

Golf Course Review: Conwy Golf Club

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What first strikes you at Conwy, as with the other top courses dotted along the North Wales coastline, is the warmth of the reception. This may be one of the country's finest links, but it is also a club for the community, and while visitors are still far too often greeted by an aloofness bordering on hostility at some of the best courses across the border, nothing could be further from the truth at this charming seaside gem.

With the Conwy Mountains providing the backdrop, and glorious views across the estuary to Llandudno and the Isle of Anglesey beyond, few courses are blessed with such a spectacular setting.

The stunning scene is matched by the quality of the course, which after a week playing some of the finest layouts in North Wales, ranks, at least in my humble opinion, at the very top of the pile.

Indeed, playing on a glorious summer day, with almost no tangible wind (I've been reliably informed that this is somewhat of a rare occurrence), there's few places you'd rather be golfing.

The only Open Championship qualifying venue in Wales, the historic links is in superb condition, and with its plethora of pot bunkers and gorse-strewn back nine, makes for a stern test, particularly when the wind is blowing. The elements are a constant threat, and tipping out at a lengthy 6,910 yards, it's little surprise that the SS is three more than the par of 72.

Conwy has hosted numerous prestigious championships, at all levels of the game, and will welcome the best female amateurs in 2020 for the transatlantic Curtis Cup.

The original course was laid in 1869, but following substantial damage sustained during the First World War bears little resemblance to today's layout, which is the handiwork of Frank Pennick.

The front nine is plotted along the estuary, with the standout hole being the par-4 seventh. Golfers begin from an elevated tee, to a bunker-littered fairway which runs parallel to the beach, before playing to a bowl-shaped green nestled on the shoreline.

While the thick rough and numerous bunkers pose a challenging test over the opening holes, it is the back nine that will truly penalise the wayward golfer, particularly over the gorse-lined final three holes, which have often proved deadly to a good scorecard.

Unusually there are three par-5's in the space of five holes from the tenth, although it is the two fantastic par-3's on the closing half that really stand out.

A flat course with everything laid out to see in front of you, a good score is certainly achievable for those who keep the ball on the short stuff.

Within easy reach of Manchester and Liverpool, excellent drainage makes Conwy a great choice all-year round.

A truly magnificent links course.

www.conwygolfclub.com

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