

# Course Review: Juniper Golf Course

Put us in the minority, but Don and Pete don't regard Juniper Golf Course in Redmond quite as highly as most people do. No, it's not a bad course, it's just a *little* overrated by others in our opinion.

Perhaps our opinion would change if we had the opportunity to play it regularly. It's one thing to have fast greens — and Juniper's greens are exceedingly fast — but it would be nice if they were at least a little bit receptive. Average golfers, a description that certainly includes us and likely most of you reading, aren't going to put made-for-Sunday-TV professional spin on every approach shot. We both hit some great shots that hit middle of greens that landed and bounded far off the putting surface. That's particularly frustrating.

Juniper Golf Course has an interesting history. It celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2002 ... then promptly moved! It formerly sat adjacent to the Redmond Airport, on leased land from the Federal Aviation Administration. When Uncle Sam decided late last century it needed to charge full market value for leased FAA property, the City of Redmond and the Bureau of Land Management, among other parties, worked out a land swap that saw an entirely new Juniper open in 2004.

The new Juniper, which is still *near* the airport, offers panoramic views of Mt. Bachelor, Broken Top, the Three Sisters, Mt. Washington, Three-fingered Jack, Mt. Jefferson and even Mt. Hood. The white tees measure about 6100 yards; play from the tips and Juniper is a daunting 7200. If you're playing for the first time, the whites are plenty challenging, as the course plays longer than the listed yardages.



Again, we're convinced that simply *knowing* the course is half the battle here. The Juniper terrain is hilly enough that you get your share of uneven lies, even after good, in-the-fairway tee shots. Central Oregon is, of course, a high desert, and Juniper plays like a desert course. It is meticulously maintained, but it's *not* lush like many of the area's resort courses. If there's such a thing as blades of grass per square inch, Juniper lags behind in that category. If you miss the fairway, you'll find desert sage and other scrub brush, sandy areas (apart from formal bunkers), native lava rock and — ta da! — hundreds of Juniper pine trees, from which the course takes its name. Mix in occasional afternoon wind and you've got challenges galore. Thankfully, there are only really water hazards on two holes.

Juniper does, more often than not, offer you generous landing areas off the tee boxes. The namesake Juniper pines aren't often in play unless you've strayed far off course. By the same token, you face several blind or partially obscured second shots; again, course familiarity would be a huge plus.

Back to those greens. They are large, firm and fast; many of them are elevated. Many are surrounded by white sand-filled bunkers. Average Joes typically struggle with sand play as it is, and at Juniper it's not unusual to pop it out of the trap, scoot along the dance floor and roll off the other side.

Finally, if you're from the Willamette Valley, you'll definitely notice the "light air" effect at Juniper. You're up high enough to enjoy some extra yards off the tee, and you'll generally see a one-club difference from the fairways — nice as long as you remember.