

# Stanley Golf Course

**No shortage of challenges on this 27-hole layout**



*The 7th hole is a 434-yard par-4.*

**W**hy is 7th hole of the Blue nine at Stanley Golf Course so difficult? It's a question golfers have been asking themselves for decades.

At first glance, the 434-yard par-4 appears pretty simple. The elevated tee box offers a clear view of a perfectly straight fairway whose width is mostly consistent from tee to green. But look a little closer, and that's when the anxiety level begins to rise.

"This is one of the toughest—if not the toughest—hole on the golf course," said Kyle Hedstrom, head professional of the 27-hole municipal layout in New Britain.

While the tendency is to rip your drive because of the elevated tee, trouble awaits along the entire length of the heavily wooded left side. For added measure, a fairway bunker juts out from the left rough just 230 yards off the tee. On the right, tall trees make any recovery shot difficult.

However, it doesn't stop there. A narrow brook runs through the fairway about 130 yards out from the green, ready to swallow any shot hit less than perfect.

Probably the most imposing obstacle of this sneaky hard hole is the pond that sits short and right of the green. Anything more than a little right and you're wet. Even slightly right will cost you because of the large bunker between the pond and the green. "An errant shot will have you reaching into your golf bag for a new ball," Hedstrom says.

Since the 1930s, Stanley has offered the golfing public a great mix of holes that often seem easy until you play them. With three distinct nine-hole courses, Stanley's layout provides different challenges on each.

"The White nine and Blue nine are similar in terrain and layout," Hedstrom explained. "A total of seven holes between these two nines feature doglegs where driving accuracy is

most important. Elevation changes on these nine-hole courses are not drastic but you will encounter drives from elevated tees as well as tree-lined fairways."

In recent years the course was renovated and reconfigured so that the main 18-hole layout now plays over the White and Red nines. Most nine-hole rounds are directed to the Blue course, which features three par-3s, two of which are over 190 yards from the back tees.

The White nine begins and ends with a par-5. Neither presents a great deal of trouble if you keep the ball in the fairway, leaving you a good chance to make par or birdie.

The 4th and 5th holes, however, are two of the toughest on this nine, Stanley's version of Amen Corner. A dogleg left, the 4th requires a mid-to-long iron tee shot to a small landing area with an uphill approach. Spray your tee shot to the right and you could find the water.

Hedstrom says the 5th hole is his favorite. "It's a very demanding but picturesque par-4," he said. The hole doglegs to the right with water along the right side and woods to the left. You have to be accurate off the tee, and Hedstrom suggests hitting a fade with a fairway wood or long iron. This should set you up for an approach of between 150 and 170 yards to a three-tiered green guarded by a treacherous bunker on the right. Landing on the correct tier is crucial to making par.

The 7th hole on the White has always been a local favorite. It's the shortest hole on the course, measuring 123 yards from the back tees and only 105 from the front. But Hedstrom says you have to be careful because the green slopes back to front, and a well-struck shot with spin could easily roll right off the green.

The Red nine showcases a variety of elevation changes throughout. All but three of the holes run parallel to each other with downhill drives and uphill approaches. Like the other two nines, the tree-lined fairways require accuracy off the tee.

The 478-yard finishing hole is one of the most challenging at Stanley. It's a par-5 with a slight dogleg to the right and features bunkers and trees guarding the landing area. Hedstrom says the ideal position for your drive is the left-center of the fairway. You can't see the green from the fairway, but the putting surface is deep, so make sure to calculate the correct yardage or you could be way short of the cup.

The recent renovations and improvements have made Stanley Golf Course a favorite of central Connecticut golfers. The course offers something for everyone, from beginners to scratch players. Indeed, some of the state's best have called Stanley home. They include Dick Siderowf, a British Amateur and Connecticut Amateur champion; Dennis Coscina, an eight-time CT Section PGA champion and former player on the PGA Tour for seniors, and Kevin Giancola, a four-time CT Section PGA Player of the Year.

Stanley also offers one of the best practice ranges in the area, with grass hitting tees and covered bays. Two years ago, Stanley upgraded its fleet of golf carts and installed GPS.

This year marks the opening of the new Whinstone Tavern in the classic stone clubhouse. The remodeled restaurant, which is under new ownership, will serve lunch and dinner seven days a week and is available for special events.



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[www.stanleygolf.com](http://www.stanleygolf.com)

**2008 Club  
Champions:**

**Men:** Alex Edwards  
**Senior:** Bruce Timm  
**Women:** Carole Oat

**Course Record:** 66 – Kevin Giancola (2008)