



Meadowcreek Golf Course ~ New Directions

Nick Ciattei



Hole 2 Par 4

There came a time in my professional career when I knew that I needed to make some adjustments. I had been involved in the radio industry for some 20 years but realized that after many alterations were made to the broadcast business it became no longer my cup of tea. So, at the age of 40, I walked away from the

job I thought I'd be engaged in forever and started a new career in the golf publishing business, proving you're never too old to change. With that being said, I bring you the case of Meadowcreek Golf Course. This year, this wonderful municipal golf course located in the heart of the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, commemorates its 40th anniversary. They, too, decided that to enhance the facility they needed to head in some new directions.

Now that I have your attention, let me say that these revisions are not very radical. The long-time head professional at Meadowcreek, Rion Summers, looks at them as changes that were really just waiting for the right time to be implemented. According to Summers, "We had been looking at flip flopping the back and front nines for quite some time. By doing so, it allows us to control the first tee better having it right next to the clubhouse." He added, "It also has eased up one of the slower areas of the course and improved the pace of play. When we started with two of the first three holes being reachable par 5s, sometimes things got backed up." After my latest loop around Meadowcreek, I can attest that they made a terrific decision. In this writer's judgment the hole-by-hole configuration just flows better.

Meadowcreek Golf Course's wonderful backdrops unfold throughout the layout, which works hand in hand with Pen Park's landscape. Designers



Hole 4 Par 3

Buddy Loving and Bill Love magnificently incorporated the lay of the land using creeks; wetlands; and a delectable array of stately oaks, dogwoods, and cherry trees to create a quite beautiful, very challenging composition. The rolling contour of the land increases the number of uphill approach shots you face, which is one of the noticeable features at Meadowcreek. While most golfers are not big fans of uphill approaches, you will see that many of them work here because ample openings lead into the greens. You can adjust your strategy from the fairways. As a rule, take one or two extra clubs on those uphill pursuits. You can stretch Meadowcreek to 6200 yards from the back tees, and ladies and beginners love the serviceable 4500-yard forward tees. Large Penncross bentgrass greens and Bermuda grass fairways form surfaces ready for play at Meadowcreek.

The front nine at Meadowcreek now opens with the "option" hole, another unique asset here. Longtime members wanted to see the hole returned to its original par 4 status. When Meadowcreek added their practice facility, the hole was changed to a par 3. Well, now you have the option to play it either way, and being the first hole, few problems occur. Whether on your approach or tee shot, you will find a testy downhiller to the green protected on three sides by a large pond. Keep your drive on the par 4 second down the left side to adjust to the fairway slope. Duplicate that on the par 5 third uphill tee shot. The day I played several deer also romped on the par 3 fourth, the shortest hole on the course. The dogleg-left fifth involves overcoming one of the more demanding tee shots over a gorge to an elevated fairway. One of those previously mentioned backdrops spreads out from behind the tee on the tough, par 4 sixth. The hole now stretches to 464 yards, the longest par 4 at Meadowcreek with a



Hole 7 Par 4



Hole 16 Par 4

new blue tee box sitting on the old Waylon House foundation. Seven and eight, both par 4s, furnish legitimate birdie opportunities because of their length. The front nine ends with a short par three to one of the course's flatter putting areas.



Hole 11 Par 4

The back nine at Meadowcreek opens with a strong par 5 that presents a two-tiered split fairway that drops off dramatically to the green. Few holes anywhere captures natural beauty like the par 4 eleventh. It

really exemplifies one of the reasons that this game is so great. While a short par 5, tricky number twelve calls for accurate shot placement over gaining great distance, which makes play longer. The par 4 thirteenth's hazard down the left side necessitates caution.



Hole 17 Par 3

While not long, both fourteen and fifteen, a downhill par 4 and uphill par 3, still make for tough pars. The Rivanna River and Pantops Mountain neighbor Meadowcreek, and both come into view during a spectacular tee shot on the par 4 sixteenth. The river on your left and a large pond in front of you make the par 3 seventeenth one of the harder short holes you will ever play. The closer is an uphill par 4, so remember...take that extra club!

Meadowcreek Golf Course introduces young people in Albemarle and the surrounding counties to the game of golf with their family fun tees on the front nine. Being much shorter, children play for free with a paying adult. Both initiatives address the two barriers of time and money and provide another fun family activity. The course has been named one of the "Best Places to Play" by *Golf Digest* magazine, and residents in that beautiful part of the state will attest that it is worthy of such accolades. Nowhere else will you find affordable golf and a challenging layout right in the heart of the city of Charlottesville. Now with 40 years under their belts, Meadowcreek can make some changes and not worry about a thing! 

For more information visit meadowcreekgolf.com

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