



The pond on No. 18 was shifted left and the fairway now extends directly to the green along the right resulting in improved playability for those wanting to avoid a carry over the water on their approach. The green has also been moved to the left and is perched along the pond edge. (Photo courtesy Mike Kerby)

Shine On

After completing an extensive renovation, Crane Creek Country Club is the jewel overlooking the Treasure Valley

OFTENTIMES WHEN A PERSON TURNS 50 thoughts turn to making some major changes, and as it turns out the same could be said about country clubs.

Crane Creek Country Club, nestled in the Boise foothills, has just completed its multi-million dollar makeover featuring a completely redesigned back nine and vastly improved practice facilities for members and guests alike.

"Several things were behind it," says Jennifer Wilder, the club's membership and marketing director. "The course is over 50 years old and needed to be modernized and improved."

Ben Hay, general manager and chief operating officer, echoed those thoughts, pointing out that much of the golf course work was done to improve specific aspects of the game. But in order to accomplish the final phase of this goal, the entire back nine of the course had to be shut down for over 10 months.

"Our members were very patient," says Ron Rawls, longtime PGA head professional at Crane Creek, "and I think we all agree it was well worth the wait. Just the other day I had a member come off the course and tell me that although he didn't play well, it sure was fun."

Plans for the renovation had been in the works since 2010. The project also included a front nine renovation as well as improvements to other aspects of the property, such as the

construction of two new indoor tennis courts along with an outdoor stadium court, which were completed in 2015.

The 18-hole course, which opened in 1963, plays on each side of a canyon formed by Crane Creek, and over the years has been recognized for its environmental stewardship. In addition to golf and tennis, members and guests can also enjoy a saline pool with poolside dining options, and a fully equipped fitness center.

Undeveloped land was used to create a new par-4 and par-5 on the back nine, and with these two entirely new holes Crane Creek will now play over 7,000 yards and play as a par 72 for the first time.

According to Hay, new tee boxes and approach-shot considerations were also added to the back nine

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makeover. "The greens have also been rebuilt with playability in mind," he says. Hay also points out the 35 newly-designed bunkers will add to the course's challenge.

Playability is a huge plus of the renovation, says Rawls, noting that one example is the revamped 18th hole, where a large pond was moved to eliminate a long forced-carry over water for the average golfer. "Now they have another option," said Rawls, "although their target is still a rather narrow fairway."

Now in his 14th year at Crane Creek, Rawls has been very pleased with the renovation. "It turned out better than I expected," he admitted. "The course was already challenging, so when you make changes you don't just want to make it more difficult. Our goal should be to have a challenging course for the more competitive golfer, but keep it user-friendly for the recreational golfer."

Rawls was all smiles regarding the new practice facility as well. "We've doubled the space from the old driving range," he says, pointing out to the two ranges, separated by a row of trees. "Before, we had to shut down the range when we had classes or clinics. Now we



Dave Goss and Jody Olson, winners of the 2017 Canyon Classic, held just 10 days after the re-opening of Crane Creek.

can still conduct the instructions, and our members will also have the space to warm up and practice. The game is changing, and smart clubs are adapting to those changes."

Of course one of the biggest changes is time, and the lack of it. "I believe the practice facility is important for people looking to join a club," says Rawls. "They may not have enough time for a full round of golf, but in just 30 minutes they will have the opportunity to hit Titleist practice balls to target greens so they can still get a good workout."

Wilder readily agrees.

Many people don't have a lot of free time," she said. "The new facility allows the golfer to have a rewarding experience while their kids are swimming or just before they come in to dine."

Crane Creek showcased its new look in mid-July during its annual Canyon Classic, featuring 120 players in its yearly member-guest tournament, and the feedback was very positive.

"The players were impressed with the layout of the new back nine," Hay said. "They thought the views were spectacular and liked how peaceful and quiet it was. They also liked the different hole placements on the new greens, and the overall condition of the course, especially since it only recently re-opened. I think it's safe to say the renovation exceeded their expectations."

Hay then paused for a moment, looking around the grounds of the gorgeous new facility on a perfect summer afternoon, and reflected on the multi-year project. "It was just amazing to see this vision come to fruition. It's a credit to the members and the board. We're all very ready to enjoy it!"

– Rob Lundgren



The new property at Crane Creek has afforded the opportunity to introduce two entirely new golf holes on the course – numbers 14 and 15. The 14th (shown) is a mid-length par-4 that runs up the east side of the isolated valley. Seven tee boxes can extend the hole out to 444 yards from the tees, and down to 290 from the front.



No. 15 is now exactly what the course did not have before the renovation – a long, true three-shot par-5. Stretching to 600 yards on any given day, the hole plays considerably downhill, but often into the wind. (Photos courtesy Druzisky Golf Design)