

Stonybrook Golf Club Member Tribute

I am now in my 12th year of membership and continue to enjoy playing the course and continue to find it challenging. As a beginning golfer in 1997 the course offered me the best combination of features needed to learn how to play golf. The key elements were ease of access (no tee times, close to my location and a casual atmosphere), unrushed play and reasonable cost.

With 18 holes compressed into 3600 yards the course offers a 2/1 advantage of shot making per distance walked and time expended. In summary, Stonybrook is the best golf course I have found for those wanting to learn the skills required to score low on any golf course.

After playing the course over 100 times per year for 12 years one might expect to become bored. I find every round challenging because the course is narrow, with large mature trees, small greens, difficult doglegs, streams crossings and sand traps. I always find it difficult to avoid boggies even when shooting a par round.

Comparing Stonybrook to a typical 6500+ yard course the main difference is 12 tee shots with driver. The math is simple; Stonybrook Golf Course is missing 3000 yards of tee shots. Those strokes can be had with ease on any driving range or in the driving area at Stonybrook.

The course has several interesting holes. Number 1 is a 225-yard par three with trees along the entire left side and with trees to the right starting at 140 yards, a stream at 160 yards with a receptive green protected by two sand traps. The prudent approach is to lay up to 140 yards leaving an 85-yard pitch to the green. Moving on to number 2 after playing for a 4 on number 1 is smart course management.

To compensate for the challenge of 1, number 2 is a drivable par 4 with an adequate size green requiring a 180 yards drive. Number 2 offers a chance to make 3 and finish 1&2 at net par.

Moving on to number 4, it is a drivable par 4 if one is skilled enough to pull off a blind uphill 200+ yard drive while drawing (right hand golfer reference) the ball about 30 yards to a small green. In all the rounds I have played I have seen it done three times so the best tactic is to play the hole as intended. Lay up to the visible fairway and pitch to the two tiered green with par being a good score.

Moving on to number 5 the golfer is presented with a beautiful golf hole, a down hill par three that measures 220 from the back tees. While the view is outstanding the shot presents a most difficult challenge. The green is small and slopes away to the right with big trouble long. The opening in front is small and the fairway slopes right causing balls landing short right to be funneled into a sand trap. The safe shot is close to or in the sand trap guarding the left side. Shots just short of the green and right of the left sand trap offer the best chance to keep the ball on the green. High shorts landing on the green run a strong risk of bouncing off which assures a 4 or worse.

In between the more difficult holes Stony Brook has 8 par 3 holes that vary in length from 68 yards to 145 yards. They offer the beginner a chance for easier par making and the more experienced the practice needed to develop accurate shots to the green that are so critical to shooting low on any course.

I could tell you more about the remaining holes that all have their own unique character and challenges but best to come out and see the course for yourself.

Mike Perkins