

Course Review: RiverRidge (ShortRidge)

The RiverRidge Golf Complex in Eugene features something for everyone. There's a good practice facility, an 18-hole regulation course, a 9-hole executive course and a 9-hole pitch-and-putt course, all located a couple of miles north of Valley River Center. We played all three RiverRidge courses in one day, part of our Golf Week 2011 that found us headquartered in Springfield at a friend's home while we toured every course in the greater Eugene area.

RiverRidge is a family owned and operated facility built from scratch on farmland purchased by Ric and Debbie Jefferies in the late 1980s. The property was originally flat, but Ric Jefferies had spent some time as a golf pro and met noted course designer Robert Cupp during that time, so even though he was somewhat of a novice course architect, Jefferies learned enough from Cupp to know to add some mounding and other topographic features.

The RiverRidge complex is one of Oregon's handful of Audubon Sanctuary certified courses, so it goes without saying there's wildlife about and the course emphasizes its natural setting and environmental stewardship. There's a "natural" feel to the place — while the main course, in particular, is well maintained, you wouldn't call RiverRidge "manicured" by any stretch.

You can walk any of the three layouts; again, it was originally farmland. Given the heat and the fact we were playing 36, we rode, though we looked silly tooling around the pitch-and-putt course in a cart.

ShortRidge Course

ShortRidge Golf Course is a 9-hole, par 27 layout located right across the road from the RiverRidge track. It's one of two alternate courses to the regulation course, sitting adjacent to SuttonRidge, a 9-



hole executive course. ShortRidge and SuttonRidge are collectively known as "The Nines," though why they need individual names as well as a joint name is a mystery. Three names, really — technically it's ShortRidge at The Nines at RiverRidge (we think).

ShortRidge is a pitch-and-putt course with no hole longer than 100 yards; they range from 61 to 99. This little course was designed for family play and, apparently, hoping to teach youngsters the underlying principles of the game. In that regard, each of the holes has a name, in order: Respect, Confidence, Courtesy, Responsibility, Judgment, Perseverance, Integrity, Honesty and Sportsmanship. A little cheesy, perhaps, but we suppose if it helps the kids learn, it's a good thing.

RiverRidge is home to Lane County's First Tee program, so ShortRidge offers young golfers a great opportunity to learn the game, and families the chance to get out and play together.

During our one-day visit, ShortRidge was better maintained than SuttonRidge, if not as well-kept as RiverRidge. The course wasn't all that busy, but we still had to wait on a couple of holes. That was a little frustrating given we were trying to polish off the last of 36 holes for the day, and we could see how it could be a problem. There was no staff "presence" across the road at either ShortRidge or SuttonRidge; you were very much on your own. RiverRidge management might be wise to send someone over every now and again just to check on things — and perhaps they usually do, as we are cognizant that our visits are one-time snapshots of each course.