

Pine Needles
Pinehurst, North Carolina

Architect: Donald Ross (1928)

Tees	Par	Yards	Rating	Slope
Ross	71	6436	70.6	126
Regular	71	6985	68.5	120

Overview:

This is a real Donald Ross gem built in 1926 as the sister to Mid-Pines that opened about 5 years earlier. This part of the resort has a casual feel, 74 rooms in chalet style lodges. The course was renovated in 2004 in preparation for the third U.S. Women's Open in 2007. The work was done by a Ross aficionado John Fought and he restored it back to the specifications of the original Ross design. So you are playing a true Donald Ross experience here.

Play from the Ross tees, this is where the women played their championship-it is very playable but challenging as well. The course is routed through the pine trees that clearly define every hole and play into the strategy of positioning of your tee balls. The course has a good deal of up and down so you will be recalibrating irons all day. All the driving areas are generous so the big dog should eat until he is plump. It's only shortcoming is that it's par fives lack length, but the finesse aspect of the par fours and threes make up for this. The par fours in the middle of each nine will get your attention.

Green complexes are very Ross-esque-they require sound forethought before hitting your approaches and pitches. The major design feature is that all greens are exceedingly accessible. The course is not over bunkered at all. Typical hole has two maybe three greenside bunkers but all have some direct access along the front. The greens have some of the crowning you see on #2, many pitching areas and swales off the sides and back, and a unique design feature I call "saucering". Most of the greens have a six foot collar that surrounds the green and actually feeds balls back onto the putting surface rather than throwing them off. This is neat and presents some interesting pitching options around the greens.

Women's Open was here in 1996, 2001, and 2007. The quality of the winners lets you know how good of a track this is. Annika Sorenstam, Karrie Webb, and Cristie Kerr won here respectively. For Kerr it was probably here breakout moment as a professional. This is a top flight venue that is worth the price of admission and more.

#1 Par 5 482/462

Unpretentious nice opening hole. Drive to a landing area over the hill above you-keep it left center. Now layup to the left side at 100 for an access angle to the green through the opening. Bunkering around this green is very typical of what you will see all day. Green is pretty long and narrow and accepts the high shot well. You should be even after one.

#2 Par 4 438/419

Long tough par four that will get your attention. Drive to center of the large landing area to where you will be looking down the hill to a very accessible green below. You could drive an armada of tanks through the opening in the front of this green. Pretty big putting surface so it is important to pitch in the area of the pin.

#3 Par 3 135/126

This is a beautiful signature par three. Short iron pitch across the lily pond to a steeply banked green coming at you. The bunker on the right has a nice mound in the front left to make missing there an adventure. The slope on this green from back to front means that three putts are looming if you end up above the hole.

#4 Par 4 382/342

One of many uphill middle distance par fours you will play today-may not be long but they have their challenges. Drive across the hazard on the left side-this is the longest carry of the hazard. Now you are looking uphill at a green that has smiley face bunkering on three sides. Green is pretty flat once you get on top.

#5 Par 3 181/171

This is the highest point on the property so make note that the wind can play havoc if it is present on this hole. Very similar to #16 on the North. 180 club to a large elevated green with the saucering I described above. You are likely to have a long putt here because shots to the green seem to meander once on the ground.

#6 Par 4 411/378

First of two really hard par fours in a row. Drive to left center over the hill-driving area is very generous but shots to the green from the right are obscured by a large tree overhanging the fairway on that side. Big bunker on the left of the green is not a bad place to miss.

#7 Par 4 407/348

Comes back parallel to the last and is a similar length. Has a hint of the fourth at Pinehurst #2 in the driving area. Drive it long to center and then you are shooting at a crowned target just below you with a long iron. This is a tough one to negotiate a par.

#8 Par 4 353/324

Shortish sliding dogear right. Hit a hard slider at left edge of the fairway. From here you have a short club at a flat big green. Access from the right side of the fairway is obscured by trees and a big yawning bunker in front on the right.

#9 Par 4 371/351

Typical Ross hole to finish the inward half. Drive to center and then the fun begins. Green is flanked by bunkers and it has a sizable depression about 25 yards short of the green on the right. This means access to the green needs to carry this or work around it with a fade on the approach.

#10 Par 5 482/460

First of two five pars on the back that need another 50 yards that is not there. They built up the crown of the big bunker on the corner to heighten the risk of trying to cut the hole off. Hit driver at the 200 yard pole up the hill in front of you. Now look around the corner to a very accessible green. Should have a birdie opp here.

#11 Par 4 369/311

Another medium length uphill par four. Drive to left center for best angle at the green-again another big tree cuts off access on the right. You need to elevate your approach to a green slightly above.

#12 Par 4 350/312

Short one with a confined driving area on the right with two severe fairway bunkers. Drive to left center over the hill and then look at a classic Ross green set. Two bunkers sent into the left hill below the green and the green sits diagonal from 5 to 11 slightly raised from the fairway in front.

#13 Par 3 181/162

Very visual downhill par three. This green, not particularly large but deep, is flanked by bunkers and swales. Beautiful shot to watch fall as it travels from the precipice tee to the green below.

#14 Par 4 402/487

They shortened this and made it into a par four in the renovation. Drive to left center-stay off the corner-big bunkers there. Wide angle still leaves a mid iron to a green surrounded by sand and swales.

#15 Par 5 485/469

This became a par five but it still lacks distance. Laura Davies long and straight. OB both sides. Drive to center and then take a poke at it if you think you can get there. The fairway has a small swale breaking it between 35 and 25 yards. Green is crowned and has some pitch in it.

#16 Par 3 169/161

Challenging hole for an on level par three. Hit a middle iron to a slightly raised green. Bunkers on the flanks and chipping area long and right. This is a difficult par.

#17 Par 4 432/414

First of two great finishing holes. Sharp dogear left that wants a drive to center to clear the corner. Now a long iron in to a difficult green. Bunkerson both sides from 100 yards and in. Very cool look.

#18 Par 4 406/497

A lovely finishing hole-no easy par if the bet is still on the line. Drive to right center to top of hill and get a good look at smallish green below. Green is flanked on two sides by bunkers. You can feel the crowd presence created by the amphitheater effect around the green.