

## Quaker Ridge Golf Club Scarsdale, New York

Architect: A. W. Tillinghast (1916) Gil Hanse (2013)

	Par	Rating	Slope	Yardage
Black	70	74.8	143	7008
Blue	70	72.2	137	6456
White	70	70.8	134	6163
Green	70	68.5	130	5631

### Overview:

Quaker Ridge is an Albert Tillinghast Golden Age design that sits directly across the street from its more famous cousin Winged Foot, which has hosted numerous major championships. Truth be told by those who know, Quaker Ridge is built on a more topographically interesting piece of ground than Winged Foot and the result is a strategic offering with all the Tillinghast design features that is a pure delight to walk and play.

It too has hosted its fair share of National and Metropolitan New York championships which is a testimony to its design pedigree.

The clubhouse and amenities have a low-key, hamish character that is welcoming to all who set foot on the property. They make you feel like a member even if you are not and are only interested in making sure your Quaker Ridge experience fulfills your expectations. The club maintains a casual sense of humor as well as depicted in the "Suggestion Box" conveniently located near the clubhouse.

Playing courses created in this era where hickory shafts and balls with little spin prevailed one has to keep in mind there are some design features of the era that will affect your strategic play. Tillinghast bunkers seem very arbitrary in shape and location yet they guide you through a course where he presumed the low trajectory run up shot would often be the preference. Lots of cross bunkers 50 yards from the green are a bit disorienting but with open green front access they make the bump and run approach an option. Coupled with contoured greens with plenty of movement, that in the day were 7 on a stimp meter, current green speeds make keeping the ball in the area of the pin location quite a challenge. Again the ground can be your friend as you plot your way in and around these green complexes.

Par 70 at 6200 yards from the White Tees does not seem overwhelming but with the hilly terrain and only two five pars in the mix the host of par fours in the neighborhood of 400 yards makes this a stiff test of driving accuracy and solid long club approach play. Having said that there is only one pond and a handful of streams in play through the round so you have to make some simultaneous swing or judgment errors on the same hole to end up with a disastrous score on the card. Careful consideration on each tee to the lines of the hole and the day's pin location is critical to winning your match and posting a score you will be proud of.

The opening tee shot on one of the two par fives of the day gives you a true flavor of what is ahead. You have to drive it solidly over the hill in front of you to get a clear look at the lay up zone or consider going for the green in two. The massive cross bunker 50 yards from the green is a major no-no. Visiting this bunker because

you were greedy on an approach a bit too far is a sure way to start your scorecard from a staggered start you may never recover from.

Tilly was always good at taking the elements the topography of the land presented and seamlessly integrating them into the strategic play of the course. Standing on the fourth tee box you can an eyeful of strategic options in playing one of the more unique par fours of the day. As described in the full hole-by-hole descriptive linked at the end of this posting, the large oak tree through the fairway and the center-line rock outcropping force you to make decisions that can result in a scoring opportunity or possibly a scoring disaster.

The short Par 3 at the fifth is one of the only forced carry over a penalty area you will see all day, but the challenge here, as it is throughout the course, is the slope and movement presented in the putting surface. With greens kept at speeds in the 12 range being in the wrong segment of the green is a prescription for a putting disaster.

How often do you see the number one and three handicap holes one after the other. Number six is the number one handicap hole on the course-this bedeviling four par played as a five back in the hickory age when it was created. It is followed by the third handicap hole an arduous dog leg right march up to a steep green complex requiring position off the tee followed by strong approach carry into a plateau green complex. Two bogies on 6 and 7 picks up shots on the field.

Stepping on the eighth tee you are now entering over the next five holes the technical part of the course, where strategic finesse not power will be your friend. As you saw on the fourth Tillinghast introduces the center-line feature on the eighth that forces the player to choose what side to hit their drive for the most advantageous approach to the green. This time it is a huge grassy dune that is probably another rock outcropping he did not want to expend resources to remove. In this case the safer route is left of the mound but it presents a longer shot in that must tangle with the green side bunker. Right of the mound brings trees and OB into play but from there the shot to the green is considerably shorter and has open access.

The ninth presents you with Tilly's kitchy version of a short Redan Par 3 with plenty of right to left contour as you work into the green. The hole is completely surrounded by deep bunkers so there is no real bail out available. The kidney shaped green is silhouetted by the top edge of the front bunker so the play is landing the ball just over the right-center edge of this bunker and letting the ground move your ball into and across to the green surface.

