

The Pride Of St. Charles



Pottawatomie Golf Course

845 N. Second Avenue
St. Charles, IL 60174
630-584-8356

www.stcparks.org

Nine Hole Rates:

Mon – Fri \$18 (walking)
\$15 (senior/junior)

Weekends \$20 (walking)
\$4 discount for replay.

The Linkrat:

Back in the late 1980s, I remember hearing one of my father's friends talk about a Robert Trent Jones golf course that has an island green. I recall scraping a couple buddies and a few bucks together to go

play it. Since that round, Pottawatomie Golf Course has been one of my favorite courses. I recall playing as a broke college student and dunking two golf balls on the island hole, then asking my partners for a loaner to get through the round. They gave me a yellow range ball the rest of the day. I recall my father declaring that the first hole, a huge sweeping dogleg right, was the greatest hole he had ever played. He wasn't giving props to the RTJ. His ever-present slice always put him in the fairway while my drive usually went through the fairway and into trees. Golf memories have been stockpiling at Pottawatomie since 1939 when RTJ's little course on the Fox River opened for play.

While Pottawatomie is a park district course, located in downtown St. Charles, and it is usually packed with golfers; however, do not expect a beaten path through the green. Superintendent Denise Gillett-Parchert maintains the course to a surprising standard. The course resembles the park that surrounds her. You'll find lush turf, speedy greens, and beautiful landscaping. It is obvious that Pottawatomie GC is a source of pride in this community.

The course was recently ranked 15th by *GolfWorld* magazine in the publication's "Best Nine-Hole Golf Course in America." At just over 3,000 yards, it may be a pushover for some golfers, but it is not a course looking to hold a PGA Tour event, or overwhelm players.



Hole 3

This is a course where you learn to play the game and continue to enjoy it in your senior years. This is a course where the game and its traditions are handed down from generation to generation. Yeah, it grows the game.

The course offers everything most players need to enjoy a round of golf. You can slide in for a quick nine-hole loop, or play it twice. Time seems to be your friend with nine-hole loops taking less than two hours. The convenient routing is a walker's delight, and also promotes faster play. Gillett-Parchert shared that 75-80% of the players at Pottawatomie walk the course. We like that.

If you need a signature hole, then you have a few options. The aforementioned 3rd hole has RTJ's first island green. Then there is the

incredible green complex at the 197-yard 7th hole. But the closing hole is the one that ranks at the top of my list. I have never had a birdie putt on this 420-yarder, but I have had a few pars that kept the change in my pockets.

Do yourself a favor, take your kids to Pottawatomie, and bring the grandparents, too. It may not have a grand clubhouse, or a practice facility, but it does have charm. And that is what brings me back.

Courtesy 8

Course 8

Value 10

Lefty:

Pottawatomie Golf Course is a gem located along the Fox River. This course has stood

GOLFChicago's regulars take their value-o-meter on the road to some of Illinois' finest daily fee courses. Our goal is to introduce, or re-introduce, our readers to muni-rific gems and daily-fee treasures.

How We Rate 'Em

Course

Toss out practice facilities, the clubhouse, and even GPS. We are looking at the track and its challenges. We understand that most courses have all the bells and whistles to keep you busy pre- and post-round, but this score is about the course.

Courtesies

We look at pace of play, walking policies, friendly staff, hotdog at the turn, and even the little tings like cold water on the course. A courses service can chili dip our time, or springboard our experience. The heavier the green fee, the more we expect.

Value Rating

Is a frozen pizza worth the four bucks on the price tag? Is an authentic Chicago-style pizza worth twice as much as your local carryout joint? If a course scores a 6, then that is a solid score for a track that costs under \$40. If we give a course an eight, then be prepared to savor it like a Chicago-style pizza.

Our Secret Agents

The Linkrat: This rodent is always sniffing for a great track with a reasonable green fee. He plays to a 10-ish handicap, which is a reflection of him coaching little league instead of golfing more often. He is the big hitter of our team

Lefty: Plays the most golf of the regular gang. His handicap is 7, but when his game is on fire, he is a birdie machine. Lefty's short game is tight, and so are his approach shots



Hole 8

the test of time. It has survived golf club technology and continues to challenge golfers. It had been several years since my last visit to Pottawatomie GC, but it was like putting on a favorite pair of shoes. It feels comfortable with every step.

When I arrived at the course, it was refreshing to see the variety of players waiting to tee off. Juniors, a group of ladies, a high school golf team, and a pack of seasoned old-timers surrounded me. I had to smile walking through the collection of golfers. All of them were walking, which I love to see. This is a course that must be experienced pushing a cart or carrying your sticks. Call it green, or environmentally friendly, but it is pure golf to me.

The elevation changes are subtle and really help you with sight lines as you navigate the doglegs. There are also pleasant surprises. Hole 3 is the island hole and can wreak havoc

on the card. Be sure to check your distance to the elbow or you can blow through the fairway and turn this signature hole into a double bogey blunder. Smart play is an iron to the center of the fairway and then a cheek-clenching approach shot to the island green with a short iron.

I am not sure if my partner saw something in the adjacent fairway, but on hole 6 he bombed a ball to the tee boxes of hole 5. Maybe he wanted to up the challenge meter and see if he could scrape home a par from a wayward fairway. Well, on hole 6 he managed to do just that. And that may be the reason this course has had such a lasting appeal for Fox Valley golfers. If you are creative, old man par can be matched.

Hole 9 is another favorite that is not for the faint of heart. Play your tee ball at the far right edge of the fairway. Claim a par here

and you may get some applause from the first tee box. A par here entitles you to post-round bragging rights.

Kudos to the park district for bringing in adult beverages and a new patio that gives this gem a 19th hole, or would that be 10th hole?

My scores for Pottawatomie may seem a little high for some of you bag-tag braggers. I justify these numbers because they have a course that truly grows the game. They also have one of my favorite logos. Don't ever change it! Long live the chief.

Do yourself a favor and check out the old-time photos of the course back in the day and through the years—it's great to see the maturity of the track that is embraced by the locals and now is one of *GOLFChicago's* Best Buys.

Courtesy 8
Course 7
Value 8