

Course Profile: Holly Ridge | Golfing With the Newtons | Travel on the Coast

Carolinas Golf

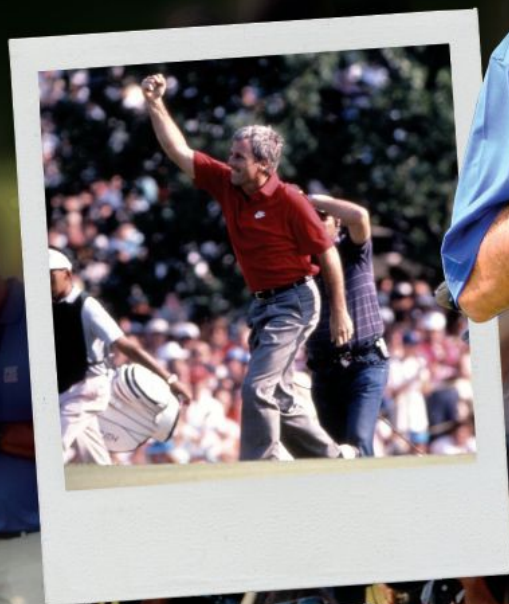


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A Change for Strange

Curtis Strange is giving back to golf and the community in the Carolinas



All Are Welcome at Holly Ridge



MAIN PHOTO: TYLER GRANFORD; INSET: ERIKA GUFFEY

North Carolina daily fee course delivers a casual vibe that's a magnet for family play and junior golfers **BY MICHAEL J. SOLENDER**

While there's some serious golf to be found at Holly Ridge Golf Links, the regulars here cite the lack of formality, inviting and casual atmosphere that make "The Ridge" a local go-to spot for dining, family outings and a great day outdoors in Archdale, N.C.

"We're not a collared shirt and long pants kind of a place," says Robert Faub, Holly Ridge's golf academy director and head instructor. "People feel comfortable coming here in their flip-flops and T-shirts."

A lot of those folks who come for dinner bring their kids. The kids often have a putter or clubs in their hands. That's perfect for letting the kids run around and play games, as the putting green is right off the porch, and the driving range is just beyond that. It's a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere.

Holly Ridge Golf Links is a privately-owned public access course, open year-round for daily play. More

than 200 golfers have joined the Holly Ridge Golf Association, which organizes annual tournaments, "gang-somes," social and charity events annually. Course co-owner and Randolph County native Luke Hollingsworth notes his family once operated a dairy farm here and his father assisted in the building the Jim F. Bivens-designed course.

Holly Ridge opened in late 1994 and has been attracting golfers from across the Piedmont Triad (the 12 counties in central North Carolina surrounding the cities of Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point) and beyond ever since.

It's the neighborly, inviting feel that's made Holly Ridge a top-10 Carolinas Youth on Course (YOC) club in terms of rounds played annually. YOC is a national program with the core mission to provide youth ages 6-18 with access to life-changing opportunities through golf. Members play hundreds of courses for \$5 or less. The CGA is a participating YOC sponsor and looks to the program to help grow the game of

golf in the Carolinas.

“Supporting YOC has been an easy and successful decision for us,” says Holly Ridge Director of Golf & General Manager Nick Cromer. “What makes our facility and our golf course so good for youth and, really, everybody, is our location in the central heart of North Carolina. It’s close to two major airports [Greensboro and Charlotte], and many satellite areas are within a 50-mile radius. That’s why we’ve been hosting a TYGA [Tarheel Youth Golf Association] event for several years now. Being a links-style course without any holes with double treelines means when we have tournaments, you can see everybody. You’re not isolated on one secluded area of the golf course. There’s an atmosphere for tournaments the juniors and their parents appreciate when they come out, as everyone feels like they’re a part of everyone’s round.”

Challenge for all golf levels

Cromer says there’s plenty of challenge at Holly Ridge for all levels of player. “All the scoring is going to be done around the greens,” he says. “They’re fast and they’re firm. When the wind starts blowing it can get tough around the greens out here. Folks need to understand they’re going to have a three-putt or two, but they shouldn’t overthink the greens.”

Faub concurs and advises a calculated approach is



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—Nick Cromer, Director of Golf & General Manager, Holly Ridge Golf Links

the key to going low here. “The greens are big and sloped,” he says. “If you’re above the hole you must putt defensively and really grind on speed. With chips, you’ve got to be thoughtful about trajectory and landing spots. You can’t just step up and hit it without having a plan.”

Cromer points to 18 as a classic finishing hole – and a closer that always has an audience for the golfers. “It’s a big dogleg-left par-5,” says Cromer. “There’s water all down the left side of the hole. Our new clubhouse looks beautiful once you get around the first bend of that dogleg, you can see it high upon the hill with the wrap-around patio usually full of folks who enjoy the play coming in.” ■

Holly Ridge is an ideal place for kids to learn the game, and the course has hosted several junior events while cultivating a strong core of adult players as well.

About Holly Ridge Golf Links

Holly Ridge Golf Links,
7933 U.S. Highway 311 S.,
Archdale, NC 27263

Opened: 1994

Course Architect: Jim Bivins Jr.

Director of Golf & General Manager: Nick Cromer

Academy Director and Head Instructor: Robert Faub

Fast Fact: Holly Ridge hosted the 2022 Dogwood Junior Boys’ Championship and the TYGA Tots State Championship. “The course is so playable for kids of all abilities,” says CGA Director of Junior Golf Chris Zeh. “The staff and volunteers are very welcoming in hosting junior golf events and go out of their way to accommodate players and their parents.”

Inside Holly Ridge: Two-time Masters Champion Bubba Watson shot a “smooth” 67 from the tips here 10 years ago, according to Cromer. The course tournament record is 63, shot by Anthony Baker in the 2015 Holly Ridge Charity Classic.

Michael J. Solender is a golf and travel writer based in Charlotte, N.C.

