



Sly Fox Golf Club ~ Fox on a Run

Nick Ciattei

Can a golf course reinvent itself? That would not be an easy task in this day and age. But in the case of Sly Fox Golf Club (formerly Jackson's Chase), we answer with a big yes! I almost have to start using a second hand to count the different owners that have signed paychecks at this golf facility. Located just north of Front Royal on a piece of farmland near Middletown, Sly Fox Golf Club has erased the slate of the past and now focuses totally on today and the future by offering a terrific and exciting brand of golf to this beautiful part of Virginia.

New owner Lou Carrozza had a game plan from the get-go to change how the golf course was perceived, and to do so he had to make many adjustments. The new name Sly Fox fits the region perfectly because on any given day during your round you may just run into one of those cunning creatures. Since taking over the reigns, Carrozza has focused primarily on improving course conditions and creating a great experience off the course by upgrading clubhouse amenities. General Manager Larry Bayne and Superintendent Mike Oates recently joined the Sly Fox team and are poised and committed to providing an unparalleled golfing experience.



Plenty of challenges abound, but I always try to wind back my testosterone level and concentrate on accuracy when taking on this crafty course. If you do the same, I believe you will score better. The front nine at Sly Fox opens with a short par 4 that can get your round off to a good start. All the trouble on the opener falls to the left. The par 3 second hole has a deep green, so back pin placements warrant an extra club. The par 5 third carries more length than any other hole by measuring more than 550 yards from the back tees. A lofted shot gains premium access to a wily green that slopes sharply from front to back. The fourth hole normally receives grades as one of the best par 4s in the region. A solid tee shot is needed to reach the top of the hill. Accept par as a good score on the beautiful par 4 fifth. Favor the left side of the fairway on your tee ball on the sixth hole. Your dimpled friend will carom down to the right side to set up your approach to this par 4. The

Sly Fox Golf Club has always revealed vistas of the Blue Ridge and Massanutten mountain ranges that other golf courses in the Shenandoah Valley find hard to beat. This 18-hole, par 72 layout features ravines and forested hardwoods spread out over rolling hills. Golfers find four options on the tee box grid ranging from a comfortable 4369 from the forward tees to more than 6500 yards from the tips.



par 3 seventh requires a decent carry to get to the putting surface, which is level with the tee box with a deep dale in-between. The par 5 eighth normally calls for three calculated shots, with the emphasis on placing the second shot on a small island-type fairway. The green is built into the side of a hill with no real bailout area in sight. A demanding tee shot over a sizable gorge awaits you on the par 4 ninth, but view that as a walk in the park compared to the undulating green packed with knolls and bumps that can leave even the best with the blade scratching their head.



The inward nine at Sly Fox starts with a par 5 characterized by defined landing areas, multiple water hazards, and dramatic elevation changes. Many consider holes 10 thru 14 more of the target golf variety. You need to get your ball in the right places to score well. The memorably par 3 eleventh (pictured on the cover) sits on a gorgeous piece of property. From the elevated tee,

you witness the valley in all its glory with Signal Knob Mountain in the background. Focus on getting your ball over the pond and on the right level of a two-tiered green. A fairway metal or rescue club provides smart play on the twelfth, a dogleg-right par 4 that plays over a deep chasm. An inventive par 5, thirteen encourages many to go for it in two, but playing strategically in three shots normally ends up with a good score if you avoid the large lake on the right that comes into play from within 150 yards. Fourteen is a shrewd par 4 where this time, the fairway severely slopes. Tee shots must favor the right side here, while on the short par 4 fifteenth, a left-to-center drive works best. I've seen long knockers reach the green on occasion. Proper club choice sets up a birdie putt on the delightful, short sixteenth settled inside a bevy of hardwoods. The par 4 seventeenth



features one of the tighter drives on the course with drop-offs to the left and woods to the right. The approach requires one more club because it runs uphill. The closing par 4 also offers an opportunity to add a circled number to your scorecard if you can get a solid drive off the tee.



The recently renovated clubhouse provides the perfect place to unwind after the round to tally up scores. Even if you can't tee it up, the bar and grill are open daily to watch golf tournaments or follow your favorite sports teams with comfy couches, high speed WI-FI, three large HD TVs, and charging stations. You can also soak up the natural surroundings while hanging out on the deck overlooking the ninth green. The fully stocked bar allows you to sample Sly Fox's handpicked selection of wines and beers, and an upgraded commercial kitchen has a new grill menu with burgers and fresh cut fries as well as breakfast and appetizers.

My late father, who was an incredibly brilliant man, would ask me "Does it pass the parking lot test?" The new Sly Fox passes that experiment in my eyes. I see more patrons each time I visit and a vastly enriched product that you too will enjoy. 🏌️

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