

Eastward Ho  
Chatham, Massachusetts

Architect: William Herbert Fowler (1922) Keith Foster (2004)

|       | Par | Rating | Slope | Yardage |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|
| Black | 71  | 72.8   | 142   | 6524    |
| Blue  | 71  | 70.8   | 137   | 6159    |
| Gold  | 71  | 69.4   | 133   | 5802    |
| White | 71  | 66.9   | 117   | 5323    |
| Green | 71  | 66.2   | 116   | 4710    |

Overview:

The fabled rumor that to become a member here you have to show evidence from ancestry.com that your kin were passengers on the Mayflower has not been proven, but I will say that you must bring some old school experience of seaside golf to play this marvelous course effectively. The links are configured in the shape of an hourglass and the clubhouse sits on the highest ground in the narrow waist of this layout. Nine holes go eastward toward the Atlantic which is visible throughout the outward half. The second nine meanders to the west and it is closely tied into Pleasant Bay.

The recent restoration of this course by Keith Foster brought back the openness of the playing areas and the amazing vistas of the Atlantic Ocean and Pleasant Bay. This seaside proximity conspires with the wind and the extreme topography of the site to make the day a defensive struggle against par. Whatever you know about club selection adjustment for uneven stances, elevation change, and wind effect will come into play as you must carefully choose on every shot to play safe or safer to protect your scorecard.

The challenge of the day is apparent standing on the first tee staring out at a prominent centerline bunker that is your target and certainly in play. If you are on short grass for your approach you get the combination you will see all day of a severely elevated approach to a perched green complex with a dramatic false front. Regardless of the day's pin location you have to elevate approaches on this course a third of the way into the green to get them to stay on the putting surface.

The next two four pars have wide open driving areas but the segmentation of the landing areas and the sharp turn of the holes at the point of inflection require a very precise line of intent to give you a good look at the green complexes set above you. As you can read in the linked hole-by-hole descriptive detail at the end of this posting, the second green has an inverted contour that favors a ground approach coming from the right. The third green is a long narrow affair tucked hard up against scrub and O.B. on the right. If you reach the fourth tee within one of par you are probably one up on the front nine bet.

For me the par threes are the most memorable holes of this course because the elevation changes combined with the seaside back drops make it extremely hard to focus on the shot precision required on each. Though not very long the fourth is the wildest ride of the lot. Only a short to medium iron, this long and narrow

multi-tiered green is incredibly evasive to what should be a stock knock down shot into the prevailing breeze. A 60 yard long affair this is really two greens bisected by a deep Biarritz type gully across the center.

As you walk to the green from the cart path the green contour looks like the Villanova logo so putting from one sector to through the valley is a three-putt you are trying to avoid. Take a moment to appreciate the stunning vista looking off the back of the green of an endless bay with pleasure boats bobbing in the distance.

The biggest challenge in the design of this course was the severity of the topography that needed to be negotiated. William Fowler did a brilliant job in this regard and it is very evident in his routing from 5 through 9. The holes go up and down severely hilly terrain but the placement of tees, landing areas, and green complexes make it very playable in spite of that challenge. Given that the course was designed during an era where hickory clubs dictated play closer to the ground this makes playability he presented all the more of an accomplishment.

After a fairly rudimentary scoring opportunity on the Par 5 fifth, the sixth is the number one handicap hole and may provide the most stirring shot making of the day. From a splendid vista on high teeing ground this signature hole sweeps hard to the left between a couple tall hillsides, and a well struck tee shot aimed at the island in the distance tumbles down the hill toward the low point on the hole.

The approach requires a towering middle iron to a small green complex perched up to the right with one nasty bunker flanking the right. The surf is lapping 50 feet below the green on the left so there is really nowhere safe to hit it but on the green. As scenic as this hole plays on the way from tee to green it is worth one more look back from the green to admire the view from where you came.

The eighth, which mirrors the first, gives you a wide landing area with a centerline bunker to aim at off the tee and a similar elevation to scale with a semi-blind short iron into the green.

The finishing hole on the outward half is pure eye candy as it sneaks up on the clubhouse set on the hill. From the proper drive position right center of the fairway you are likely standing on a plateau on level to a narrow green sandwiched by bunkers. The green complex sits across a dip in the fairway, so you must elevate a longer club all the way to the green's edge.

Grab a snack from the little room tucked in the side of the clubhouse next to the driving range because the inward nine will be just as demanding as what you just experienced. You will need full sustenance and hydration to handle what lies ahead.

When you step on the tee box at the tenth it looks like an on level 175 yard shot but the devil is in the detail of the green complex. It is an inverted hour glass set on a 7 to 1 angle that does not present you very much width to work with. The front of the green is open but there is a decided pitch right-to-left once the ball is on the surface. As with so many of these Fowler approaches you must enlist the ground to be your friend to control line and distance on the roll out of these shots.

