

Airway Meadows maturing nicely

Gansevoort course among this area's top public tracts

By Gordon Woodworth
 Chronicle News Editor

Open since 1999, Airway Meadows Golf Course in Gansevoort is a unique 18-hole facility that is coming into its own.

The course, owned, operated and conceived by Joan and James Heber, features its own airstrip, rolling terrain, great conditions and a wide variety of challenging holes that place it among the top public golf courses in the area.

The **Gordon Goes Golfing** crew made a visit to the course last Sunday. Despite getting more than four inches of rain the day before, the course was in terrific shape, with fast, testy and true greens and very little standing water. One thing that keeps the course in such nice shape, besides the work of the superintendent **Rob Fosmer** and his crew, is a 90-degree-only rule for carts during normal conditions.

On this day, carts had to stay on the paths that skirt each fairway, which was fine and allowed the course to remain playable. And the course was getting plenty of play when we were there.

My foursome was my Dad, **Bob Kelly** and **Marty Breen**. Bob worked with my Dad for many years at Oliver W. Winch Junior High School in South Glens Falls, while Marty is a longtime South Glens Falls resident who plays golf quite a bit with Dad and Bob. At school, Dad was the principal while Bob was the assistant principal in charge of discipline.

One time, I was watching a fight between two classmates in the gym, refereed by Bob, at lunchtime. Bob saw me, and, as I reminded him, made me do pushups for the rest of the period.

On the third tee, I discovered I wasn't alone in enduring this punishment. Old friend Mike Kirk was in the group ahead of us, and when we kiddingly complained about the pace of play, Mike asked Bob if he was going to make him do pushups again.

"I think I only did about 10,000," Mike said. "I'm still sore!"

Anyway, the course is 6,000 yards



Bob Kelly, left, and Marty Breen, center, joined Gordon's father, Don Woodworth, in the **Gordon Goes Golfing** foursome at Airway Meadows in Gansevoort. The seven-year-old course is maturing into one of the top public courses in the area.

from the white tees, and places a premium on shotmaking. The first hole is a 517-yard par 5 that doglegs to the left. It's the number-3 handicap hole, so make sure you're warmed up! The second hole is one of two that goes along the airstrip. A sign on the tee warns golfers not to tee off while a plane is on the runway. (Skydivers often descend onto the strip, but not on this day, which was overcast).

On the third hole, a nice par 3 over a gulley, I pulled my tee shot to the left, where it bounced off the road that runs by the course and kicked back into play. I still made a 5, but was glad for the bounce.

The fourth hole is what should be an easy par-4, though I muffed two off the tee and then put one in the small pond that fronts the green.

The eighth hole is one of the more interesting on the course, a par-5 along the other side of the airstrip that requires a good drive and a well-placed second shot before a difficult approach over a valley to a narrow green. I parred it for my first par of the day, and then finished up the front nine with a par on the par-3 ninth.

Like the front side, the back nine begins with a testy par 5 that features a fairway that slopes hard left to right. Play along the tree line on the left and you should be okay. The 11th is a par-3, all carry, over that same gulley to another narrow green. The yardage was 150 yards, but it plays longer, because if you're just a bit short,

you'll be chipping up onto the green.

The 12th hole starts my favorite stretch of six holes on the upper, wooded part of the course. The 13th hole is a short but challenging par 4 that requires a precise tee-ball with woods on the left and trees on the right. The 14th runs parallel to the 13th and comes back up the hill.

The finishing hole, a par-5 requiring a drive over another valley, is another great hole, and on this day saw me get hit square in the back by an errant shot by Marty that caromed off a tree I thought I was hiding behind before leaving a nice welt in the middle of my back.

"Marty's a little irritated," Bob said. "If that ball didn't hit you, he would have been right in the fairway!"

None the worse for wear, I followed up a good drive with a nice three-wood that left me a short chip onto the green.

Bob was low man for the day, carding an 85. He is also a ranger on the course, so he knows his way around Airway Meadows. (That's another good feature of the course, rangers that keep things moving). Dad finished with an 88, while



I had a 93 (44 on the back) and Marty finished with a 107.

Greens fees are \$30 on the weekends, \$25 weekdays, with carts \$13 per person. There is also a senior rate on Mondays and Tuesday, \$27 with a cart Info: 792-4144 or www.airwaymeadowsgolf.com.