

Course Review: Forest Hills Golf Course

If you don't know, there are two courses with the moniker "Forest Hills" in Oregon. The Forest Hills *Country Club* is a 9-hole course in Reedsport. Forest Hills *Golf Course* is a venerable 18-hole layout just north of Cornelius, likely named for its location halfway between Forest Grove and Hillsboro.

Don grew up in Forest Grove, so he's imminently familiar with Forest Hills. The course opened in 1953, and very little has changed about the place since then. In fact, one justifiable criticism of Forest Hills is the age of the facilities. The clubhouse is small and hasn't changed since Don was a kid. The adjacent restaurant looks very 1960ish — because it is. (They serve a great hot dog there, however — in fact, all of the food fare is good.) The restroom fixtures are generally ancient. Almost everything facility-wise could use an upgrade.

But ... none of that detracts from the course. Forest Hills is a classic, old school layout. At about 6150 yards from the white tees and only another 150 or so from the blues, length isn't the issue at Forest Hills. Accuracy is, however. The property is blessed with hundreds of mature trees, and those trees crowd many of the fairways, though occasionally you get some relief with a hole more wide open. There are also multiple water hazards, lots of bunkers (especially around the greens), frequently changing elevations and enough challenging holes to keep your interest throughout your round. You can walk the course, but there's a lot of up and down, so it's a workout.

The greens at Forest Hills are smallish and no one would call them fast. They're not tough to read, but you will typically find a bumpy once or twice per round. The best three holes on the front nine are No. 4, a par 3 somewhat over 200 yards; No. 6, a double dogleg (first left, then right) par 5 of about 550 yards, and then No. 9, a 410-yard par 4 that's uphill and requires two excellent shots to land the green.

The back nine is a more interesting test of golf than the front, as you get a far wider variety of holes to play — three each of par 3s, 4s and 5s. No. 10 is a 382-yard par 4 that runs parallel to a road, so you



can't go left. The fairway drops off about 75 yards or so in front of the green. The green is more or less the same height as the fairway before the drop-off, but it feels downhill. It's a very small green, and it's built on a hillside, so if you miss front or right you roll down into some trees — nicknamed, appropriately enough, the "Double Bogey" trees.

No. 11 (pictured above) is probably Forest Hills' signature hole. It's just 132 yards and straight downhill, so it plays much shorter. A pond protects the green in front, and it's surrounded by sand traps short and left. If you miss the water, miss the bunkers and hit the green, you'll find it's two-tiered, so your work is far from complete.

Holes 12-13-14 are a short par 5, 3 and 4 in that order, your best chance to score on the back nine. No. 15 can be feast or famine. It's a 496-yard par 5. Two nice hits can put you in birdie position, but trees line both sides of the fairway so they've got to be straight. Hit a great drive on No. 16 and you're facing a 60-foot or so uphill shot to a postage stamp green; you don't want to hit more than 220 or so off the tee to stay level. No. 17 is a big par 3, 193 yards, so you're hitting a long iron over a pond into a small green; go long, and you end up in a natural amphitheater behind the dance floor. No. 18 is a good finishing hole, a 466-yard dogleg left par 5 without a lot of trouble. Hit a good tee shot and you've got an excellent chance to end your round on a high note.