

Old Macdonald Golf Course Bandon, Oregon

Architect: Tom Doak/Jim Urbina (2010)

| Tee | Par | Rating | Slope | Yardage |
|--------|-----|--------|-------|---------|
| Black | 71 | 74.1 | 133 | 6978 |
| Green | 71 | 71.3 | 127 | 6352 |
| Orange | 71 | 70.4 | 118 | 5044 |

Overview:

As the fourth course built at Bandon Dunes Tom Doak and Jim Urbina had probably the hardest task yet because of the fact they were being asked to add to a family of courses all in the top 100 in the country and they had to do it on the least desirable piece of the really desirable land for links courses. Bandon Dunes and Pacific Dunes had used up just about all of the available seaside land so there was no way to build holes with the tactical drama and adrenaline rush of the shoreline holes that give those two tracks their character.

This piece of ground is a sprawling tract wedged between two massive dune ridges-there is only one corner with a clear view of the shoreline-so the holes they would construct would have to find a character value in another way. The good news is they had the sand based soil for links golf and the proximity to the ocean just over one of the ridges so wind influence would be there to facilitate creation of a more sublime but equally interesting links golf challenge.

After serious consideration Mike Keiser came upon the idea of creating a course that celebrates the best of the British Isle influence on links golf. Something that is a bit of St. Andrews, a bit of Prestwick, a bit of North Berwick and Leven and Littlestone and many others from Scotland and Ireland. They then reached further and decided to celebrate a formula used by the father of American golf course architecture, C.B. Macdonald, and build holes that did not replicate the great holes of courses like these but used characteristics of those holes to create unique holes that shared the unique character and playability. In doing so they did the double mitzvah of creating a testimony to Scottish links golf and a homage to C.B. Macdonald's genius at the same time.

Once settled on the Macdonald approach Keiser hired the only man other than C.B. Macdonald who was suited for the task. Tom Doak is the most recognized American expert of links course design having studied it first hand in Scotland and Ireland, built a photographic catalog and knowledge base second to none of the original holes, and studied in detail the careers of guys like Mackenzie and Macdonald and their approach to course design. With the trusted hand of Jim Urbina at his side, someone who has helped Doak build some of the most memorable links courses of our generation around the world, they set out to build a little bit of Scotland in Oregon.

As you can read in the book “Dream Golf” or see in the DVD “Creating Old Macdonald” these guys had a huge task in trying to meld into 18 holes a seamless presentation of many of the great holes C.B. Macdonald emulated repeatedly in the 12 courses he built. The granddaddy of them all for C.B. was the National Golf Links he built on Long Island in 1910 that remains in the top 10 of just about everyone’s list. The National has representations of the Eden (St. Andrews), Sahara (Royal St. Georges), Alps (Prestwick), Redan (North Berwick), Road Hole (St. Andrews), and many others with less familiar lineage. It was Doak and Urbina’s aim to use many of the characteristics that Macdonald used for his versions at The National as templates in fashioning what we see at Old Macdonald.

The result is a wonderfully playable walking course with the full panoply of Scottish links elements presented in a seamless flow of holes meandering across hollows and hummocks set against a backdrop of tall gorse covered dunes. Unlike at the other courses at Bandon the gorse and the tall grasses are well off the playing area so you will find plenty of room to play your shots and a very easy time finding your result. You can likely play the entire round with the same ball which reduces anxiety considerably. It may lack the visual drama of it’s flashy neighbors across the dunes but they integrated all the mystery and intrigue of Macdonald’s work to create a challenging links experience that the discriminating golfer will savor and enjoy every time they play it.

Of the four courses at Bandon this is the one with 100% fescue grasses throughout-tees, fairways, and greens. This is the tightest grass and most appropriate for links golf. Because of the flowing contours they created and the fact the grass does not vary throughout it is almost impossible to distinguish where fairway ends and greens begin. The exposure to constant wind from the nearby Pacific helps the turf plays dry and fast and balls roll forever following the contour of the ground on what seems to be an almost existential path. As a result the full collection of trajectory controlled shots that use the ground and slopes as an ally are the way to get the best results around here.

