

Course Review: Sunriver Woodlands

Golf Week 2013, our second Central Oregon Golf Week, could have been subtitled “Sunriver Week.” Having played the Meadows Course in 2011, we had the other three Sunriver Resort courses on the 2013 agenda: Woodlands, Crosswater and Caldera Springs.

Woodlands is one of Sunriver’s two public play courses (Meadows being the other). Designed by internationally celebrated golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, Jr., Woodlands features dense forests of Ponderosa and Lodge Pole Pine, outcroppings of lava rock and an abundance of water. Also noteworthy are the bunkers, they’re extraordinarily deep.

There’s something else running rampant throughout the Woodlands course: doglegs. Twelve of the 18 holes feature a dogleg of some fashion. That many twists and turns means you’ve really got to *think* your way around this course, something not all of us are always good at! ☺ But this is a layout where you want to plan ahead one shot, and try to leave your ball in a place that works for you — in other words, not necessarily just whacking it as far as you can every swing.

This was another Golf Week that featured frequent tagalongs Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack, and as usual the four of us played from the white tees, which at Woodlands top out at 6010 yards. Jones doesn’t pull any punches on the first tee, he gives you a sobering preview of your upcoming four hours. No. 1 is a 483-yard par 5; you tee off through a chute of trees to a narrow fairway that begins to dogleg



left, then meanders back a hair to the right up by the green. Your approach shot can’t veer right or it’s wet, in one of several Woodlands ponds.

Your first chance for a breath comes on the No. 5 tee. It’s a straightforward 150-yard par 3, the only issue one large greenside bunker. The front nine ends with a daunting ninth hole. Only 342 yards, it’s got a 90-degree dogleg left guarded by two huge ponds on both sides of the fairway. Like most of Woodlands, this is very much target golf.

The first two holes of the back nine continues to put the “wood” in Woodlands. Nos. 10 and 11 are simply carved out of the forest, you’ve got fairway and trees, with little rough to speak of. No. 12 is a par 3 with a green virtually surrounded by bunkers, then it’s back to the woods for hole-after-hole with no breathing room left or right. Nos. 13-16 are 347, 353, 491 and 366 yards, respectively, not monsters, but again, there’s just no room for error. No. 17 is a 138-yard par 3 with no tree issues, but there’s water to the left of the green, water to the right of the green and greenside bunkers as well.

Just to make sure you feel properly punished, No. 18 is not only (surprise!) tree-lined, but there’s also water on both sides. When you walk off of Woodlands, you’ll never want to see a pine tree again.

Note: When we played in 2013, the greens were fine but not great. The following year, Sunriver replaced all of Woodlands’ dance floors with new bentgrass greens.