

Enjoyable Round of Golf down by the Creek

Innisfil Creek Golf Club By Andrew Hind

Golf is a game. It should be fun.

Sometimes it's hard to remember that when you're driving balls into water hazards, teeing off from a clubhouse full of onlookers just waiting to jeer a miss-hit, or operating under a stuffy atmosphere better suited to the aristocracy than to Joe-golfer.

Thankfully, Tom Torkos, owner of Innisfil Creek Golf Club, understands these concerns all too well. Better, he set out to correct them.

"Golf is supposed to be fun, an enjoyable day out with a few friends," he says with obvious passion, both for the game and his role in promoting it. "We want to remind people of that. We want fathers to bring their sons and daughters out for a round, we want couples to experience the game together, and we want people to enjoy themselves."

"That's our goal with Innisfil Creek and it's directed all the changes we've made over the past year."

When Torkos acquired Innisfil Creek two years ago the fairways were poorly designed, the greens didn't run true, there was no clubhouse to speak of.

The effort to revitalize the course has taken the better of part of two seasons. "Changes are never fully complete at a golf course---you are always making small changes, tinkering with things---but 80% of the big changes are done," says Mr. Torkos.

Changes include the planting of more than 230 evergreen trees, the widening of fairways and removal of numerous mounds, an altered course layout, and a renovated clubhouse with a full-service kitchen.

The result is a course that is far more enjoyable to play.

Innisfil Creek is flat and of modest yardage, which makes it player friendly, but it's unassuming appearance can sometimes make you forget that it also provides a stern test. Instead of radical changes in elevation or excessive sand traps, both of which can frustrate players of average skill, Innisfil Creek relies on narrow and winding fairways, along with strategically placed ponds, to make the experience challenging.

The intent was a course that everyone could play, and which would appeal to a broader spectrum than would a championship length golf course. Things begin quietly enough with several holes designed to slowly warm you up. Its great not having to tee-off in front of the clubhouse; most casual golfers find that extremely intimidating.

Just when you get a bit cocky, you arrive at the heart of the course. Rolling fairways, 14 ponds, and the weaving presence of the stream for which the club is named---it's not as easy as it looks from the highway. No one hole stands out; instead, it's a constant challenge that tests your consistency over 18-holes.

The end-result is an exhilarating and thoroughly enjoyable day.

But work never stops. A new clubhouse, Scottish-in feel to keep with the traditional links style course, is in the planning stages.

Until then, Mr. Torkos continues to tweak the existing 18-holes and the atmosphere itself, striving to create that sense of excitement that initially got him into the game.

"It's all about enjoying yourself," he says proudly. "I want the course to be *fun*. That's our mission."

In my opinion, its mission accomplished.

Just the Facts

Phone: 705-458-4653 or 1-888-486-0002

Web: www.innisfilcreekgolf.com

Location: Corner of Highway 400 and Highway 89.

Green Fees: 18 holes Monday-Friday \$30 (\$20 after 6pm). Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays \$35 (\$25 after 6 pm).