



## The Gauntlet Golf Club ~ Ready, Aim, Fire!

Nick Ciattei



Hole 2 Par 5

Of all the professional sports that we sports gods and goddesses follow, it would be safe to say that golf is considered the least violent of them all. Football and hockey are not for the meek at heart, although if the NFL keeps going down its current road, Tom Brady will soon be wearing a dress. Even baseball and soccer have their physical moments, although I don't consider a soccer "flop" an act of violence.

Golf, on the other hand, is the nice sport. Golfers playing against one another take their hats off and shake hands when they finish and drink beers together after they go to war. The actual battle is the golfer against the course rather than his opponent. In the mid-Atlantic, several courses bring thoughts of combat to mind by the mere mention of their name. The Gauntlet Golf Club in Fredericksburg is one of those battlefields.

The architect, PB Dye, is known for designing challenging and creative golf courses. You have heard the saying, "prepare to use every club in your bag." The Gauntlet fits that bill employing target golf philosophy, undulating bentgrass green complexes, and unique design features. The builder's favorite bumper sticker proclaims, "my other car is a bulldozer." At The Gauntlet you can see where the earth has been moved with towering, sculptured bunkers and modern mounding. Ample zoysia grass fairways provide plenty of playing area, but sometimes it's better to leave the big dog in the bag off the tee. Four sets of tees provide a comfortable range from just less than 5000 yards from the red tees to 6900 from the tips. The focal landmark of The Gauntlet is Curtis Lake, and Dye doesn't waste any time bringing it into play. Dye routes three of the first five holes along the shores of and sometimes over the lake. The first hole is a downhill dogleg left par 4 that favors a slight draw off the tee for prime position. Try to make a good score here because you'll need your armor on to ward off bogey on the second hole. The 493-yard par 5 plays alongside Curtis Lake with a wetland area crossing the fairway just inside 150 yards. The layup area over the marsh is bigger than it looks from the fairway. Pinpoint accuracy is a must on this breathtaking hole where the green sits out on a peninsula. Dye uses this location to demonstrate his target golf theme. The par three third plays to a deep green, so check pin placement. More shoreline



Hole 10 Par 5

adventure awaits on the par 4 fourth. A sharp dogleg left around the lake beckons big hitters to cut the corner. Even those who play it safe have to negotiate several gaping bunkers and a "Dye"abolical three-tiered green. Take a deep breath because you are almost through the toughest stretch of holes at The Gauntlet. The par 5 fifth is a three shot hole that plays with water to your left. A second shot must carry a finger of the lake that crosses the fairway. From there, it's uphill to a large, well-protected green. After the par 3 sixth, a trio of par 4s close out the front nine. The par 4 eighth is nearly as long as a couple of the par 5s at 470 yards but plays downhill after the drive, as does nine. The green on nine is bordered by a small pond to the left.



Hole 18 Par 4

The tenth is one of my favorite holes at The Gauntlet. The inward nine starter is a straight, up-the-tree-chute par 5 that plays longer than suggested. Bunkers border the fairway as well as front the putting surface. By contrast, distance over accuracy is need on the par 4 eleventh where all the trouble looms to the right. The par 3 twelfth is the shortest hole while the par 5 thirteenth is the longest hole on the course. The last par three is fifteen, which plays well over 200 yards. Three here is gold. While holes eleven thru fifteen have a links feel, the three closing par 4s play through a wooded parkland setting. Seventeen is a dogleg left where your second shot plays uphill to The Gauntlet's most intimidating green armed with deep bunkers. Eighteen is a beautiful par 4 that also plays uphill. An extra club on your approach here is always a wise choice to clear Dye's nasty contingent of bunkers that hold court next to the sloping green.

The comprehensive practice facility at The Gauntlet includes approximately 20 tee stations and several target areas on the range. The facility also includes a practice bunker and chipping area. The full service terrace clubhouse has a veranda overlooking the eighteenth green and makes an ideal late afternoon campground to settle bets, bandage any wounds, and discuss tactics for your next war games endeavor at The Gauntlet.

For more information visit [golfgauntlet.com](http://golfgauntlet.com)



Hole 4 Par 4