

Course Review: McKay Creek Golf Course

McKay Creek Golf Course in Hillsboro holds a unique distinction in the annals of Don and Pete Golf Oregon. We have played the course together, which is the first “rule” of our Quest to play every course in Oregon. We have the scorecard (somewhere, maybe). We each have a logo ball from the course (for sure). It’s marked off the list.

And Pete has never seen the course.

No, God did not strike Pete blind for a round. Rather, we played McKay Creek in one of their annual autumn “night golf” fundraisers. Along with Don’s high school classmate Dave Cadd (McKay is Dave’s home course) and a friend of Dave’s to finish out the foursome, we all had special golf balls that light up, glow sticks around our neck so the people playing behind us knew where we were and we aimed for poles in the fairway also adorned by glow sticks.

There were additional glow sticks on the flagstick, plus a flashlight — you were allowed use of the flashlight while putting. We’re not sure what compression the balls were, they flew a club to a club-and-a-half shorter than normal balls, but they looked like shooting stars when you whacked them up into the night sky. It’s all for a good cause, a local family with some extraordinary medical expenses. But it starts at late twilight, so literally, Pete saw very little of the course other than a glimpse of No. 4, which was our shotgun start hole (Don has played McKay with Dave other times).

If you play McKay Creek in the daylight, here’s what you’ll find.

The course, which opened in 1995, is built on an old dairy site adjacent to, appropriately enough, McKay Creek on the west side of Hillsboro. The McKay Creek clubhouse is the dairy’s old farmhouse, circa 1929, the only surviving building. It’s not big, but functional, and includes a limited pro shop and small snack bar.

The course measures 2761 yards from the blue tees, which are in essence the “men’s tees” at McKay Creek. Generally speaking, McKay Creek is pretty wide open. There are some trees in play on



No. 1 (and here and there elsewhere), but they’re generally not a factor. The McKay Creek crosses the first fairway, though in a spot generally not in play — farther up than you’ll drive it, short of any sort of decent approach shot.

Indeed, the namesake creek winds along portions of the course, but is mostly in play only if you hit way over the green on Nos. 1, 3 or 7, or if you badly slice on the short par 3 No. 4. You also have to clear the creek approaching the green on No. 9, though again its placement is such that it shouldn’t be in play. Of course, we all know that water has magnet-like effects on golf balls.

Holes 2-5 are pretty trouble-free. Again, this was a dairy, so you’re playing in what was once pastureland. No. 5 is a 467-yard par 5. You can’t slice or you’ll be in fenced off OB property, but you can hook it a mile into the parallel No. 8 fairway. No. 6 is an uphill par 3; if you get a hole-in-one here, you won’t see it (day or night). Hole 7 is a downhill, short (325 yards) par 4. Bomb away if you must, a 3-wood off the tee is the smart play. No. 8 is the No. 1 handicap hole, a 508-yard par 5, but you can hit it a mile right or left into adjoining fairways and still play it fine, so it’s pretty forgiving. No. 9 is a nice finish, with the creek guarding a duffed approach shot.

One note: McKay Creek the river floods portions of McKay Creek the golf course virtually every winter at some point, so it’s rarely open 52 weeks a year. Call ahead if you’re hoping to play a December, January or February round.