The bunkering is similar to the Bandon and Pacific, mostly scabby jagged blow-out bunkers that look like they are more the creation of nature than the hand of man or machine. Doak threw in a few punitive sod wall pots on his versions of Eden and the Road Hole along with a generous helping elsewhere of very intimidating bunkers with vertical railroad sleepers shoring their faces. They paid special attention to the slopes around the bunkers that will feed insufficiently enthusiastic approaches into them. Just as the Eden hole feeds the Strath Bunker or the Road Hole feeds the notorious Road Bunker at St. Andrews, these holes at Old Mac will make you plan and execute with intent to avoid anxiety. It is safe to say that if you want to score well here it is key to navigate your way about Old Mac without spending much time getting sand in your shoes.

Probably the most authentic Scottish feature at Old Macdonald is massive greens with imaginative contours. This is a result of trying to make many of the green complexes similar to their originals. The green at the Short Hole (#5) with three distinct segments and a huge wall at the back to play off is something you will find at 6th at The National. The slope on Eden (#2) will feed a shot back toward the front of the green to pins set above the Strath Bunker just like it does at St. Andrews. The contouring of the green on Long (#6) replicates precisely the imaginative green on the 14th at St. Andrews and it dictates a low pitch and run approach from the left. The long and narrow ribbon of a green on their version of the Road Hole makes for the familiar agonizing possibilities playing delicate pitch shots to save par. The scale of these green complexes puts a huge premium on keeping your focus on the 25 feet of green between you and the hole and ignoring the acre and a half of green around you. If your mind wanders three putts will invade your scorecard.

The expansiveness of the course presents itself on the first tee where the driving area seems to invite you to hit it anywhere. But as it is on links courses across the pond there is a precise angle of advantage depending on the pin location of the day on this massive putting surface. The green is over 50 yards deep and just seems to emanate out of the fairway-the lack of definition of target is something you better get used to. After a technical interlude of the Eden and the fearsome Strath Bunker on the second hole, Doak will jump you over the dune ridge on number three with a blind tee shot past a haunting Port Oxford Cedar from which the bulk of the course will spill out below you. From here the scale of the challenge for the day becomes apparent.

The holes meander about this valley but they are far from lacking distinguishing topography. Holes like Ocean (#7) will abruptly whisk you off of the valley floor straight up the face of a dune to a green perched staring out over the Pacific Ocean. This is a good example of the subtlety of Old Mac-the shot up to this green needs to be of measured trajectory to manage the strong wind influence you cannot feel from the ocean side of the dune. With a low shot of intensity required you must use the high back contour of the green to contain your shot and remain on the green. On the Cape (#9) you are playing a long second shot downwind into a green sitting slightly above you with unfettered access. Here the green is over 40 yards long to accommodate the roll out of a low running approach. Great links holes give you the tools to deal with fast turf and windy conditions, you just have to use your head and your hands to play shots to be successful.

There are eighteen chapters of delight on this course, many of which will seem very familiar to you from your own experiences in Scotland or images you have retained from watch the Open Championship on television. The devil, and the delight, is in the details which you will find attached. To fully enjoy Old Macdonald get yourself a good caddy, check your ego at the starter's hut, and be prepared for an invigorating walk through a wax museum of C.B. Macdonald treasures.

Hole-By-Hole Analysis (Black/Green):

#1 Par 4 341/304 Double Plateau

Round begins with a wide open short one but don't let all the elbow room lull you to complacency. Drive up to the right on the plateau over the first bunker or wide to the left gives a better look at the green-check the hole position of the day. Green is set against a gorse laden dune to the left and has a nasty double fill bunker bisecting the front. The second bunker on the right is 60 yards from the green so don't be fooled calculating your approach. This is a massive green that just seems to emanate out of the fairway-get used to it since you will see this scale of putting surfaces all day that are hard to distinguish from the fairway around them. It has a winged shape with high sides in the back corners and a trough down the center. Conservative approach is to the center trough leaving an uphill putt to most pins.

