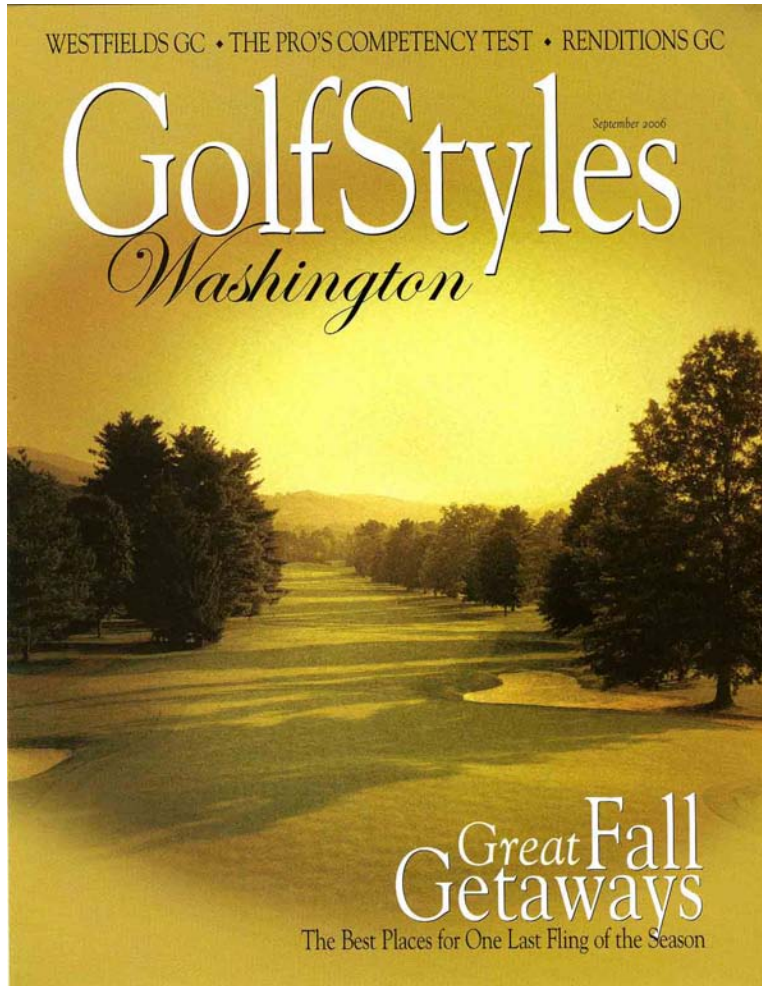


Golf Styles Washington October, 2006



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Westfield Golf Club



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Private Stature, Public Pleasure

The pressure to excel has to be immense on a golf facility that rolls across the historically rich landscape of the Virginia Piedmont. According to the late historian C. Vann Woodward, this part of our nation has "soaked up more of the blood, sweat, and tears of American history than any other part of the country." Thoughts of "laying up" here are usually second-guessed.

Still, in the mid-1990s, Northern Virginia has been witness to an explosion of upscale golf courses. Resorts, counties and developers found out that by adding a golf course you could enhance the value of most any property. Since then, some of those golf courses have thrived while others have experienced their problems.

Westfields Golf Club in Clifton, Virginia, has thrived. Part of the reason for this is the Fred Couples signature that was put on it. But the larger reason for its success is that it has never wavered from its original philosophy to serve as an upscale daily-fee golf course all the while making



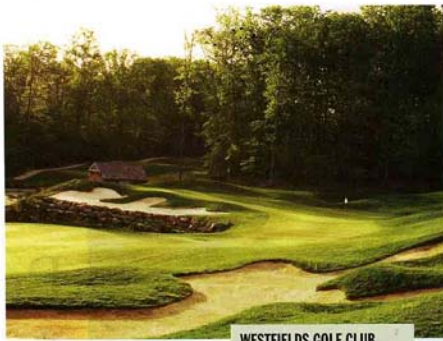
Let It Rain: Blue Mash and Waverly Woods Are There for You

When the big storms hit in June this year, the folks at Blue Mash and Waverly Woods expected the usual — lots of phone calls from people looking to play somewhere. As always, both courses could accommodate, and that is when the owners realized something: neither course has ever been closed due to rain. “Except for when it is actually raining, rain, especially heavy rain, is not too bad for our business,” says owner Joe Hills. “People might not want to play the day that it rains, but the next day we often get about 50 percent to 75 percent extra business from people looking for a place to play. It works out well for everyone — except maybe our superintendents. They would probably like the break, but the courses drain too darn well to keep closed.” So if it’s raining golfers, don’t despair. Blue Mash and Waverly will come through for you.

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WITHIN DRIVING RANGE



golfers feel like they are playing a private club.

