

Course Review: Riverside Country Club

A nice mid-July 2013 summer day was the perfect setting for Don and Pete to tackle Riverside Country Club in Portland. This is a private course located off of NE 33rd Ave., not far from Broadmoor Golf Course that sits at 33rd and Columbia Blvd., and basically across the street from the Oregon Food Bank's Portland headquarters. The course also borders Columbia River Correctional Institution, a small state prison, whose employees are members of the organization Don works for (Oregon AFSCME).

Indeed, there was a bit of a union feel to the day, as we were hosted by Portland labor attorney Greg Hartman, a longtime friend of Don's, and our fourth was Dick Schwartz, the retired director of an Oregon education union. Thanks to Greg's graciousness, we enjoyed an excellent lunch at Riverside's restaurant before teeing off.

Riverside Golf and Country Club has a "classic" feel to it without being snobby. Built in 1925, it has stood the test of time well and the members, according to Greg, have been good about ponying up some extra money from time-to-time over the years when things have needed to be updated and/or upgraded. While the site doesn't feel all that big, the white tees measure some 6400 yards (the blues come in at 6700), so it's not short.

The Riverside property is blessed with an abundance of towering fir trees. Inevitably, some of them will be in your way occasionally, though they are not placed punatively. If a tree is in your line at Riverside, it's your fault. Hit it straight and you'll be fine. You should also assume you'll be hitting a few sand shots. While fairway bunkers are sparse at Riverside — there are a few — most greens feature at least two sand traps, some three bunkers and at least two greens are surrounded by four traps. This is a well-kept private course, so the bunkers were in good shape; getting out is dependent on your skill level — you can't "blame" the bunkers as is legitimately the case on some courses. The greens are quick but roll true, so you can adjust pretty quickly.

Hole No. 1 is a very good introduction to Riverside. It's a 380-yard par 4 from the whites (the No. 3 handicap hole), basically straight with probably a



half-dozen or so large fir trees scattered along each side. The larger trees are on the left, so of course that's where both of us whacked our tee shots. Don had an alley and was able to hit up by the green; Pete pretty much had to hit out into the fairway. There's one large bunker short and right of the generous first dance floor.

Holes 2 and 3 are similar, offering you a good feel for the course. No. 4 is a challenging par 3 that seems underrated on the scorecard as the No. 15 handicap hole. It's 182 from the white tees, and while there's a good-sized green to shoot at, there are also three separate bunkers guarding the right side and one on the left, so by-and-large you're on the green or in the sand. A small stream winds through Holes 4-6 but isn't in play unless you hit a really bad shot. There are ponds/lakes that can come into play on Holes 8, 15, 16 and 17, but generally speaking water hazards aren't part of the routine at Riverside.

No. 8 is arguably Riverside's best hole (and the No. 1 handicap). It's a 418-yard par 4, gentle dogleg left with a lake. You've got to push it left pretty good before the water is truly in play, but if you are left (but not in the water) your approach shot is guarded by a huge willow tree. It's an excellent hole.

Overall we had a great experience at Riverside and highly recommend it if you have the ability to finagle yourself an invitation to play there.