

# Course Review: Stewart Meadows Golf Course

This is a tough one. On paper Stewart Meadows Golf Course in Medford sounds great. It's a flat, walkable 9-hole layout. The course features four large ponds, 39 sand traps, over 800 trees and a creek that bisects the 62-acre area. That said, the trees are spread out, we didn't hit many traps and avoided the water. So why is it that Stewart Meadows just seems so, well, *underwhelming*?

It started in the clubhouse. We played Stewart Meadows as part of Golf Week 2008, at that point only the second such venture. We were stationed with Don's cousins in Grants Pass and played a full week's schedule throughout Southern Oregon. It was Year 2 of our Quest to play every course in Oregon, and we were full of enthusiasm when we announced ourselves in the pro shop. And were greeted by a yawn.

Search the Internet and you'll find plenty of reviews (Google, Yelp, others) commenting about rude service at Stewart Meadows. Our treatment was not rude, but very indifferent. Look, no one is required to be interested in our adventure, but most people we encounter at least pretend. Stewart Meadows also doesn't have logo balls, far too nice a course not to, and our query as to why was met with a disinterested shoulder shrug. From our experience, they could work a little on customer service, but we wouldn't term it "rude."



All of the very flat fairways at Stewart Meadows were immaculately manicured.



Looking back at the Stewart Meadows clubhouse (left); Hey, less than 3,000 miles to Augusta!

We found the course to be very well maintained. Stewart Meadows is not a difficult layout, but you do need to keep your ball in play or you'll have difficulty hitting greens in regulation. Those greens were nicely kept and rolled true — quick, though not as fast as they looked as though they might be.

We played the white tees, 2,658 yards. There are "back nine" blue tees that measure 2,910; par is 35 in both cases. By-and-large the holes are straight. A couple change direction gently as you approach the green; No. 6 features a true dogleg right on a short 330-yard par 4. No. 5 is a 152-yard par 5 with a big pond about halfway between the tee and green. That's an easy 7-iron for most of us, the water shouldn't be an issue, but it does look intimidating.

The Internet is also full of chatter about slow play at Stewart Meadows and ineffective marshals. For the record, we didn't see any of that, but we played mid-week in hot August weather, so there weren't a lot of other folks on the course. Despite the heat, most of the other golfers we saw were seniors, and we got the impression that local, west Medford retirees make up the bulk of the course's patrons.

Stewart Meadows does include a small restaurant that serves breakfast and lunch dining and a nice driving range that is covered, heated and lighted.

Again, there is nothing *wrong* with this course. It's near a newer, commercialized section of Medford ... strip mall, strip mall ... boom! Golf course. No reason for that to matter, yet somehow it just adds to the overall flavor of the venue. Southern Oregon has lots of fine courses. This one is OK.