

# Course Review: Quail Ridge Golf Course

Our visit to Quail Ridge Golf Course in Baker City during Golf Week 2015 was memorable, but for non-golf reasons. We were excited to arrive and looking forward to marking the last “Quail” course off our list — having previously golfed Quail Point (Medford), Quail Run (La Pine) and Quail Valley (Banks).

But our day at Quail Ridge was an omen of things to come for the rest of the week. A dry-by-Oregon-standards winter and spring had left the state’s forests tinder dry, and what was to grow into the Cornet Fire Complex near Baker City was just beginning to take off as we checked into the Quail Ridge pro shop.

“You see that smoke coming over the hills there?” asked the old-timer taking our money. “That used to be my ranch. It’s burning up.”

So at that point things were interesting, but the fire wasn’t yet a “complex” and it wasn’t yet B-I-G news. We teed off ready to challenge the 5763 yards awaiting us from the white tees. We found a course mostly wide and devoid of many trees, although there is water here and there and a decent number of bunkers. A stream cuts straight across the majority of the course, putting it in play on eight holes for sure



— nine if you were to seriously overshoot No. 13. The most hazardous hole is No. 3. It’s a short par 4, only 273 yards, but with a pair of fairway bunkers on the right, a large pond on the left and the stream guarding the approach to the green, your tee shot here must be accurate.

The layout is a little different — you pass a lot of other holes going from green to next tee. After No. 5, for example, you pass the tees for both No. 12 and No. 3, the green for No. 11 and the tee for No. 17 before you finally arrive at your tee for No. 6. It’s hard to visualize without a course map, but trust us, we made a few U-turns that day.

Otherwise, the front nine was relatively uneventful, we played OK, stopped for a quick hot dog at the turn and made for the back nine. Then in the middle of the 10th fairway, it started raining — ash, not water. The wind had shifted and for the rest of the back nine we had ash swirling around as we played; we even had a light dusting on the greens by round’s end.

We muddled through Holes 10-16, playing solidly if nothing spectacular. The course was in great shape, well groomed with quick-but-consistent greens. We did over-putt several of them on the front side, but had things pretty well under control on the back. It took us awhile to find the 17th tee, it’s a long way from the 16th green. Plus, by then, the ash was really falling. For those who were in the Northwest when Mt. St. Helens blew in 1980, it wasn’t that heavy, but it was eerily reminiscent. We left Quail Ridge and headed to Ontario; the next day, I-84 was closed between Baker City and Ontario due to the fire.