

# Course Review: Wildwood Golf Course

Up, down. Up, down. That's the first thing you remember when you walk off the 18th green at Wildwood Golf Course, located about 20 minutes out of downtown Portland out Highway 30 toward St. Helens. And it's unfortunate that those severe elevation changes will be seared into your memory, because in the midst of all that upping and downing is a very nice golf course.

Wildwood is an 18-hole, par 72 public golf course. It features some towering trees (mostly Douglas fir), three small creeks meandering the course and spectacular views of three mountains (Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams) as well as downtown Portland. But it's the hills everyone remembers, so let's deal with those first.

- First off, despite relatively short green-to-tee distances and modest overall length, get a cart — don't be a hero and slow everyone down by trying to walk Wildwood. There is not *some* elevation change here, there's a lot.
- Second, be cautious driving that cart. Wildwood's steep and sometimes narrow trails make driving a golf cart here different than most other courses.
- Third, you're going to have a lot of uneven, side-hill lies at Wildwood — that will impact not only your swing but also club selection. Choose incorrectly and you'll find yourself way short or way over; that can take some getting used to at first.



Looking down at the fairway from the No. 10 tee. This is a sight frequently duplicated at Wildwood.



Upon your arrival at Wildwood Golf Course, you can look off yonder to the left and see the hilly terrain.

So, on several holes you're either heading down a valley to a green below or up a hillside to a green above, maybe partially obscured. What else to know about Wildwood? It's not an overly long course. We played the white tees, which measure just 5,600 yards. Even from the tips, the course only measures out to a little over 5,800 yards.

Side-hill lies aside, Wildwood offers several challenging holes — enough to keep things interesting — but it's not too hard. Challenging but playable may be the best turn of phrase to describe Wildwood. If you're an extremely low handicapper, this may not be the course for you. For the rest of we mortals, it's a fun layout. For all of the timber on the course, if you don't spray the ball too far right or left you'll generally be OK. In other words, hit the ball straight, good advice on most golf courses.

Wildwood's greens are, generally speaking, average size and average speed. They do vary quite a bit hole-to-hole in undulation, so you'll see lots of break on one hole and not so much on the next. But those with break are easy to read, nothing much to fool you. Two front nine holes are short (under 300 yards) par 4s; they have correspondingly smaller greens.

We found the course well maintained on our visit and green *everywhere* — none of the usual dry spots you usually see at least here or there at most courses. This qualifies as one of the Portland area's proverbial golf course "hidden gems."