

Course Review: Prineville Golf & Country Club

The Prineville Golf & Country Club is a 9-hole private course a few miles east of Prineville proper. We played there as part of Golf Week 2013 in Central Oregon — Don, Pete and regular Golf Week tag-alongs Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack, Don's high school classmates.

In fact, Don, Dave and Mitch played Prineville Country Club one time before, during the ill-fated Golf Week 2010. Also scheduled for Central Oregon, Don and Pete got in three days before Pete's back issues kicked up and sent him home. Dave and Mitch arrived the next day as scheduled to play out the week, so the threesome soldiered on, but obviously the official "Quest" was suspended.

When we played at Prineville in 2010, Don explained the situation with Pete and was told, "No problem, you come back any time with Pete." Sure enough, in planning Golf Week 2013, when we called the pro shop and talked to Marge, she was quick to invite us back to play. So we're not exactly sure just how "private" Prineville Country Club actually is. The pro shop door has a faded 8.5 x 11 flier noting it's a private track for members and guests only. But if you're from out of town, they seem pretty accommodating, and everyone one there seems genuinely happy to see you. We were warmly greeted by staff and other golfers on both occasions, hearing the phrase "happy to have you here" over and over.

It could be they just liked seeing different faces. The everyday clientele at Prineville Country Club is, well, old. Put it this way, we (Don, Pete, Dave, Mitch) were all 55 or 56 the day we played in 2013. As such, we lowered the average age on the course considerably. The group behind us, whom we chatted with several times out on the course, were all in their late



70s or early 80s. The oldest was 83, and he was a master at putting Prineville's tricky greens!

Prineville Country Club's layout is funky. Par 32 and 2500 yards, there are no par 5s. Mostly it's flat, with the exception of one hill you climb. Everything is crammed into close quarters. There are a goodly number of trees on the course, and Ochoco Creek meanders the property and comes into play several times. There are few bunkers.

The greens at Prineville are somewhat larger than average and, as mentioned, are tricky. There are a lot of subtle undulations that aren't evident at first blush, and the greens also putt much faster than they look like they should. We missed several putts by a *lot* throughout the round.

One of the old-timers behind us made a point of showing off a five-foot bullsnake he found while looking for an errant ball on No. 4. He had it wrapped around a club. "Ah, he just likes to play with them snakes," said one of his unimpressed partners.

At any rate, we lumbered through our round, not playing terrible, not playing great, ready to hit the Prineville Arctic Circle for lunch and head on to Meadow Lakes, unaware that the best was yet to come. The best part? As we finished up on No. 9 and went back to the clubhouse to say thank you and good-bye, Marge greeted us with homemade chocolate chip cookies — still warm! Talk about a fun (and tasty) morning.

