Course Review: Golf Club of Oregon

Jan. 20, 2014 was a milestone day for Don and Pete as we played our 150th course in The Quest to play every golf course in Oregon. The Golf Club of Oregon in Albany was the site, and the fog burned off just prior to our 10:30 tee time, making for a gorgeous mid-winter day.

We were greeted by Steve in the pro shop; he had made the tee time with Don over the phone and recalled that we were the ones on The Quest. He welcomed us warmly and asked several questions about previous courses we've played.

We were joined, as is frequently the case, by Don's high school classmates Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack. Dave and Mitch are serial pre-round practice putters, and the two of them pretty much took up The Golf Club of Oregon's putting green, which is extremely small. It's also extremely slow, and not indicative of the green speed on the course.

The Golf Club of Oregon was founded in 1929. The property is blessed with hundreds of mature trees — Douglas firs, cottonwoods and cedars make up the majority. Many of the holes feature fairly small windows to hit from the tee box. No. 1, for example, is virtually impossible if you're right off the tee (as Don was). There's also an elevated railroad trestle bordering one side of the course, so be prepared for the occasional train whistle during your backswing.

The Golf Club of Oregon isn't overly long, measuring 5600 yards from the white tees, 5800 from the blues. It's flat and you can easily walk it. The 18 holes are laid out compactly, and the hole routing is

sometimes interesting. There are several instances where you'll encounter two or even three tee boxes crammed closely together, although there is adequate signage to get you to the right one.

While the front nine is pretty straight-forward, the back is a little funky. The two par 3s come back-to-back. There are two short par 4s — No. 13 in particular, No. 16 is the other — where the greens jut off at a 90-degree angle. Course knowledge helps there, as drive placement on both is far more crucial than distance. Incidentally, like many courses, The Golf Club of Oregon's tee boxes feature signboards that include depictions of the hole. Those little pictures could use some reworking, as several — especially on the back nine — show greens straight ahead when in reality, the hole bends one way or the other.

The greens have some diseased spots and are patchy here and there, although generally speaking they rolled smoothly and consistently (and much more quickly than the aforementioned practice green). Winter rates were just $20 for 18, which is more than fair. The pro shop does include a small snack bar. Steve readily admitted the winter food fare was limited, but the hot dogs were good and reasonably priced. The Golf Club of Oregon's logo could certainly use some updating/improving, but there are $2 logo balls available, always a plus in our eyes. All-in-all, a landmark event in our Quest and a great day of winter golf in Oregon.