#2 Par 3 200/181 Eden

Based on one of the most famous short holes in golf, the 11th at St. Andrews, this hole has a close cousin in a fine par 3 at C.B. Macdonald's National Golf Links. The nasty "Strath Bunker" embedded in the front right of the green is the dominant tactical feature working a shot around that is a major challenge. As a longish three par that generally plays into the breeze coming over the dune you may have to try to run one up the gap between a yawning bunker front left and a deep revetted pot front right. Wide green sprawls around the front bunker and

banks back left to front right. After you avoid the wrath of the Strath, you are probably looking at a long downhill lag putt from behind this flag.

#3 Par 4 375/345 Sahara

This is where Doak jumps the dune ridge for the first time that traverses the ground on which Old Macdonald sits. Once on the other side the bulk of the course will sprawl in front of you. C.B. used this same template for the 2nd hole at The National-it's original origin was a hole at Royal St. Georges that does not exist any longer.

An unusual short hole with a fairway set on a five to eleven diagonal to the tee. You have a blind tee shot over the huge dune in front of you to a fairway that banks away from you. I like driver up the right over the walking path up the dune with a strong draw around the old Port Oxford Cedar that visually dominates the left. With the wind aiding off your right shoulder this should trundle down the hill leaving you a short pitch to an enormous putting surface that just seems to blend into the fairway. Note on your approach that the bunkers on either side are set well back from the green. The green has a side wall on the left supporting a retention area in the front left of the green.

#4 Par 4 504/472 Hog's Back

A brawny par four takes two big ones to reach even with the prevailing wind at your back. The landing area has a ridge on the left. If you hit it long enough you may stay on the ridge and get an extra kick forward, anything else is repelled to the side. The long second shot in is played off a side slope stance and needs to carry all the way up the swale in front and feed onto the green. Anything landing on the green in the air is likely to run off the back. This green has a small shelf on the left that is very hard to keep the ball on even on a recovery pitch.

#5 Par 3 175/147 Short

C.B. was a big advocate of short technical par 3s and this one fits the bill. As the name indicates this is a short hole with a humongous green set on a diagonal to the tee fronted by a massive sand pit short and right of the green. The green is slightly above you masking view of the hole. There are three distinct lobes to this green and it is extremely important to get your short approach on the right section if you are going to avoid a three jack. It has a Jai Alai wall across the back-use it wisely to hold your shot in the appropriate section. The right hole locations are particularly dicey because of the aura of the sandy area. Any other pin you can be aggressive.

#6 Par 5 555/520 Long

This is the longest hole on the course and moving toward the ocean it makes it longer playing into the wind. Patterned after the 14th at St. Andrews, one of Doak's favorites, this hole presents multiple tactical alternatives depending on your courage and can easily result in a birdie or a snowman. The bunker at 100 yards out is fashioned after Hell's Bunker and the vertical "sleepers" that accent the bunker make it very intimidating. Be intimidated since you must avoid this visiting this bunker at all costs. Drive line is left center at the Hell Bunker replica to get past the nest of bunkers on the left. In truth the difficult aspect to this hole is the contour of this green and what it will do to an approach shot. Best layup is to the left of the bunker constellation since the green has a distinct rise on the right and coming in from that side is very problematic. If you are

approaching from the left a linky running shot will give you the best result or else a left to right high one working off the rise to the right.

#7 Par 4 363/345 Ocean

Fantastic short uphill par four that is folded to the left leading to a precipice green overlooking the Pacific. The driving area is generous, aim at the gorse you can see just right of the green. The green sits atop a dune overlooking the ocean so your approach needs to properly gauge the effect of elevation change and wind coming off the back of the green to get all the way to the putting surface. In spite of the sharp fall off to the right your approach should come in on that side and deep to use the back slope of the dune to contain it. There really is no distinguishing this green from the fairway, they simply grassed the top of the dune and clipped it short.

