesome given that the Eagle Creek layout doesn't bring you back to the clubhouse on No. 9, you're out in the boonies going from No. 9 to No. 10. While the pro shop people were friendly, it'd be nice if they'd let first-timers know of this little quirk.

The white tees at Eagle Creek measure about 5600 yards. The blues add almost 700 yards, so that makes a difference. You start with a short par 3 (139



from the whites) and, frequently, an audience. There are a lot of "regulars" at Eagle Creek that like to congregate near the first tee and check everyone out.

As you work your way forward, you'll encounter water hazards at various intervals. Chief among the water holes is No. 5, a difficult hole to play the first time. A 573-yard par 5 from the whites, you see water ahead but you're not sure quite how far it is. Turns out the lake and bordering marshland are quite expansive; there's no way to clear it from the tee. You don't need driver, you need to lay up, but you don't know that on the tee.

No. 9 is also a challenge for first-time visitors. It's only about 300 yards, but 150 or so off the tee is a creek running across the fairway. Another 75 yards further up, there's another creek crossing the fairway. So you can lay up short of the first creek, try to land your ball between creeks or go for the gusto and try to fly both creeks — difficult, but not impossible (Mitch successfully did it).

The back nine starts routinely enough, but then you're really back in the trees for a couple of holes that almost feel off the course. No. 12 is a 307-yard par 4 with a severe dogleg left. If you can hit a hook on demand, this is your hole. Then No. 13, a par 4 that's only 251, is cut straight out of some woods to the extent that you're either on the fairway or in the trees, there's no rough. No. 14 is straight with OB on the right, No. 15 is a good par 5 requiring some real shot-making, then there's nothing particularly memorable as you finish up — except that you do finally reach the clubhouse again.