



Front Royal Golf Club ~ Skyline Drive

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Warren County, Virginia, and the town of Front Royal have always been synonymous with the Skyline Drive. That’s basically how I was first introduced to the area in the early 1980s. “Oh, that’s where the entrance to the Skyline Drive is,” I was informed. I’m a fast learner and realized soon that the county had other attractions and the one that has kept growing since then is golf. In fact, the number of choices makes this county the Commonwealth’s leader in golf holes per capita. The county now has 108 golf holes, but it was the original first nine built here next to the Shenandoah River that made the biggest impression on my golf game.

Front Royal Golf Club was the first course in Warren County, opened in 1938, and is one of the oldest remaining 9-hole courses in Virginia. Originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the land was donated by William Carson with the course built to his design. The registered Virginia Historic Landmark has been a part of the Shenandoah Valley’s golf landscape for decades with its heydays coming in the 1950s–80s. Several devastating floods and the addition of other golf facilities in the area forced the old “country club” to take a different direction. The club has been owned and operated by the County of Warren since 2006.



Holes 1 & 10 Par 4s



Holes 4 & 13 Par 5s

Front Royal Golf Club has long been known for some of the best putting surfaces in the entire Shenandoah Valley. The Scottish links style layout has 18 different tee boxes which gives the nine holes a different look and a different option of attack by the golfer when playing them as a full eighteen. Playing to a par of 70, the course measures in at just over 6,000 yards

from the tips, and will test all aspects of the game. Holes one and ten, both par 4s require an accurate tee shot to avoid out-of-bounds to the left and a crop of pines and willows to the right. The second shot plays uphill to one of the courses most challenging greens. The second hole is a dogleg left par 4 where finding a flat lie for your approach shot is almost impossible. The twelfth, which is 20 yards longer, along with the second hole play uphill after your drive. I normally take at least one extra club. You are at the highest point of the layout here, and the views are very special, including vistas of “the drive.” Some newly expanded tee boxes have made holes three and twelve, par 3s, much easier to play. Another one of FRGC’s slick greens is featured here sloping from back to front. The fourth and thirteenth

holes at Front Royal, notorious par 5s, contain as much myth and legend as the Loch Ness Monster. A roller coaster fairway ends at what has to be one of the most talked about greens in the region. Descriptions include “It’s like the top of a Volkswagen,” “Basketballs are flatter than this,” “Why did they have to put a cherry on top of this snow cone?” and my favorite, “Is Jimmy Hoffa Buried in there?” You may not like it, but you sure will remember it. The course shifts gears for what locals call the bottom four. The fifth and matching fourteenth are par 4s that play to a green perched 30 feet above the fairway. Holes six and fifteen may share the same green, but play totally different. The former is a straightaway hole, while the latter is a sharp dogleg right. Number seven is one of the great, short par 4s in the valley where I’ve seen every score from aces to eights. The second time through this hole plays as a par 3. Eighth and seventeenth are the holes that bring the river into play. You may not be aware, but the Shenandoah River is among a handful of tributaries that flow south to north. After playing as a dogleg right par 4 the first time, the par 5 on the back side measures just 486 yards, but the tee box is hanging onto a ledge just up from the river. The drive must be threaded through a shoot of trees to the right and the water to the left. A great chance for birdie and even eagle await if you find dry land and avoid the trees. The finishing holes on each side are par 3s that play up hill to another sharply sloping putting surface. Choose the right stick on the tee box and you will be dancing.



Holes 6 & 15 Par 4s

Located a short drive off I-66 and bordering the deepest part of the Shenandoah River, FRGC also features a full service clubhouse, boating, fishing, swimming and a walking trail. Front Royal Golf Club offers a fun and playable tract, and with the other recreational sidebars, offers affordable daily use and membership tariffs. I don’t play the old course as much as I used to, but always still enjoy a big drive along the skyline.

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Holes 7 & 16 Pars 4 & 3