

Fort Cobb: Stay in play or pay

STORY & PHOTOS BY JENK JONES JR.

"You hit it in the fairway or you're in the junk."

That's the assessment of the back nine at Fort Cobb Golf Course by head pro Pat Moore. The course is located in Fort Cobb State Park in southwestern Oklahoma, between Weatherford and Anadarko.

Not that the front nine is any slouch.

No. 9, the top handicap hole, and No. 2, the fifth-toughest, are both dogleg lefts with second shots uphill to their greens. Lengths: 456 and 435 yards, respectively. South winds can help golfers on each.

No. 7 (the No. 3 handicap hole) has Fort Cobb Lake abutting the left side almost the entire 535 yards. Gaggles of geese gather as gallery.

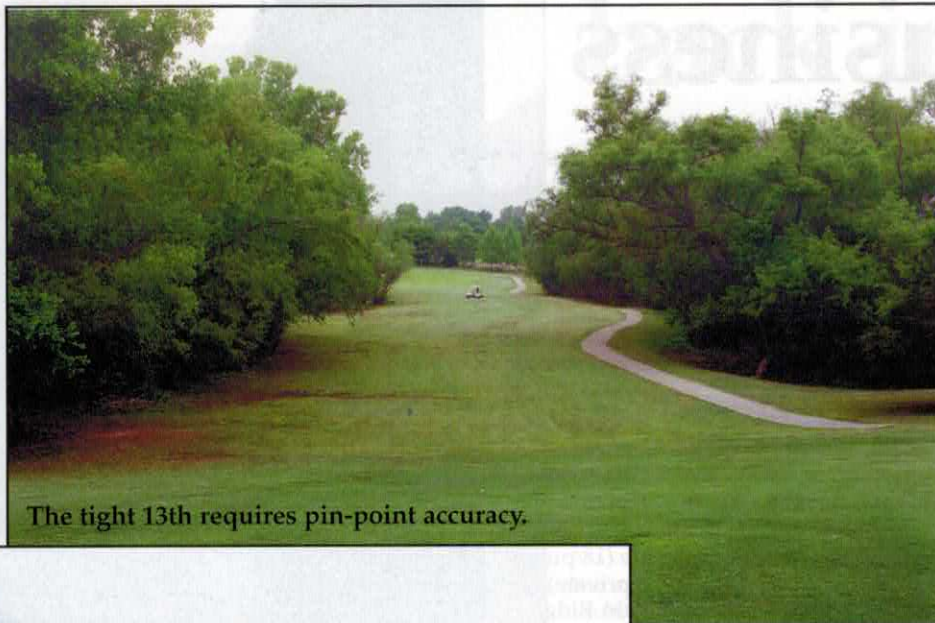
The front nine is somewhat longer — 3,211 yards from the white tees compared to 3,055 on the back; 3,042 to 2,841 from the reds. Blue tees are a few yards longer than the whites but not listed on cards.

Each side plays par-35, with two par-5s and three par-3s.

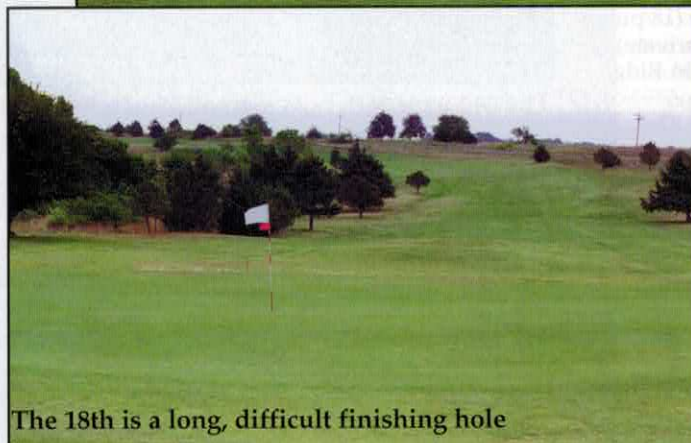
"You want length on the front nine, accuracy on the back," Moore says.