Standing on the eleventh tee the driving area seems wider then the Hudson but take note of the large poplar tree shadowing the left side of the fairway. Any drive left of center will have to contend with the sprawling limbs of this tree. If you are in the correct segment of the fairway the second shot is likely less than 150 yards but the architect created a moated effect by having the fronting stream turn around the right side of the putting surface and meander behind the back right corner. An articulate iron is needed here and could provide a good birdie opportunity.

As you look down over 210 yards from the elevated tee box on this big boy of a Par 3 thirteenth you will recognized the technical part of the course is now behind you. It is hard to be articulate with a very long club in your hand but at least Tillinghast provided lots of roll up space behind the two front bunkers set well off the green. The contour of this one is tricky so pay attention to the ridge that bisects the green.

I cannot help but wonder what it must have been like to try to negotiate this three shot Par 5 with a set of hickory clubs and a ball with a lot of curve. The strategic path of the fourteenth ramping it's way up the steep hill is delineated by more bunkers then you can fathom. From the drone this kind of looks like the silhouette of a Tyrannosaurus Rex but it packs slightly less bite. If you lay-up short of the crossing line of bunkers at 120 the short iron approach should take the high score out of the mix.

What these Golden Age architects do really well is they let the land dictate the routing and hole strategies and they rarely make two holes on the same course that have similar strategic character. The penultimate hole is such a unique offering-a short but not drivable Par 4 on one of the flattest portions of the course that still demands discipline in both the tee ball and the approach to take advantage of a hole that is only 344 yards on the card.

The tee shot has to hug the right side near a nest of bunkers to have a straight on approach line to the flag. The green is the second smallest of the day, a virtual thumbprint pinched on all sides by deep bunkers. There is plenty of back to front slope which puts a premium on keeping your very short iron approach below the hole. As with so many great holes you may walk off this green shaking your head wondering why you did not make a better score then you did.

As you work your way up the corridor of trees playing your tee ball on the last, you get a full relief of the grand clubhouse at the top of the hill behind the eighteenth green. The approach is significantly up hill requiring an extra club and once again the fronting bunkers are a good 75 short of the putting surface so you have plenty of space to work a shot in on the ground if you have to.

When the final putt drops and you take off your hat to shake hands with the others in your group, take a second to look back down the fairway at the rolling topography that Tillinghast had you explore through the day. It is a majestic sight and one worthy of the quality of the course you just experienced.

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### Hole-By-Hole Analysis: (Blue/White)

#### #1 Par 5 510/496 yards

The the first of the two par fives sets the tone with with an uphill tee shot into a hill above. If you can clear the hill, going for the green in two is possible for long hitters. There is a cavernous cross bunker that collects uncommitted approach shots sits about 50 yards from the green that can mitigate the strategy of going for the green in two. If that is not your cup of tea you lay up your second to about 120 yards for a look up at the green setting above. Two greenside bunkers frame this sprawling, steep green that slopes from back to front which makes staying under the hole a premium.

#### #2 Par 4 405/389

Ratcheting up to the stiff par four category early in the round. Slight dogear right routing of the hole is offset with a nest of bunkers below the fairway on the left from a shared constellation with the 14<sup>th</sup> hole. You need to

really smoke one to be able to reach this one in two. There is open access to the green sitting below you protected by bunkers left and right.

### #3 Par 4 424/414

Long straightaway par four whose driving area is framed by trees with fairways bunkers on both sides with an impinging fairway bunker in play about 210 on the left. Best approach line is from left center as the green slopes from the back right to front left.

### #4 Par 4 408/384

In some ways the signature hole on this first nine this Par 4 has lots of visual cues for the proper strategy of play. Big oak tree frames the left off the tee and an abrupt rock and grass depression sits in the right center of the fairway. As was habit of this era, architects often buried a rock outcropping rather than struggle with removing it and I imagine that is why it is here. Drive needs to aimed off the oak tree and be left of the rock depression to get an unobscured look at the green. The green complex sits on a bit of a shelf high above a wrap around deep bunker on the left. A front left pin location is a sucker so play out to the right on your approach.

### #5 Par 3 151/132

At last a shorter hole, and you thought it would never come. This is a shortish iron pitch across the only pond you will see all day to a green set well back from the water. Green is steep back-to-front with a defining shelf created by a 3 to 9 ridge that bisects the green. The two greenside bunkers frame a target that is slightly below the teeing ground but does not call for an adjustment in club selection.

### #6 Par 4 434/424

First of two very stiff four pars in a row. Two fairway bunkers on the right of this fairway that leans left toward Sheldrake Creek make this a dicey shot off the tee. The cross bunkers at 100 yards from the green were put there to complicate lay up shots and they will still hold your attention on your approach shot if your tee ball is too meek. As you approach this green the combination of the long bunker that protects the left feeding into the fairway in front and the OB right of the green should keep your mind focused. The surface is steeply sloped so make sure to carry your approach shot into the section that plays host to the flag today.

