

# Course Review: Rose City Golf Course

Rose City Golf Course in Northeast Portland has a rich history. Located just west of Rocky Butte and (today) adjacent to Madison High School at its eastern edge, Rose City was built in 1923, making it the second oldest municipal course in both Portland and Oregon. The course sits in a ravine off of NE Tillamook between 60th and 82nd, and is one of the five golf courses owned by the City of Portland (along with Eastmoreland, RedTail and the Great Blue and Greenback courses at Heron Lakes). Add the two Glendoveer courses to the count — formerly owned by Multnomah County, now run by regional government Metro — and few U.S. cities can boast municipally-owned courses to match Portland's list.

Arrive at Rose City and the first thing you notice is the distinctive clubhouse (photo below). Built in 1932, the clubhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's a striking brick, vintage building with steep pitched roofs. Inside, you'll find a small pro shop crammed with stuff, a great little grill that serves *real* breakfasts (and lunch, of course) and an absolutely ancient and grimy locker room you'd best avoid. Rose City also features a one-of-a-kind "driving range." It's just an open area near No. 4, and it's BYOB — bring your own balls. You gotta hit 'em and then chase 'em. The course is also home to smart, aggressive squirrels. Not aggressive as in attacking you or anything, but nimble thieves happy to peruse through any food you've left in your power cart while you're on a green putting — they'll even stick their noses into your bag on a pull cart. ☺

Rose City is one of several courses on our Quest that native Oregonian Don had played several times, but was new to Pete. We played on a drizzly late spring day in 2013 with frequent foursome-fillers Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack, Don's Forest Grove High School classmates. The course played all right — it drains better than sister course Eastmoreland, for



example, but it doesn't necessarily drain well. (Don knows from experience Rose City can also get hard and dry in the summer.)

White tees are about 6200 yards at Rose City, the blues another 350. Rose City's overall design is best described as "traditional." It abuts Rose City Park on one side, and the entire property has a park-like feel to it. Rose City has seen several renovations over the years, and the course sports greens that are much larger than you'd expect for a track of this age and setting, so good lag putting is a must. Most have only average break, which helps, though their speed varies greatly depending on the season. The property abounds with large, old growth trees — beautiful to look at, but frequently in the way if you stray off the fairway much. Generally speaking, the course sits on mildly hilly, rolling terrain, but there are a few spots of more exaggerated elevation, especially on the second nine. The front nine is more forgiving than the back. Both nines are dotted with greenside bunkers. There's really only water in play on one hole on the front, the 157-yard par 3 No. 5, but comes into play four times on the back side.

You know you've trekked a ways at Rose City when you play No. 14, which is the hole adjacent to Madison High, which fronts 82nd Avenue. You tee off next to the Senators' baseball field, and if you slice it pretty good you can hit the school's track. Ultimately No. 14 turns sharply left and uphill, guarded by one the back nine's three ponds on the left. There's another smaller pond guarding the next green on No. 15, a fun 122-yard par 3 that's steeply downhill from an elevated tee box.