

Course Review: Neskowin Marsh Golf Course

Along the northern edge of the Central Oregon coast, near the Neskowin resort area, you'll find one of Oregon's most different and — from Don and Pete's perspective, enjoyable — golf outings. The 9-hole Neskowin Marsh golf course has operated since 1932, and as the name implies, it's built in a coastal marshland. Among other things, that means you can only play there between roughly May 1 to November 1 — the rest of the time, it's underwater.

We played Neskowin Marsh in the summer of 2007, during our initial "Golf Week" along the coast, based out of Don's in-laws in Newport. Located off of Highway 101 just a bit north of the Highway 18 junction, Neskowin Marsh doesn't take tee times. There aren't any motorized carts available. Obviously since the fairways and greens spend lots of time each year underwater, they're not in pristine condition. Nevertheless, Neskowin Marsh is just a fun way to spend a couple of summertime hours on the Oregon coast.

There aren't a lot of courses where the most descriptive word in a course review is "reedy," but that's the word du jour for Neskowin Marsh. As you might expect, there are lots of water hazards on the course. In fact, Hole No. 2, a 303-yard par 4, is the only Neskowin Marsh hole that doesn't have one. Holes 1, 4, 8 and 9 feature lateral hazards, while there are good old-fashioned ponds and lakes on Holes 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8. (The astute will note there's lots of water on No. 8.) That said, the water hazards grow and shrink with the seasons. Play an August round and the course is pretty open unless you venture far from the fairway.

Then there are the reeds, which unsurprisingly grow thick near much of the water. If you hit your ball into the reeds, trust us, you won't find it. We tried a couple of times. It's kind of entertaining looking, but you will not find your ball. Oddly enough, you rarely manage to find anyone else's ball either, the reeds just seem to eat them up. As the signs and scorecard note: "Play reeds as part of water hazards."

Neskowin Marsh is not a long course. There are no par 5s. Seven par 4s and a pair of par 3s play to a



total yardage of only 2236 yards. The longest hole on the course is No. 4, and it only measures 308 yards. No. 7 is a short (117 yards) par 3 where you hike up a small hill to shoot off an elevated tee.

Given its relative shortness and its proximity to the Neskowin resort area, you'll find a lot of families and beginners at the course, especially on summer weekends. That may slow you up some, but be patient and enjoy the experience. Also, look for wildlife, there's an abundance of bird species evident throughout the course.

At one point in time, golfers could turn 18 in the Neskowin area by trekking across the road and playing Hawk Creek Golf Course. Alas, that little nine closed down almost a decade ago, even though it still pops up in many "Neskowin golf course" Internet searches. You could play Neskowin Marsh twice, or you could go hunt down some good clam chowder, which is abundant in the area. Either way, you win!