What follows is a shortish, funky five par with a bit of deception on each shot. Driving area is slightly above the tee and it looks very generous, but the proper line is up the left to avoid the ball drifting right into a low area. The second is a blind shot over a hill to a lay up zone about 75 yards from the table top green

complex. As detailed in the hole-by-hole link below, this is a very shallow green so some grip on the approach is needed to give you a scoring opportunity.

The short par four that is next is a fooler because it appears unduly wide from the tee to the green but you need to mind a line up the left to reach a flat area for the short iron approach to the green set to the right. This green is an inverted bowl that will deflect balls in all directions. Even greenside recovery pitches are very hard to keep on this putting surface.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> tee to the house is a run of the most quixotic holes you play all day. The blind “Elephant Hole”, a massive grass two-story crater down the left of the driving area, is a sure path to double or worse. If you drive safely past this chasm the green sits below you with a resplendent backdrop of the bay in the distance. This green has another false front that requires your approach to land in the first third of the green to stay aboard.

The next one is the most photographed of the three pars on this course but I actually think that if you look through the eye candy it is the easiest of the lot. The three tiered green sits on a bit of a concealed diagonal so shaping it into the wind to reach the proper tier is the task at hand.

You are basically playing the steep contour of the adjacent 14<sup>th</sup> hole in reverse on the 16th so you can add a solid 20% for the hill and the prevailing wind to an already sizeable challenge. The width of the hole on the left is helpful but like the approach into the 12<sup>th</sup> you are probably facing a blind shot into this green.

Turning back to the club house for the last two the wind should be at your back. It is important to play up the left side of the penultimate hole to avoid the grab of Cahoon’s Hollow on the right and give yourself a manageable lay up past the fierce Fowler Bunker which shadows the layup area just inside of 150 yards from the green. This approach into the tightly guarded green is one of the coolest you will hit all day.

With a helping breeze the home hole provides you a chance to let the big dog eat and carry the ridge across the fairway that can throw your drive well down the hill another 50 yards. As you have experienced all day the final approach is straight up the hill to a false fronted green complex at the foot of the clubhouse. Even with wind aid it is a club and a half extra to reach and stay on the putting surface.

From the green take a moment to look to your left for one last jaw dropping shoreline view across the bay at the 5-Star Wequassett Resort in the distance.

Hole-by-hole (Black/Blue/Gold):

#1 Par 4 387/380/370

Starts with a dogear left around a scrubby area with a centerline bunker in the distance as your target off the tee. Mid iron play into an elevated green complex across another centerline bunker 50 yards from the green. Open access to the front of the green, with bunkers flanking both sides and a serious false front feeding back down toward the center bunker. Pin on the right is a bear.

#2 Par 4 350/334/300

This is a tee ball with a serious uphill increment on a shortish dog leg right. You want to land your ball in a saddle area on the left side short of the second bunker on the left. Long string of bunkers along the right off the tee must be avoided. Single bunker short left of the inverted green. This shot favors a ground approach landing just right of the green on a slope that moves the ball right-to-left and back into the putting surface.

#3 Par 4 326/310/261

Even shorter than the last, this is a forced carry off this tee over a ravine and two fairway bunkers flanking the which will feed the ball to right center. What remains is a short articulate pitch into a rolling green set 5 to 11 flanked by bunkers. Long or right of this green is O.B.

#4 Par 3 165/153/147

First of the four brilliant three pars on this course. Visual on this tee is heart stopping. Prevailing wind blows from the left toward the bay on your right into a long and narrow trifurcated green that is steep back to front. The approach requires a full carry into the day's segment with the flag. This is really two greens with the deep culvert traversing the center of it. There is scrub and a bunker well short left of the green. The best play is the front edge leaving an easy pitch or putt up the slope to save your par. You won't appreciate the severity of the segmenting of this green until you stand green side.

#5 Par 5 525/492/475

The topography makes this a long hole for most mortals as you play across a wasteland to a fairway slightly below you. Two fairway bunkers occupy the right off the tee so play to center. From there it is like the Sound of Music as you must traverse hill and dale to reach a blind lay up area full of moguls and hummocks where there are no level stances. After two well struck shots you are left with an awkward short pitch into a green that can present a blind approach.

#6 Par 4 455/415/405

The signature visual hole of the outward half, this is a strong and long dogear right Par 4. Teeing off from an elevated tee box you aim at the island in the distance in hope to carry it over the hill and let it tumble toward the green. Approach is a club more, across a low that must cover the steep hill in front to the green that will reject timid approach shots 40 yards back down the fairway. The green is a two-tier affair with one bunker right which will make getting your approach close to the flag a challenge.

