

Course Review: Oak Knoll (Ashland)

The Oak Knoll Golf Course in Ashland has been open since 1928, giving golfers a challenging layout in a beautiful setting. Owned and operated by the Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission, Oak Knoll is Southern Oregon's only municipal golf course. As Don and Pete are both on the board of directors of the Chehalem Park & Recreation District, which owns and operates Chehalem Glenn in Newberg, we have an affinity for munis.

We played *this* Oak Knoll course — there's one in Independence of the same name — as the first course of the second day of Golf Week 2014, just before heading over to Klamath Falls where we spent the bulk of that week. Oak Knoll is a 9-hole course, although it has two sets of tees for those wanting to play 18.

Which brings us to a minor criticism. If you've read other of our course reviews, you may have run across our "thing" about courses naming holes. Augusta National has hole names. They get to do whatever they want. But if you're not Augusta National, don't do it. Oak Knoll takes it a step further and has individual names for the second set of tees! You play blue tees on the "front nine" at Oak Knoll and white tees on the "back," and yes, the yardages vary and in a couple of cases, even par varies. BUT, the holes aren't *that* different. Not enough to warrant calling No. 1 "Double Trouble" and then tagging it as "Thread The Needle" when it's No. 10. Yes, it's a personal pet peeve, but ugh!



Yeah, we know, not exactly our best group photo ever. Alas, it's the only one we have from Oak Knoll.



There are a few holes at Oak Knoll where an errant shot offers the opportunity to meet the golf course neighbors.

That aside, this is a nice course. There is only a sprinkling of sand traps, but water does come into play on four holes to add a little intrigue to your round. By and large the holes are straight; there's a hint of a dogleg left on No. 1, and No. 9 bends some to the right near the end. Accuracy is a must at Oak Knoll as there are lots of OB areas — some "real" (go too far right on No. 5 and you'll hit Highway 66), others manmade via white stakes.

We liked No. 6, listed as a 263-yard par 4, downhill no less. Sounds easy enough, but a small stream runs right in front of the green — and if you really bomb it, there's a large pond immediately behind the green. This one swaps out to a 184-yard par 3 on the "back nine."

Unusual for a 9-hole course, there are two sets of restrooms at Oak Knoll (plus two drinking fountains). Relatively speaking the restrooms are pretty close to one another (one on the right of No. 6, the second on the right of No. 7), so maybe that could've been thought out a little better. The drinking fountains are better spaced.

There are neighborhood homes adjacent to a couple of holes, but you never feel cramped. There's a driving range and putting green, and Oak Knoll has a nice clubhouse with a good little restaurant. We grabbed hot dogs and such when we finished, good grub before our trek over to Klamath Falls.