

# Course Review: Shield Crest Golf Course

It was Day 2 of Golf Week 2014. We played a quick morning nine at Oak Knoll in Ashland, then sojourned over to Klamath Falls for a mid-afternoon tee time at Shield Crest Golf Course. Not long after the first ball was struck, thunder rumbled to the south. And the wind was coming from the south. By the seventh hole, we frequently saw lightning strikes — we being Don and Pete, plus friends Mitch Nosack and Dave Cadd, along for the week.

Don: “Those are getting pretty close.”

Mitch: “C’mon. What are the odds that we’d actually get struck?”

Don: “A whole lot less if we get off the course.”

The debate ended about 60 seconds later when they finally blew the horn from the clubhouse. We joined another dozen or so golfers for a 45-minute delay, highlighted by a strike on a nearby hillside that started a small fire. But the storm rolled through and we got back on the course.

Such was our experience at Shield Crest, making for a memorable 18 holes of golf. Perhaps the good news is that the lightning storm dominates our memory and hides a bit of the disappointment of a course that could have been so much better.

Two words sum up all of the issues at Shield Crest in a nutshell: absentee ownership. We learned, during the weather delay, that the course is owned by



The summer storm that brought the lightning also brought many a tumbleweed across Shield Crest fairways.



Even as we posed before teeing off, you can see that the weather was looking rather ominous.

a California group that has several courses down south. Shield Crest, one of the younger employees implied, was viewed as sort of the Bastard Child North. There were no logo balls, for example. “Yeah,” said the kid, “they’ve been promising those for a couple of years now.”

The course itself showed neglect as well. There were long brown and cracked stretches right down the middle of many fairways. We don’t play PGA rules on the trip, so if we hit one of those spots we just bumped the ball to some grass. But if you were playing in a tournament, men’s league or whatnot where it was strictly hit it as it lies, you could be penalized severely through no fault of your own.

It was frustrating, because other than some weird cart path routing at times, Shield Crest was a nice layout. The regular tees are green rather than white and measure about 6,300 yards. Blues are a little over 6,600, and the black tips measure just over 7,000. About two-thirds of the holes have sand traps somewhere, there’s a small creek that meanders through the course coming into play on several holes and a pond in play on No. 1 and 18. There are occasional trees, though they don’t come into play very often.

We look forward to returning and playing Shield Crest again, and hope to find logo balls, grassier fairways and staff that don’t appear to be exiled.