Opened in 1998, this wonderful design by Couples and Gene Bates immediately earned well-deserved rave reviews. No longer a spring chicken, the course has developed into a mature upscale matron that constantly delivers a wonderful product to members, daily-fee players and corporate outings. Under the direction of general manager Jason Paul, Westfields provides a country club atmosphere.

“That is our goal from the moment the golfer arrives,” Paul says. “We want them to feel like Westfields is their private golf course.”

Since it is also associated with Westfields Conference Center, a Marriott property just a few miles up Route 28, the attention to detail is apparent from the time you arrive.

Although you’re not far from civilization, the course feels like it is out in the country. As Paul puts it, “With only one home directly next to the course, there are few outside

WESTFIELDS GOLF CLUB

Clifton, Virginia; 703.631.3300
westfieldsgolf.com

Par 72	6,897 yards	72.7	136
Par 72	6,316 yards	70.7	130
Par 72	5,322 yards	69.8	127
Par 72	4,597 yards	65.9	114

Rates: \$84 weekday (Monday to Thursday); \$104 weekend (Friday to Sunday); twilight rates and times fluctuate throughout the year.

Directions: Rt. 28 south past Dulles International Airport, travel approximately 15 miles; left onto Compton Road; go two miles; right onto Balmoral Greens Avenue; club is 1/4 mile on the left.

disruptions. The trees buffer you from the rest of the world to give you a sense of privacy.”

Since opening, only a few minor changes have been made. A couple of bunkers and tee boxes have been rebuilt.

“That is a testament to the wonderful original design of the golf course,” Paul says. “We have made changes in other areas like customer service, the clubhouse, driving range and pace of play.”

The driving range now includes a

WITHIN DRIVING RANGE

golf analysis area where golfers can be tested and fitted for clubs. Changes to the clubhouse include additional meeting space so companies can conduct meetings in the morning and play golf in the afternoon. Of course, Marriott hotels have always been known for their food and the Westfields restaurant and snack bar are tied to that tradition.

As for the course, part owner and design consultant Fred Couples and lead designer Gene Bates teamed up and put the historical land to good use. Carved through majestic beech and oak trees, Westfields is a course that is fun and accessible for the novice while still challenging and thought provoking for the experienced player. It does not have the drastic changes in elevation characteristic of some courses in the Virginia Piedmont. Still, one of Couples' original assessments was, "There will be enough elevation changes, water hazards, sand traps and other obstacles to keep you on your toes all around the course."

One of the beautiful things about the course is the way it flows. The par 3s are widely separated on both nines and the par 4s are a nice mix of short yet challenging and long and difficult golf holes. Like Couples' relaxed style, this course is open enough where you can use your driver on most holes. Par is 71 at Westfields because one of its long par 4s was supposed to be a par 5. When Couples saw the hole, he decided it was too short. He didn't want the low handicappers to be able to reach one of his par 5s with an iron. That means there are three serious par 4s on the front side.

The dazzling par-3 third is still the signature hole. At 223 yards

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from the "Boom-Boom" tees with a rock-walled pond fronting the large, L-shaped green, it is certainly the most memorable hole on the course.

One of the things that makes Westfields great is that there are plenty of other holes that you might remember - either for the thrilling eagle putt you had or the big number you made while thinking you could make eagle.

The bunkering on No. 8 is dramatic and provides a good reason for this hole being rated the hardest on the scorecard. Like the way Couples plays golf, length and accuracy are important.

No. 13 includes a Civil War gravestone (you get a free drop if your ball lands in it) which may foreshadow what will happen if you miss the green. A deep bunker in

front, a severe drop-off to the right or a shot too long could spell death. Once on the green, be wary of some "interesting" pin positions. Being on the wrong level makes three-putting a distinct possibility.

No. 14 is a drivable par 4, listed at only 285 yards from the tips. Hit it like Couples, long and straight, and it's an easy hole. Miss it and you will pay the price.

From the tee, the visually difficult par-4 No. 16 looks like there isn't any landing area. Water runs down the left side to a pond in front of the green making accuracy a premium.

One of the biggest improvements to the course is the pace of play. Although it was never much of a problem, management has created even wider intervals on the tee times to help separate groups.

Careful monitoring of play also keeps pace moving at a quick but relaxed pace. Like at most private golf courses in the area, rounds in the middle of the summer were averaging just over four hours at Westfields.

As someone who has seen the course grow, Paul is proud of the job done by the team at Westfields.

"We put a lot of work in making each time you come to Westfields something special," he says.

As one regular player at Westfields said, "To me, it is like belonging to a private golf course without the large initiation fee and monthly dues."

In the heart of Northern Virginia's Piedmont, that's one statement that won't be second-guessed. *



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