

Course Review: Glendoveer Golf Course

A Tale of Two Courses — *“It was the easiest of times (West Course), it was the hardest of times (East Course).”* With literary apologies to Dickens, this is the story of Glendoveer Golf Course in Portland.

Located at 148th and NE Glisan St. in urban East Portland, Glendoveer is more than its two excellent 18 hole courses. (And yes, Glendoveer West qualifies as “excellent” in its own way.) There are tennis courts, there’s a pool, and there’s a great nature fitness trail. But we’re here to talk golf — and by the way, **this is a “two-fer,” there are not separate reviews of the East and West courses.**

Glendoveer East is considered the “better,” more demanding of the courses due to a variety of factors: length, tight tree-lined fairways, water hazards. The East Course has three sets of tees, measuring 5700 from the whites, 6200 from the blues and about 6600 from the tips. Glendoveer has been around a long time; the East Course in opened in 1926.

Be forewarned that walking Glendoveer East is a workout. It rivals our home Chehalem Glenn for flat out “up-and-downness,” which, like Chehalem Glenn, translates to flat lies being a rarity. There’s a great variety of holes. On the front nine, No. 5 is a long par 3 measuring around 200 holes, depending on the tees you play. The next hole, No. 6, is a 250-yard downhill reachable par 4. The back nine features a lot of elevated greens, and most of those greens are heavily bunkered. But the most difficult feature on Glendoveer East is simply trees. Big, beautiful old growth fir trees that are spectacular to look at, but frequently exasperating to play through. You simply have to hit the ball straight on the East Course or you’re going to have a long round.

The greens on both courses are relatively small, and quicker than you’d expect for a Willamette Valley, municipal course. But they do putt consistently and aren’t hard to read.

Glendoveer West is considerably easier. Shoot, Don even shot a 79 once at Glendoveer West, one of three times he’s ever broken 80 (always 79). But let us say this: it’s still a very good course. It gets chastised a lot as the poor sister to Glendoveer East —



which it is — but many golfers in many cities would love to have a muni as nice as Glendoveer West.

The West Course, which opened in 1928, is much more open, has far fewer bunkers and less water in play. Its tees are set between 5400 and about 6000 yards, so it’s shorter. It’s really the Glendoveer West front nine that’s the pedestrian track. Straight, back-and-forth parallel holes and flat terrain mark the West front nine. The back side is hillier and includes way more trees — the fairways are wider, but really, the Glendoveer West back nine isn’t that much different than the East 18. Overall it is easier to walk, however, as there are fewer and less steep hills.

A quick word about the fitness trail that rings Glendoveer. By all accounts, it’s a world class 2.2 mile loop, with markers every so often to let you know how you’re advancing. There are a zillion squirrels — squirrels that will thief food from your golf cart, by the way — and ducks in the ponds.

Finally, Glendoveer has one thing no other course in Oregon can boast: a Ringside restaurant right on-site. One of Portland’s premier steakhouses, the scaled down Glendoveer Ringside still offers outstanding grub. There’s a big selection of Oregon beers on tap for imbibers, an very reasonably priced steakhouse burger and onion rings to die for.