

MYSTIC ROCK-NEMACOLIN
Farmington, Pennsylvania

Architect: Pete Dye-1997

	Par	Rating	Slope	Yardage
Blue	72	73.8	138	6791
White	72	71.6	137	6313

OVERVIEW:

This Pete Dye creation is another addition to the death defying style courses that the man likes to create. It reminds me very much of Bulle Rock which is of the same vintage. Sweeping panoramic holes with big intimidation factors but really only moderate challenge when you strip away the veneer if you play at an appropriate tee length. If you choose to play further back do so at your own peril since the difficulty notches up considerably.

This place was the home of the PGA Tour's 84 Lumber Classic for a number of years and they did substantial renovation and redesign in 2004/2005 to meet the challenge and conditioning requirements of the tour. The black tees measure a whopping 7550 yards with a slope of 152-if you do not have your name embroidered on your bag you have no business playing back there.

The basic lay of the course is very characteristic of its surroundings-rolling terrain with dramatic vistas and more rocks than you can imagine in any stone quarry. The rocks accent the water hazards-the forced carries, the tee boxes-even the outhouses. The stone budget alone would have built most courses in the sixties.

The green arrangements are really challenging. Most involve a dramatic approach but all have bail out areas and alternate routes for the player not up for that challenge. Lots of undulations, a few buried pacaderms, and, though some of the greens are in the 50 yard long range, you never get much depth to shoot at so you have to pay attention to the approach angles.

The driving is the most challenging aspect of the course. Wayward ones pay the ultimate price-re-teeing-but even the one that is slightly off line will make the approach to the green considerably more difficult. You must pay attention to the hazards in the driving areas-if you have the nerve to play adjacent to them you will have a much easier approach at the flag. At 6300 you do not need to jack them long-normal drives will leave you medium to short irons. But the green sets will make you concentrate on those approach shots because there are some huge bunkers, swales, and even an occasional hazard you do not want to visit if par is your goal.

HOLE-BY-HOLE ANALYSIS:

#1 Par 4 368/299

The opening hole is very typical of Pete-very routine if you drive it in play. Massive fairway bunker down the right with a cute accent of two eyebrow bunkers above it. This is typical of what you will see all day-very creative bunkering to the eye and very tactical to the game. Drive it left center at the utility pole on the horizon. Leaves a short iron into a diagonal green that plays a half a club short for some unknown reason. Big bailout available on the left.

#2 Par 4 442/379

As you approach the second tee and are startled by the appearance of a man leaning on this driver staring down the hole-rest assured there is no back-up, it is the plus fours of Gene Sarazen in bronze. He is pensively looking at is the task you have at hand. This hole is typical Pete Dye-the forced carry he presents you with off the tee cannot be ignored because bailing out left brings the water hazard from seventeen into play. Your drive must be straight over the rocks to hit the most generous part of the fairway. If you don't lose it right you will have about 175 to 200 into a very skinny green that is set on a diagonal to the hitting area. The bunker on the left flanks the entire green but there is bail out room right between the green and the trees. This green is very long and banks toward you so it should hold the long club you have to hit brought right to left into the green.

#3 Par 3 211/178

At the white tee length the hole plays about five yards shorter than marked- the elevation appearance does not give this away. Deep bunker short left-set off the green that is a no-no-but big bailout room behind that bunker and left of the green. Pitch shots from the bailout are Avenel-esque so you have to be creative to save par from there. Bunker on the right is pretty deep as well but you are generally pitching back into the hill.

#4 Par 4 344/335

This is a pretty short technical hole for Pete. The drive is over a pond into a driving area that is banked toward you and leans left. A right center drive is best and leaves a shortish iron into one of the skinniest targets you will see all day. Deep green with a deep bunker set in on the left. Bail out room right between the outcroppings and the putting surface.

#5 Par 5 591/504

The first real breather hole since number one-but this will catch your attention if you do not drive it well. Very wooded up the right you drive it at the bunker on the left. From here your layup is about 170 yards to 100 just off the bunker on the right. Now you will loft a high one into another long skinny green set off to the right that is flanked by sand on the left-there are few saves from this ashtray. Green has some distinct banking from right to left so your high one should hold and feed toward the left. This hole-like so many others out here-has a wonderful flow to it-very well conceived.

#6 Par 4 396/361

Now the fun begins-you really have to control your direction and distance from here on. This hole is simple to the eye but tricky if you do not place your shots carefully. The canal that flanks the driving area is definitely in play-your eye tends to tell you to hit it up the right but the tree line on the right hugs tightly and the green arrangement is much more accessible from a spot tight on the left edge of the fairway. If you drive it on that side and it is just the moisture of the dew on your ball you will have a middle iron into a kidney shaped green that is tightly wound around a deep pot bunker and swale short left. The ideal shot here is a soft draw up the narrow front right neck of the green that will ground hook its way up to center of the green. There is a pronounced drop off back right so do not be shocked if you are chipping for three.

#7 Par 3 170/126

From the white tee this is just a little 125 yard pitch to center-the elevation change is a good club more. A little gamesmanship going on from the tee-the front of the tee obscures your vision of the front of the putting surface so there is a little hide and seek feeling to this shot. Huge mammal buried in the right center of this green. I like a little fade starting over the huge bunker on the left leaning into the side of the beast.