#7 Par 3 181/168/155

Almost unplayable, this strong uphill three par that will play into a wee bit of a breeze. It requires two clubs extra as it must carry a waste area in the face of a super steep incline. Topographical challenge is much like #12 at Newport Country Club but 40 yards longer. Steeply sloped green sits on a slight angle from 5 to 11. Missing left over the bunker can bring you back into the 6<sup>th</sup> fairway, right into a furry grass behind the right greenside bunker.

#8 Par 4 364/325/318

Shortish Par 4 that is anything but easy. Drive it downhill into a landing zone at the center line bunker backed up by three cross bunkers on the left. The approach is uphill into a blinded steep green complex with a cavernous bunkers left and two more on the right.

#9 Par 4 396/381/364

This side finishes sneaking up to the clubhouse with a glorious looking Par 4 played into the breeze. You need to hit a strong drive to carry to the flat plateau area of the fairway for a clean look at a relatively flat green laying below the clubhouse saddled by bunkers. A more timid shot off the tee will funnel to a low area making the approach shot incrementally more difficult to negotiate.

#10 Par 3 201/190/174

The second nine begins with a very intimidating looking tee shot into this long par three. Anything wide left brings the deep pot bunker into play and wide right has native grass to contend with. The green is an inverted hourglass with a significant depression middle left that makes holding an approach from the right difficult. Two bunkers well short of the green are not in play. I like working the ball up the front third to try to approach the flag of the day from underneath.

#11 Par 5 507/485/455

An unusual shortish five par you want to hold your drive on the left to avoid the slope on the right that will funnel your ball into a low. Second is across a heel print in the fairway to a lay up area short of the green on the left. Shallow green is perched with a false front so make sure to carry the approach pitch into the middle of the green to avoid it rolling back down the fairway. Truth is this is a par hole so walking away with anything else is disappointing.

#12 Par 4 349/337/323

A short but tricky hole you need to hit your tee ball down the left to get into a flat area for a short iron pitch into the slightly blind putting surface tucked to the right. Any ball timid or right will be facing a blind approach over a yawning bunker into an inverted bowl green set 7 to 1 that repels shots without sufficient assertion. There is a sharp fall off left of the green between two bunkers that feeds into a low short grass area.

#13 Par 4 354/331/322

This is the second scoring opportunity hole on this side so take advantage of it to heal your scorecard. Slight dogleg right you drive into an open area with bunkers flanking both sides. Second is a short club into a narrow green with bunkers left and right. Local knowledge says the fairway in front is firm and fast so it might be a good time for a ground approach. There is a steep drop off back right into a low area behind the right greenside bunker.

#14 Par 4 371/369/325

A visual quirky one they have given the moniker the “elephant hole” that bends around a deep notch barranca in the left side of the driving area. You cannot miss this drive on the left or you are facing double from the base of this gnarly depression. From the right center of the fairway you are looking down the hill to the plateau green visually perched against Pleasant Bay with a deep bunker protecting the front left. Another false front your approach must carry to the middle of the green but handle a slope off the back that leans to the bay.

#15 Par 3 187/145/132

This is the Kodak moment at Eastward Ho, a short 150 yard Par 3 set against the bay on the left. A school of bunkers you must carry on the left into a three tiered green which makes club selection quite difficult due to the likely breezes off the left. There is nothing easy about this one but the view.

#16 Par 4 407/380/362

From the drone this is a beautiful hole. A very stiff challenge because a long uphill four par is made longer by the prevailing wind in your face. The entire right side of the fairway is flanked by seven shishlink bunkers separating this from the 14<sup>th</sup> fairway and are in play for any miss to the right. For the approach the line of the hole is swooping right to left so you probably want to turn one over to run it toward the open front of the green. Likely pitching on your third into a green pitched hard back to front that has deep bunkers flanking both sides of the green.

#17 Par 5 537/516/510

Turning back toward the clubhouse this Par 5 is generally downwind but your drive needs to be precise to make this a scoring opportunity. Left off the tee brings trees into play on the second and rightward can get swallowed by a deep gully pulling it further to the right. The lay up is up the left of Fowler’s Bunker, that will swallow shots that have too much wander on them. You are left with about 150 yards into the green is set diagonally to the left across a valley with bunkers on either side. A right to left approach will work up the angle of the green.

#18 Par 4 462/448/404

Home hole is a long and arduous task to get to the house on a positive note. It requires a very strong right to left drive to catch a downslope to throw the ball toward the green. If you leave it out to the right you have 250 into the green and it becomes a three-shot hole. The steep uphill approach is a club and a half extra into an accessible green complex with another false front so play strong to the center of the putting surface. The green slopes away from you and to the left so getting it close on the approach is a major challenge.