

Course Review: Woodburn Senior Estates

If there is a major landmark running parallel to a hole on the left, Don will hit it.

That fact was proven true again on early fall of 2013 at the Senior Estates course in Woodburn. If you've traveled up and down I-5 you've undoubtedly seen it there countless times, sitting adjacent to the east side of the freeway. The hole closest to the east side interchange is No. 2 (the course starts with a par 3), and sure enough, Don hooked his drive onto the freeway. It bounced right in front of a car, brake lights flared, though no damage was done. As interesting as it might have been to pitch back onto the course from the freeway median, Don judiciously hit a mulligan and left the freeway-scraped Callaway for the next crew of inmate trash picker-uppers to find. (Other recent to-the-left thoroughfares Don has hit in recent years include Highway 20 near Stayton during Golf Week 2013 and the McKenzie River near Waltherville during Golf Week 2011, just to name a couple).

Otherwise, the afternoon adventure at the Senior Estates was a good one. We were hosted by Gene Findley, who is married to friend Mitch Nosack's wife's mother (got that?). The Senior Estates is a private course, and when we arrived before Gene and Mitch, the clubhouse attendant greeted us a little gruffly — our guess is that he thought we had just showed up expecting to play. His tone changed quickly when he learned we were with Gene, who apparently plays nearly every playable day and is an icon of the course.

Gene is in his early 80s and suffers from some form of palsy, so he is constantly battling the shakes. He courageously plays on, refusing to make excuses. The palsy is particularly bothersome when he putts, but Gene refuses to "take" any but the shortest of putts, insisting on holing out. He missed a handful of 18- to 24-inchers anyone would have happily given him, but he likes to play out. He also has an entertaining habit of calling out his running score after every shot. "That's two!" "That's five." It was an honor to meet and play with Gene, he's an inspiration. Gene Findley is good for golf, and golf is good for Gene.



Again, Woodburn Senior Estates is a private course and it's very nice, though it's hardly a "manicured" course. Several holes are surrounded by almost anachronistic, 1950s-style bungalows. There are enough trees and houses to get you into trouble if you don't keep it straight off the tee (to say nothing of major interstate thoroughfares); the greens were well-kept, average speed but consistent.

Befitting a private course in a senior community, Woodburn Senior Estates isn't long. The white tees, which are the back tees here, measure 5400 yards, while the shorter gold tees come in at 5065. The longest par 5 is the aforementioned No. 2, officially 457 yards but considerably longer from the freeway. There are no "gimme" par 3s, the shortest is No. 11 at 158 yards. The front nine features three each par 3, 4 and 5s; the back nine consists of the more traditional two par 3s, five par 4s and two par 5s.

It didn't seem that we had played all that well, yet the scores weren't too bad when we added them up. We call that the "having-Chehalem-Glenn-as-your-home-course" factor. All-in-all, it was an excellent Sunday after church round of golf and, again, a pleasure to meet and play with Gene.