#8 Par 5 496/486

In the category of unusual holes this is high on the list. You need to drive it over the edge of a massive rock outcropping that runs the full right side of this hole from tee to about 100 yards from the green-but do not bite off too much because it is a bigger carry than it appears. The long fairway bunker on the left of the driving area will keep you honest-the ideal drive location is at the end of that bunker where the fairway pinches from sand and rock. Now you are likely to layup down to about 100 yards from this table top green set on top of a turret. You can try to jack a wood in here but it repels balls like the greens at RTJ Alabama. The green sits on a 5 to 11 diagonal so you really do not have much to shoot at even from the layup area. Again a draw is preferable to get the roll up the long part of the green. The bunkers short and left are death-you are much better pitching from short or right to save par.

#9 Par 4 444/451

A glorious finishing hole for the outward half. This is a big hole that takes two strong shots to have a realistic chance at par. The dogleg takes a good swing to the left around some bunkering collared by water. Drive to right center gives the favorable angle to the green set in on the left by more sand and water. This green has three distinct tiers and is a full forty yards front to back. Your approach needs to stay away from the hazards on the left and work its way up the right-any pin on the left or back is pure rope-a-dope. Two putting this green is an accomplishment given its size and grade changes.

#10 Par 4 390/336

You better hope the extra cholesterol from the dog at the turn has kicked in because the next five holes really will test your nerve. This is a visual hole to the eye-flanked by pond and rock right and more subtly by water and sand on the left. You cannot hit a draw on this tee without a penalty stroke imposed-the straight line off the tee is into an area that releases the ball straight forward into the hazard-this is a left to right to right center drive if I have ever seen one. From that spot you have a middle iron into a 50 yard green that is protected left and right by sand. A fade works best here if you can muster it off the side hill lie. Quite a bit of surface feature to this putting surface.

#11 Par 5 534/507

Wow! That is about all you can say about the “wharf” hole. You should hit a fairway wood off this tee to left center-what is not apparent off the tee is how close the rock wasteland on the right is to your intended landing area. The hole sweeps very quickly down and left to a narrow landing area pinched by the rocks and heavy rough on the left. Now you want to hit the shorter of your fairway woods to about 100 yards on the left. Yes the imposing pond on the right is definitely in play to anything wandering right. The green is set diagonal and adjacent to the pond and you will be playing the absolute left edge of the putting surface trying to stay dry coming in. Plenty of bailout room left and long of the green in the retention area. The view of 10 and 11 from this green is a kodak moment.

#12 Par 3 181/166

Trent Sr. would be proud of this par three-it is pure guts and glory. A middle to short iron depending on the pin placement-the green is almost 50 yards long. The slender green is diagonal to the boulder accented hazard which means it is more carry the further they put the pin up the green. The bunkering on the left and left back make the left back pin position an insane challenge. For good measure the tree line on the right makes bailing out away from the water very risky indeed. You simply have to pick an aiming point right center relative to the pin position and stick it there-nothing else will do.

#13 Par 4 360/345

Diminutive length but a sporting challenge. Long hitters will consider this hole a pesky gnat short hitter will feel right at home. The hole has a decided lean to the right so you really want to hit the drive to left center-from the tee you are tempted to hit it right at the green which would be the right edge of the fairway but the tree line on the right of the landing area and between there and the green will eat you up. The green saddles around a pot bunker in front which means the approach is a draw if the pin is right and a fade if it is left. The green has a mean steep pitch from back to front so do not hit it past the hole or you are in three-putt city.

#14 Par 4 388/384

This is a slightly truncated par four that becomes a dogleg around a huge bunker on the left on your approach shot. The look from the tee is to drive to left center-which will keep you out of the Sahara right but it does add a few yards to the shot going in and forces you to play across sister Sahara on the left from about 130 yards out all the way to the green. This forty yard green hangs dangerously over that bunker so you are tempted, as you should be, to play the right edge and turn one up the green. With the long club you are hitting into this green you are likely to be pitching and putting to save a par.

#15 Par 4 433/382

Longer length than fourteen but an easier task. Relatively straight driving hole so let the shaft be free. From about 150 you will have a shortish iron to an angled green set that lacks any real definition. Concentrate on this shot-birdie is a good possibility here.

#16 Par 5 521/512

The last of the five pars has a real signature look to it. Drive off a precipice tee is a forced carry over the quarry that is really no challenge at all-but you will find the driving area a bit narrower than you expect so try to hit it straight. Now you hit a long one as far down the hole as you can-the long bunker on the left flanked by the pond starts at 100-that is actually a good angle to approach the green that is precariously set out into the water on the left. The walk down to the landing area of the second shot is a visual dream. Your short club needs to be deft to give you an opportunity here-the bunker on the right is no good bailout so be courageous and hit it at the flag.

#17 Par 3 181/166

A pure chutzpah par 3 if you have ever seen one. To say the water is in play is an understatement that is clearly apparent from the tee. There is bailout room deep and right but you really need to hang a fade over the water and turn it back up this putting surface. This is a magnificent shot to behold-especially if you manage to get it back over land before it comes down. Many, many mounds in this green-there are now easy two putts here.

#18 Par 4 468/432

Fortunately they did a major redesign of this hole during the renovation in 2004- the old hole was an unplayable abomination. It is a massively long hole so this is not going to be an easy par to finish. Drive to left center-between the bunkers to get a good look across the edge of the right fairway bunker at the new green setting back to the right. The green is protected on the right by a couple of deep pots of sand. A fade working up the diagonal of the green setting from 7 to 1 should give you a putt at it.