

Congressional Country Club (Blue Course)

ARCHITECT(S): Devereux Emmet (1922), Donald Ross (1930), Robert Trent Jones (1960) and Rees Jones (1988)

LOCATION: Bethesda, Maryland, USA

PGA 2000 version: January - June 2008 by Dale Somerfelt

SCORECARD:

Tee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Par	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	35	3	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	35	70
Black	402	233	456	429	407	477	174	356	605	3539	218	478	415	187	454	439	579	437	466	3673	7212
Blue	386	218	424	425	388	456	155	351	535	3338	203	449	396	171	418	420	541	421	442	3461	6799
White	362	183	392	396	377	443	132	337	516	3138	193	419	366	155	393	401	525	398	395	3245	6383
Red	333	155	369	380	360	376	113	323	506	2915	183	377	325	135	340	383	453	378	387	2961	5876

The Course

Congressional hired Devereux Emmet in 1922 for \$150 per month. The original plans called for 36 holes, but Emmet only built eighteen. The layout included two par-sixes, both the opening holes of each nine, but were changed during the Donald Ross re-design in 1930. Though little known, seven of Emmet's courses have hosted national championships. Emmet helped Charles Blair Macdonald during his work on the National Golf Links of America by measuring some of the more famous British golf holes as models for Macdonald's work on the NGL. At Congressional, his work remains as the front nine of the Blue course and the last four holes of the neighboring Gold course. Donald Ross, fresh from his work on Pinehurst No. 2, eliminated the par-sixes, built new tees and reshaped some of the greens and bunkers.

After the club emerged from bankruptcy and recovered from an invasion by the OSS (the predecessor of the CIA) for training purposes, Robert Trent Jones was hired to design a "third" nine, now known as the back nine of the Blue course. Following the 1959 U.S. Women's Amateur, Jones was asked to return to strengthen the weak front nine in hopes of landing a U.S. Open. He added a pond at number six, re-routed several fairways, built new tee boxes and added length to turn "Big Blue" into a course with championship distance. The club was rewarded with the 1964 Open, won by Ken Venturi. In 1976 Dave Stockton won the PGA Championship over Ray Floyd and Don January. The fourth nine was opened in 1979 and was designed by Tom and George Fazio. In 1980 the PGA's Kemper Open was relocated to Congressional from Quail Hollow in North Carolina. Finally in 1997, Ernie Els won the U.S. Open.

The quiriness of the course was the finishing par three. In recent times the club redesigned the course to instead finish with the former par-four seventeenth. The eighteenth green was removed and a new one built on the opposite side of the lake to become the tenth.

Though now the host to Tiger Wood's AT & T National, the Blue course has hosted the U.S. Open in 1964 and 1997 and PGA Championship in 1976. It is due once again to have the honor in 2011 of the U.S. Open.

Architect's Notes

This, in my opinion, is just a good solid course that isn't "tricked-up". It fits the lay of the land very well and deserves the honor of being one of the best courses in America. In it's history, it has been revised by some of the best architects, including Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones and his son, Rees. I had the privilege of visiting the course in the late nineties when my brother-in-law was still living in the DC area. I only got as far as the path overlooking the then seventeenth green and par three eighteenth, but was inspired back then. Since then they have renumbered the back nine and changed the previous par three eighteenth hole to be the new number ten, finishing off with the former seventeenth hole. My resources for the course include "The Washington Golf Monthly" and the USGA Official Magazine for the 1997 U.S. Open. I used Google Earth and the Links rendition for the layout and do the elevations.

Thanks and giving credit where credit is due:

I'd like to thank all those who made all the great libraries that I used. They really made the whole job a lot easier.

If you have any biting comments or suggestions, please feel free to e-mail me, Dale Somerfelt at dsomerfelt@neo.rr.net

Last but not least, this PGA 2000 version of Congressional is originally copyrighted ©2008 by myself. I ask that no portion be modified without our knowledge and that it is not used for personal monetary gain by anyone, living or not.

*Dale Somerfelt
June 2008*

Other courses from Dale, done in JN5 & GBC (*where noted):

Pinery Narrows - *Chinook North - Mentor Marsh #1 – TPC at Mt. St. Helens – *TPC at Waterloo – *TPC at Heron Bay - *English Turn - *TPC at Southwind - *Sagebrush - *TPC at Las Colinas
And with Lee Gordon: the *TPC at River Highlands & *Cathedral Rock

For PGA 2000 – PUUOO, Colonial (R), Mentor Marsh, Hazeltine (R), Sagebrush, English Turn (R), Pinery Narrows, Oak Hill (R), Cathedral Rock, PGA West (Stadium Course) (R), Royal St. George (R), The TPC at Mt. St. Helens, TPC at Las Colinas (R), Firestone South Course (R), Chinook North (Championship & Member's Courses), Torrey Pines-South (R), Bay Hill (R), Murfield Village (R), Baltusrol-Lower (R), Forest Oaks (R), Riviera (R), Innisbrook – Copperhead Course (R), Oakmont CC (R), Westchester CC (R) and helping David Salter with Royal Liverpool (R)

(R) = Real course

Currently in the works for PGA2000 by Dale: ????

Besides using the stock PGA2000 libraries, Congressional uses the following custom libraries:

Baltusrol, DSTour, Murfield Village and Blackheath

A custom library: **Congress** was created for this course.