

Course Review: Eugene Country Club

The Eugene Country Club is, from what we can tell from years of watching the Masters on TV, a *little* piece of Augusta National in Oregon. That may be overstating things, as we've never been to Augusta, but as of the end of Golf Week 2011, the Eugene Country Club was the best manicured, most landscaped, most upscale golf course we've played in Oregon.

A quick tip of the hat here to two people: Jim Steiner, Don's work colleague, and Jim's friend Del Johnson, a Eugene Country Club member who was quick to host us when Jim mentioned we'd be in town the second week of August 2011 and needed to play ECC to complete our "Quest." Del was a gracious host and we greatly enjoyed our round with him and hearing some of the inside scuttlebutt about the course. Del's best story was about a neighbor who, in the dark of night, *cut down two trees on the country club's property* because they impeded his view of the course. ECC sued the man and won a considerable judgment. Undaunted, the man applied for membership the next year! He did not, said Del, find favor with the membership committee. ☺

The Eugene Country Club was organized in 1899, and has existed at its current location since 1923. The course was originally designed by H. Chandler Egan, then underwent a major 1967 renovation overseen by Robert Trent Jones Sr. Jones took ECC's lush grass and added new water features and sparking white sand bunkers, and, interestingly enough, more than doubled the green sizes by reversing the course and swapping out tees for greens and vice-versa.



The result today is a stunning layout dominated by huge, old growth fir and oak trees. Gorgeous but problematic, several fairways are tree-lined on both sides by trees so big their branches form a virtual canopy over the course. We hit several tee shots that *should* have been good shots that struck tree branches within the airspace of a fairway. In retrospect, there were several holes where we should have put the driver away. At 6400 yards, the white tees we were playing weren't a problem distance-wise (the blues measure about 6900). For a couple of hicks from Newberg, we were constantly awestruck by the out-and-out beauty of the course.

Eugene Country Club, while not the "official" home of the UO golf team (that title currently belongs to Emerald Valley in Creswell), does nonetheless periodically host Ducks' home matches. ECC has also been home to an impressive list of USGA events over the years, and will host the USGA's Senior Amateur national championship in 2018.

Don and Pete do have an interesting disagreement on where ECC ranks on our respective "best" lists. Don currently has it at No. 2, just a whisper behind Black Butte's Big Meadow course. Pete doesn't even have Eugene Country Club in his Top 5, specifically because "it's too hard for average guys, like us."

While our debate is, well, debatable, this point is not: if you have the opportunity to get on at the Eugene Country Club, do it! It is inarguably one of Oregon's best golf experiences — perhaps even *the* best.