No. 11 is a good example. Just 154 and 146 yards from whites or reds, it has water immediately left all the way, vegetative jail and lake behind and a steep hillside of knee-high rough just right. There's virtually no room for error.

Nos. 12 and 13 also have lake on the left. The latter, 569 yards from the whites and the No. 2 handicap hole, has a second shot Moore describes as "terrifying" because the woods pinch the fairway so severely.



The tight 13th requires pin-point accuracy.



The 18th is a long, difficult finishing hole

"You're trying to thread a needle" is the way he puts it.

Fine views over the lake and park are obtained from the elevated 17th green and 18th tee. The latter triggers a 590-yard dogleg-right closer, with fairway

falling sharply toward Scottish-like rough in the bend. Approaches to this No. 4 handicap hole are to an elevated green.

At times of heavy runoff high water in the lake can flood part of the course, especially the back nine. Moore plans to redo greens at 11 and 12 to reduce downtime.

The scenic course has rolling terrain with pine, blackjack, oak and pin oak, cottonwood, cedar, bradford pear and elm. Trees are added yearly.

Wildlife includes ducks, geese, deer, coyotes, badger, bobcats. "We've got it all if it flies, crawls or walks," Moore states.

The course, overseen by superintendent Tony Palesano, has Bermuda fairways and bent greens with a fully automated irrigation system. About half the course has cart paths.

Fairway markers denote 100, 150 and 200 yards to the centers of greens.

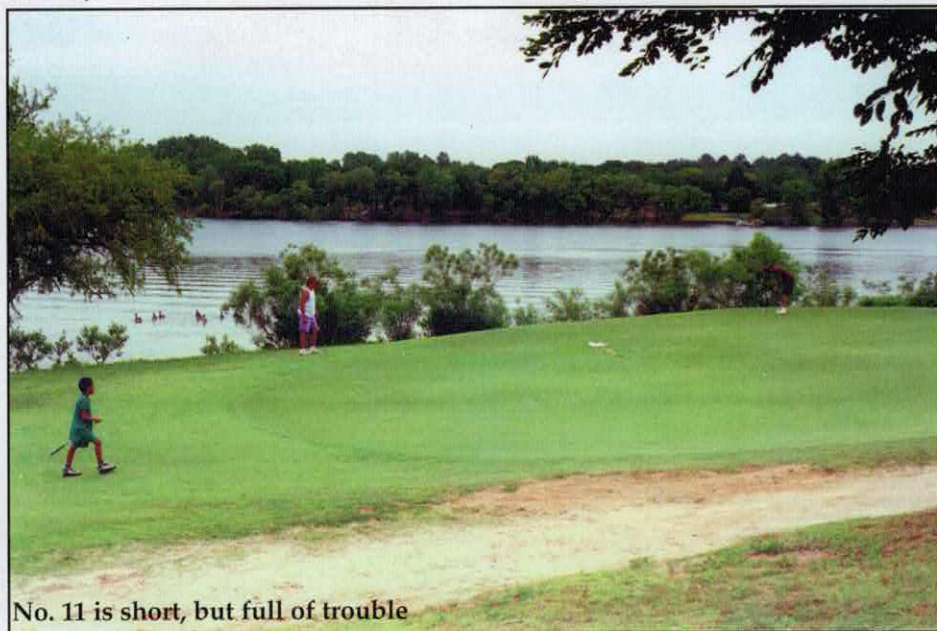
Fort Cobb has a full pro shop plus driving range, putting green and gasoline golf carts. Lessons are available. Food includes microwave sandwiches, candy and beverages.

Greens fees are \$8 weekdays, \$10.50 weekends and holidays. Tee times are available weekends and holidays by calling 405-643-2398.

Pinning Moore down on his favorite holes is difficult.

"All of the back nine, for one," he replies.

As long as you avoid the junk, defined as lake, trees, deep grass, mud, bushes and anything else with a taste for golf balls.



No. 11 is short, but full of trouble