



Goose Creek Golf Club ~ Playing the Numbers Game

Nick Ciattei

In the game of golf, there are two numbers that are considered “sacred ground” when discussing all-time low scores shot in a round on the PGA Tour — 60 and 59. And yes, 59 was the lowest score ever recorded for a round in a Tour event. Only accomplished five times, it was most recently shot in 2010 by Stuart Appleby at The Greenbrier Classic. In the long history of the tour, 60 has only been shot 25 times. Sacred ground indeed!

In the case of Goose Creek Golf Club in Leesburg, Virginia, the numbers 60 and 59 also represent both tradition and history. This year Goose Creek celebrates its 60th year as one of Washington D.C.’s premier golf venues. The score 59 has some historical significance for Goose Creek as well, as the course record there is by the great Ben Hogan. This unmatched accomplishment is portrayed in a series of timeless photographs that grace the clubhouse.



Although there have been some tweaks to the course over the years, the “Goose” really has not changed as much as the surrounding areas have. The 6410 yard par 71 carries the reputation for being a shotmaker’s layout that requires knowledge and strategy over power. In addition, this longtime favorite is still one of Northern Virginia’s best golfing values. Goose Creek is under the Kemper Sports Management Team, which also handles several regional courses in Maryland including Whiskey Creek Golf Club, The Timbers at Troy Golf Course and Swan Point Yacht and Country Club.



On my most recent visit, I was able to experience some of the nice changes that have taken place at Goose Creek Golf Club. Most notable is that in 2007 popular architect Rick Jacobson was brought in to redesign a couple of the holes. You would think the newer holes would stand out compared to the originals of the 1952 work from designer Bill Gordon. The adjustments on the front side, however, blend in

wonderfully, just like Jacobson planned in the blueprint that hangs in the snack bar. The par 3 third is testament to the seamless quality of the course, playing uphill at nearly 170 yards from the tips. Avoiding Tuscarora Creek, a tributary of Goose Creek, the course’s namesake, and the deep bunkers on the left are your first goals. Successfully handle the two-tiered green and mission accomplished. A series of par 4s from holes four through eight represent an interesting part of



the course in which each hole plays over, around, or next to the Tuscarora. The sixth hole is rated the hardest at Goose Creek playing 411 yards with O.B. down the entire left side. A demanding drive over the creek will set up an uphill second shot. Par here is a keeper. Both seven and eight are short by today’s par 4 standards but are challenging none the less due in part to a couple of Goose Creek’s

signature small pop-up greens. The par 3 ninth is a story in itself, having achieved a reputation as one of the toughest par 3s in the region. Your tee shot plays out of a runway set back in the trees to a narrow sloping green perched onto a hillside. A deep bunker to the right and some vast environmental areas are just part of the quandary on this infamous hole, rated the **THIRD** most difficult at Goose Creek.

The back nine at Goose is longer than the front side, but some added elbow room makes it play somewhat easier. The course’s namesake borders the left side of the three par 4s that open the inward side, with each hole getting progressively harder. The twelfth is the first of two lengthy par 3s on the back, playing 236 yards from the blues. Water down the left in the form of a decorative pond is a mere distraction. Back-to-back par 5s on



holes fourteen and fifteen are the scoring zone on the back side at Goose Creek. The first plays uphill to a two-tier green that slopes hard from back to front. The later hole plays downhill, with hazards crossing the fairway and near the green that demand your complete attention. Sixteen and seventeen are two of my favorites. The par 3 and par 4, respectively, combine both length and beauty. Wispy native grasses surround both greens’ complexes. Goose Creek ends with a short and easy par 4 that sees many birdies as the final post on a scorecard.

What stood out to me at Goose Creek Golf Club was the excellent condition of the course overall, with plush fairways that would make some nearby country clubs blush. Spongy and soft, the bentgrass transformation over the years is really paying back in spades. Another wonderful highlight that I experienced at this fine facility was the speed of play, which has been an ongoing issue with the golf industry lately. Don’t expect that agonizing five hour plus round here. Four hours or less is the norm at Goose Creek. Now, that’s a number every golfer likes to hear! As you would expect, the course stays pretty busy. General Manager Jeffrey Berg and his staff do a first-rate job handling the events, members, and daily fee players that frequent this establishment.

During its 60th anniversary year Goose Creek Golf Club has specials, incentives, and contests running, so make sure to take advantage of them! You may not shoot a round there to equal Ben Hogan’s record of 59, but you are guaranteed innumerable happy times at this challenging, beautiful, and historical course. 

For more information visit goosecreekgolf.com