

# Course Review: Santiam Golf Club

We played Santiam Golf Club under difficult circumstances. No, it wasn't wet, or cold, or windy — or too hot. The difficult circumstance was that it was the last day of Golf Week 2013, and we were — in a word — pooped. We'd played a full week in Central Oregon, two courses a day with friends Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack filling out our foursome, and Santiam was the last course on our agenda. After 27 to 36 holes a day for seven days and then a two-hour drive from Bend crammed in Dave's minivan, we were four old, cramped, stiff and sore hackers. And played that way.

Obviously that wasn't the course's fault, and despite all the sore muscles, we had a good time — and an epic last shot of the day. You can see Santiam on the south side of Highway 22 on the way to Bend from Salem. People tend to think of Santiam as being in Stayton, though technically it has a Sublimity address. At 6100 yards from the white tees — which was plenty far enough for us that day — and par 72, Santiam is completely flat and easy to walk under normal circumstances. As noted, our circumstances weren't normal — we took carts.

Santiam is truly a *local* enterprise. The course was founded by a group of seven gentlemen from Aumsville, Stayton and Sublimity in the late 1950s. Those founders and assorted other local friends and neighbors actually did much of the construction work on both the course and the original clubhouse, frequently during evening hours after a regular workday. The front nine opened in 1957, the second nine about a half-dozen years later.

Today, a group of just over 300 stockholders ultimately oversees an 18-hole course that's been frequently updated and modernized over the years (sometimes by necessity; the original clubhouse burned down). As you might imagine with a course somewhat designed and built by committee, the layout is fairly pedestrian. Most of the holes are either straight or have a gentle bend to them, though there are a few that qualify as legitimate doglegs.

Santiam is a typical Western Oregon golf course, which means hazards come in three primary forms:



trees, water and sand. The trees are generally set back far enough from the fairways to give you a decent landing area off the tee. We had more tree trouble than we should have, attributable to tired muscles and poor swings. There are probably bunkers about every other hole on average, virtually all of them greenside. We only recall one fairway bunker, on No. 18. The traps are pretty steep and the sand was rough, so they're definitely best avoided. There is quite a bit of water on the course. Mill Creek cuts through Santiam and comes into play on several holes, plus the course features probably another five or so ponds scattered about the layout. Overall, however, most of the water is avoidable.

Santiam's greens are average in size, fairly quick in pace and by-and-large flat; there's not a lot of undulation and you won't find many tricky reads. If we hadn't just spent a week putting Central Oregon greens Santiam's dance floors probably would have seemed faster.

Other highlights: No. 10 runs parallel to Highway 22. As Don is wont to do with a major thoroughfare on the left, he bounced one off the roadway. Also, our "epic" Golf Week birdie contest was decided on No. 18, on the very last shot of the last hole of Golf Week, when Mitch rolled one in from about 15 feet — the first 5 feet of which were off the green — though right in front and uphill. That enabled him to break a tie with defending champion Don and claim our rotating trophy.