#8 Par 3 181/170 Biarritz

You will recognize this look-elevated tee to a bifurcated lurking behind a high mound short left with a deep Biarritz ravine running through the center. This was one of C.B.'s favorite templates and you will find it on many of his courses-the most famous version is at the Yale University Golf Course. To get at a back pin you may need to land it on the front section and run it through the windmill. The front pins present a dicey task trying to stop your shot from running into the ravine. Needless to say two-putting here can be an adventure. If you make one with the right color ball you get double tickets for the game room.

#9 Par 4 416/352 Cape

The cape style hole is a favorite of designers from the golden age, it usually involves a green setting tucked behind a water hazard creating a cape effect with a diagonal approach across the hazard. In this case there is no water but the green lurks behind a nasty bunker on the right creating this feel. This is a long dogleg right with a bit of blinded mystery on both shots. It wraps right around a bevy of blow-out bunkers-be careful not to try to cut any corners here. Drive at the right edge of the gorse hedge on the horizon which should feed to right center and shorten the diagonal approach at the green. What remains is a long approach across a bunker at about 60 yards to a 42 yard deep green slightly above that runs away from you. This is a long green and you are likely playing downwind so a sliding Irish runner is the play.

#10 Par 4 465/440 Bottle

The inward nine begins with a bear of a par four set against a stunning backdrop of sand and gorse walls. The hole gets it's name from the two sets of bunkers that pinch the driving area. You either have to bomb a precise one up the left and carry the first set of bunkers or slip one into a narrow space to the right of the bunkers. Personally I like the left option. The second shot is a long one into a green set raised up slightly from the fairway with one nasty bunker about 20 yards short of the green on the left. With no room for error long leaving a pitch up the hill to the green is probably the safest approach.

#11 Par 4 445/399 Road

The Road Hole at St. Andrews is about as iconic as it comes and this one gets the general look and feel of the original without being a clone. There are no wood sheds to drive over but the bunker and gorse on the right still provide enough suggestion that the best drive is up the right center. From there you get a peek around the revetted "Road Bunker" set on the left into the steep face of the green. Doak and Urbina were meticulous in creating the same insidious contour to the hill leading up to the green that will feed approach shots without sufficient enthusiasm into the bunker. If you don't have that peek around the bunker you are either laying up short right for access to a front pin or long left for access to a back pin behind the bunker. The very narrow green is a full 48 yards long and there is fall off to a collection area to the right where the road should be. There is little room for imprecision on the final approach. The recovery from that collection area will be a testy putt up a very steep incline with the road bunker waiting to collect an overzealous effort across the narrow green.

#12 Par 3 237/205 Redan

The Redan hole at North Berwick was one of C.B.s favorite par three configurations and he used it over and over in his creations in America. Here they created a faux Redan arrangement-it lacks semi-blind look of the green surface and the forbidding fate of super deep bunkering left of the diagonal set of the green. The green banks away from you and is protected by a single deep bunker on the left of the green. Your shot is a draw working up the line of the green but the slope in front of the green does feed into that bunker so if your ball works to quickly left you are looking at a difficult sand save. There is no banking on the right side of the green to assist in holding a draw into the right side so if you do not create the proper degree of curve you are likely running through and off the green into some grass hollows. As Tom Doak likes to point out this does present distance control issues playing downwind as the original plays at North Berwick.

#13 Par 4 346/319 Leven

A classic short par four based upon a hole at Lundin Links south of St. Andrews. The green is nestled between an office building dune on the left and a low garden complex dune on the right. There is a lonely pot bunker out there on the right in the driving area-aim at that to get the approach angle you want. This green looks like a catcher's mitt leaning back left to front right, it should hold all approaches from the right. Your best approach is right center to play back up the slope to the day's pin. Front right of the green has a nest of bunkers as well so don't get leaky right on the approach. If the pin is back right then you might hit your tee shot more down the left to give you a better angle at the back right pin but beware since there is no sanctuary long and right of the green.

