



## The Woodlands Golf Course ~ Enchanted Forest

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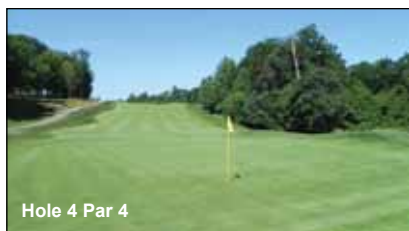
Those of you who grew up in the Baltimore–Washington metropolitan area from the 1950’s through the 70’s may remember a fixture on Route 40 West. If you spent any of your childhood here, it’s likely you frolicked to the Enchanted Forest. It was the first theme park in Maryland and the second oldest in the U.S. next to Disneyland. Enchanted Forest has been closed for more than 20 years but still brings back fond memories to many people like me. Although I still enjoy amusement parks, these days I prefer my parks to have holes in them, and nothing in the area comes closer to replicating that childhood memory than The Woodlands Golf Course.

Any trip to this terrific golf course is an immediate departure from the norm. Minutes from downtown Baltimore and a couple miles from the beltway, The Woodlands is set in a natural, secluded area. As the name implies, the course is fashioned through a heavily wooded area. It has substantial elevation changes and is void of housing, with a total absence of distractions. Architect Lindsay



Ervin literally had to carve holes into this beautiful piece of Maryland countryside. Opening for play in the summer of 1998, The Woodlands immediately gained recognition as one of the best layouts the state had to offer. Situated next to the long standing Diamond Ridge Golf Course helped the course get the word out quickly. The Baltimore County Revenue Authority placed The Woodlands alongside another of their contingent, Greystone, as close to a complete upscale golf experience as you will get on a public course.

A very manageable 4700 yards waits from The Woodlands’ forward tees with the back tees weighing in at just over 7000 yards. A couple of characteristic traits of the course are that it plays in a single loop with a halfway hut, and there are very few water hazards or forced carries to negotiate. The undulating fairways provide plenty of roll, and the greens . . . well, let’s just say they are fascinating. You may find another word to use, but the fact is they will test your putting ability with severe slopes and multilevels.



The traditional par 72 opens with a picturesque par 4 where you should favor the left side of the fairway. Three of the four par 3’s are downhill with the beautiful second hole falling into that category playing to a green surrounded by three bunkers. The third is a flowing downhill par 5 that gently doglegs to the left. One of the few blind tee shots


is found on the par 4 fourth. From the top of the hill, it's a downhill approach to a green protected by two bunkers. Several, fun-to-play short par 4's merrily mix things up at The Woodlands. The delightful, 336-yard fifth is the first of these with a deep bunker on the right front of the green that should be avoided. The second par 5 is the sixth where the fairway narrows on this dogleg right. Fairway bunkers border the fairway on the par 4 seventh at the 100-yard marker. The green is a small and narrow and kidney bean shaped. Another lovely downhill par 3 is the eighth, while the ninth is ranked the hardest hole on the course. This par 4 plays uphill and doglegs to the right. Par here is a savior.

The back nine at The Woodlands opens with a short par 3 that plays to a crowned green surrounded by deep sand traps. The toughest stretch of holes is easily eleven thru thirteen. The first two are pars 4's that play around a couple of large ponds. Add some serious length issues and you have a pair of brutes. The par 5 that follows almost plays like a double dogleg and is the longest hole at The Woodlands spanning nearly 600 yards from the tips. After that rugged



Hole 17 Par 5

stretch the course eases up for the next several holes. Fourteen is a captivating downhill par 3 that normally plays a club shorter. Fifteen and sixteen are bookend par 4's where accuracy is required more than distance. The last bit of real sorcery that the course conjures up is on the par 5 seventeenth. The hole serpentine from right to left along a roller coaster fairway where anything too far left results in nothing but evil. Hit your drive to the right side at the top of the hill, and from there it's downhill to a bewitching green. At this point, straight is a charm, and the par 4 final hole abides. It's a realistic chance to end the round on a pleasing note.

If you are looking for a course that will literally take you to another land, I recommend a scamper through this 185-acre mature hardwood forest. Escape to your own enchanted forest at The Woodlands. 

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