### #7 Par 4 416/380

A long dogear right favors a left-to-right tee ball that ends up in the left center of the fairway just short of a crossing creek. The plateau green sits above you across two cross bunkers about 85 yards short of a the putting surface. There is a severe false front that will feed meek approach shots back down the fairway. Deep bunkers on both sides will punish wayward approaches but one behind does contain overzealous shots that would otherwise go OB.

### #8 Par 4 335/318

Next is a short four par where you drive across a creek into an uphill landing area that has a large rough grass mound prominently in the center. You are challenged to decide which side to play your drive to. Playing left

makes the approach longer and you have to contend with the green side bunker. Playing right there are overhanging trees and OB lurking just 10 yards right of the fairway. I like the right choice because you have a shorter approach and open access to bounce a ball in. This tiny green may be the flattest putting surface you will play all day. Local knowledge says putts break toward Griffen Avenue so strike up your Google Maps.

#9 Par 3 143/134

Tilly left you a large aiming tree behind this Redan-esque kidney shaped green. The small green is surrounded by bunkers so there is no bail out here. The deep bunker in front follows the kidney shape front edge of the green so your tee shot needs to just clear the front right of this pit and let the green contour feed the ball to the pins on the left. Side bunkers are no party to recover from but being just slightly long in the rough can work.

#10 Par 3 186/172

Back-to-back three pars is unusual and this one could not be more different than the previous one.. Four clubs longer than the ninth you must carry your shot to a sharply canted green from back left to front right that sits slightly below the teeing ground. No tree protection from the breezes with bunkers surrounding the target so it will need to be something with trajectory and a proper read of the wind.

#11 Par 4 372/360

This one proves that length alone does not make a strong hole. Driving area is quite wide but you need to be on the right half of the fairway to get a look beyond a tall Poplar obscuring the left portion of the green. A meandering brook crosses in front on flanks the right side of the green which creates a moat effect. The false front and steep right shoulder can tumble less then enthusiastic approach shots into the creek.

#12 Par 4 403/377

An uphill long Par 4 this hole plays it's full measure and a wee bit more. Drive uses the fairway slope right to left off the bunker to get back to the center of the fairway. If you are on the left edge of this fairway the trees on the right will interfere with your approach line. Be aware that the left bunker is 75 yards short of the green so there is plenty of ground between the bunker and the putting surface to use to bounce one in on that side. Bunkers on either side and an additional grass bunker right for good measure. Putting from above the hole on this steeply banked green is a four-putt in the waiting.

#13 Par 3 209/196

Just a bully of a three par this is a downhill long club into a green complex filled with deception. The two bunkers in front are set well off a green which has a good tilt back right to front left. There is a trough that runs through the green on that same angle that complicates getting close to a pin as well. Pure eye candy hole.

#14 Par 5 517/499

Finally another three-shot hole that is not a Par 4. An old school classic serpentine hole with enough defining bunkers that it would require you to take off your shoes to count them all. Drive is to center to a landing area below the teeing ground just off the bunkers on the left. It is now uphill the rest of the way and your lay-up is

likely short of the cross bunkers that bisect the fairway at about 130 yards leaving a short iron pitch to the green. The incline makes this a long and demanding hole but should be an easy par if you don't try anything silly.

#15 Par 4 375/368

A scenic downhill look from the tee the tree framed driving area is cordoned off by a stream that traverses the fairway about 210 yards from the tee. The uphill approach must deal with another deception bunker on the left 65 yards short of the green. Lots of slope back left to front right with further topographical interest makes for a couple of very difficult hole placements.

#16 Par 4 414/392

Next is a long corridor Par 4 that has a creek hidden in the left trees. Two fairway bunkers on the right are way out of range for most mortals. Elevated three-tier green sits atop the hill requiring an extra club in but is accessible in front with deep bunkers on both sides and a scalloped edge bunker behind. Green is sloped sharply front half with a flat plateau across the back creating the tiered effect.

#17 Par 4 344/337

One of my favorites of the day, this dexterous short Par 4 has fairway bunkers on the right about 240 which may prompt you to consider less than driver off the tee. This is a thumb print of a green pinched by four profound guarding bunkers. You should have a short club in hand for the approach so a good score is there to be had.

#18 Par 4 410/391

Inward nine finishes with a strong corridor hole that ramps up slowly toward the majestic clubhouse. Drive it at the dormers on the roof of the clubhouse to get a good angle of approach to the green. Your second is uphill into a green set back a full 85 yards from the bunker crossing from the right. A hidden bunker front left makes the front left pin much more difficult to get at.