

# Course Review: Valley Golf Club

Valley Golf Club in Hines is, in one respect, our favorite golf course in Oregon. No, it's not the best course in the state, but when we arrived to play as part of our Golf Week 2015, we were greeted with the news that after nearly a decade and 180-some courses into our Quest, we were finally being comped. *Free golf!* Seriously, it was a nice and unexpected surprise.

Hines is adjacent to Burns, and while technically the course is "semi-private," it's a public play venue. (More on that below.) A quick fun fact for Oregon Ducks fans, Valley Golf Club is right next door to Clemens Real Estate, the family business of former Duck and longtime NFL quarterback Kellen Clemens, who locals say stops by maybe once a year.

Valley Golf Club opened in 1939. It's not overly fancy. There are two sets of tees, not five. The day we visited it was well kept, but certainly not manicured. The fairways are winter rye (interspersed with occasional clover and crabgrass) while the greens are bent grass. Valley's nine holes measure 3190 yards, so it's a reasonable length.

Valley Golf Club features big, wide fairways. There



are trees sprinkled about, but you have to have really bad luck or be way off-course to have a tree in play. You can go out-of-bounds on a few holes by whacking it into adjacent farmland. There's water in play here and there, plus the occasional blue, metal coyote apparently meant to keep critters of one kind or another off the course.

The greens were nice. They had been a bit over-watered that morning, but given it was August in Burns, better too much than too little.

So more on the whole semi-private thing. We had an odd situation when we finished our round. We went back into the clubhouse where we had tried to pay and were so warmly welcomed, with the intention of having lunch in the restaurant. To our surprise, we were told we could not be served because while the golf course was public, the clubhouse was actually a private club. But quick as a whistle, the attendant smiled and said, "Don't worry, though, I'm sure we can work it out."

She then got the attention of about six good ol' boys at a nearby table. She told them who we were and what we were doing, and one immediately said to consider us his guests. So we ended up with a couple of good burgers and lots of conversation — we got the feeling we were the first "new news" there in quite some time. They were curious where we had been and where we were going. They laughed when they heard our next stop was Bear Valley Meadows (read that review). It was also the first warning we received that South Fork in Dayville was perhaps no longer open, which turned out to be true.