#14 Par 4 370/297 Maiden

Now this is one of the coolest holes they created on this course, the likes of which you would not see designed today. A shortish par four that plays uphill all the way, lengthening the playing reality. The sprawling segmented green, raised from the fairway, is a triangular shape with large bat wings, making getting to and keeping the ball in the appropriate region a challenge. Check out the pin to determine the best drive position. The pin center or right you want to drive to center to feed just right of the bunker on the left. Pin on the left wing hit it wide right for an angle back across to the back left corner. Bunkers flanking both front sides are an

absolute double bogie waiting to happen. There is a bunker straddling the back center that will collect balls with too much gusto aimed at a back pin.

#15 Par 5 535/482 Westward Ho!

This substantial par five wends its way through a sea of moguls to a green that sits on top of a dune at the ocean's edge. Drive is center over the cross bunker, you need to avoid the one magnetic bunker on the left side of the driving area. The lay-up is short of or left of a bunker that looks like it survived the blitz in London at about 85 yards from the green. From there you have a three story pitch up the slope to a green that is really long and works to the back right corner. This green has multiple tiers so you have to find a creative way to get your ball to the level where the flag resides. Pull out the camera for a Kodak moment-from this green you behold one of the most spectacular vistas of the ocean shore line in all of Bandon Dunes.

#16 Par 4 455/433 Alps

Doak will tell you that blind approach shots are as much a part of the original links layouts as your low pitch and run. This hole is based on the most famous of these blind par fours, the 17th at Prestwick. A brute of a par four it has a small mountain in the left middle of the fairway that obscures your vision of the green. A big drive to the right is the ticket and it might get a glimpse of the front of the green around the foot of the mound. Center or left off the tee leaves a blind approach over the Alp feature. You can either approach the green around the mound skirting a deep bunker lined with vertical sleepers that haunts the front edge or take on over the top of the directional indicator on the mound. If you come over the mound it will hit the down slope on the other side and try to funnel its way onto the green between a bunker set into the left side hill and a the wooded bunker short of the front edge. This is a super long diagonal set green that sits in the Hollywood Bowl of tall dunes-makes you want to break into song. He even provided accompaniment with a traditional warning bell for you to ring and let the group behind know it's safe to wage their assault. Take a second to appreciate the enormous blow-out dune behind this green-the scale of it is spectacular. You will now return to the other side of the dune ridge you traversed on #3 and it is time to head for home and icy cool one.

#17 Par 5 546/515 Littlestone

Macdonald was a bit ahead of his time in that he liked the idea of holes with alternate fairways to choose from on the tee. He created a par five like this at Lido on Long Island back in the day, unfortunately that course was reclaimed by the Atlantic Ocean about 70 years ago. This hole is designed in that tradition, it is a par five that gives you two distinct choices off the tee. If you can bomb it down the right and clear the wetland you nestle it within a field of dead cat bunkers strewn on the other side. From there you could have the shortest approach up the right with a chance to sneak one on the putting surface in two. The correct play for most mortals is down the left-aim left of the cell tower on the horizon. Now you have a lay up to about 75 yards off the starboard side of a huge sleeper lined bunker buried in a tall mound front left of the green. You won't get a clear view of the flag on your third because of the massive height of the tall mound housing the bunker. The narrow green is 64 yards deep, yes you heard it right 64 yards deep, so get a good measure to the flag for your approach. The putting surface has a distinct lean to the right and one more sandy enclave flanking the right so don't let your approach wander.

#18 Par 4 469/426 Punchbowl

The final hole is a strong and long one that looks for a drive down the left center-aim at the right edge of the bunker on the left through the fairway. Anything taking on the bunkers on the right off the tee is an insane carry with little reward. Now the fun begins because the green here, probably the biggest on the whole course, is cantilevered between a pair of slopes and has a punchbowl character because it is surrounded by waist high mounding. Any pin on the left or center should be approached hoisting it to the far left front edge and let it feed back into the center off the severe slope. There is a Dolly Parton feature in front so if the pin is on the right you can try a low approach between her cleavage and let the back right slope hold it in that section of the green.