

# Arrowhead's Amazing Butterfield Triangle



East Course Hole 17

## Arrowhead Golf Club

26W151 Butterfield Rd.  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
630-653-5800  
www.wheatonparkdistrict.com  
Non-resident rates:  
\$47 weekdays  
\$57 weekends

### T-blade:

I live in the city, so getting to the suburbs on a weekday for a round of golf is rare. After finding Wheaton on a map, I braved the 35 miles of westbound traffic to get there. I didn't know what to expect from this suburban municipal, but the massive clubhouse was an impressive first sight. Looking at the manicured fairways, smooth greens, and challenging layout, I knew this course was definitely worth the trip.

We decided the best way to play it was from all angles. Lefty covered the left, The Linkrat had the right, and I worked on long iron approaches. Most of the fairways were narrow, but misses gave shot makers good chances to recover. The trees were not too

penalizing, and for the most part we avoided the fairway bunkers. What did get us was the water protecting the greens on holes 3, 4, 9, and 11. These holes tested our nerves. At least one of us dunked a ball on each of these five holes.

One of the more refreshing aspects of the course was its serenity. Far from any hustle and bustle, the unassuming setup and natural surroundings made every hole enjoyable. The putting surfaces rolled as well as anything you would find without needing a membership. This was one of the more pleasurable rounds I've had at a municipal course in a long time. Although a bit far from the city, you will be rewarded with a solid pace of play and a high level of maintenance. I look forward to playing Arrowhead again, especially now that I know where it is.

Course: 7.5  
Courtesies: 8.5  
Value: 8

### TV Guy:

A striking new clubhouse is the first thing to catch your eye when you pull into Arrowhead

Golf Club's parking lot in Wheaton. It's the cornerstone to what is a real diamond in the fairway. There are three distinctive and formidable 9-hole tracks, all of which have been renovated by accomplished architect Ken Killian. As far as I know, no relations to the beer company. However, there are some fine local brews in what is surely one of the best 19th holes in Chicagoland. I would like to spend some time watching golfers on the impressive balcony, but when I'm at Arrowhead, I'm playing golf until dark.

What you will notice when you tee it up at Arrowhead is the plush bentgrass throughout the golf course. On each of the three tracks, there is a nice mix of water holes and bunkering to keep golfers honest. One of the nicer aspects about the land of the Arrowhead is the elevation, not what most people expect in the Wheaton area. Arrowhead treats golfers as if they are members of a private club.

How can you beat that?

Now go play it!

Course: 8  
Courtesies: 9  
Value: 9

### The Linkrat:

Leave it to TV Guy for an appetizer when our readers want a meal. We traveled to Red Grange's turf for 27 holes at one of the best municipal golf facilities in the state. I am not sure I agree that the three loops are distinctive, but this is not a criticism. I think each of the three courses at Arrowhead have the Killian-esque sensible variety.

While the Butterfield Triangle is not scalene, it does, to quote a Marisa Tomei character, "blend." On the south course's second tee, golfers will begin to experience the vastness of this facility. To your right, the West Course is visible through the foreboding hardwoods that can belittle a loose swing. To your left sits the meat of the South Course, with the East Course lurking on the other side of the practice range.

More likely than not, you will play the South Course, then the East to complete your round. We played our round in less than



South Course Hole 9

Golf Chicago! regulars and our gang of pigeons visit some of Illinois' finest daily-fee tracks in search of great golf at a fair price. Best Buys focuses on daily-fee courses, which fill the spectrum in Chicagoland. We put the Value-O-Meter to everything from muni-rific courses to public tracks that would shame most warm weather resort courses.

### How We Rate 'Em

#### Course

Toss out the practice facilities, clubhouse, and even GPS. We are looking solely at the track; variety, shot value, challenges, and the enjoyment it provides. We understand most courses have all the bells and whistles to keep you busy pre- and post-round, but we are talking merits of the

course! A solid score here is seven, just like in mathematics class.

#### Courtesies

Here we look at the pace of play, helpful staff, cold water on the course, walking policies, dog-at-the-turn, and the other services that can either springboard our experience or chili-dip our time. The heavier the price tag, the more we will expect.

#### Value Rating

Is a frozen pizza worth the four bucks on the price tag? Is an authentic Chicago-style pizza worth twice as much as Pizza Hut? We select raters who see scores of courses each year because if you have been eating frozen pizza your entire life, you may just think Pizza Hut is Chicago-style pizza. 'Nuff said?

### Our Secret Agents

**The Linkrat:** This rodent is always sniffing for a great track with a reasonable green fee. His handicap proves he spends more time sniffing for Best Buy tracks than practicing on his short game.

**TV Guy:** Enjoys a \$30 municipal track with buddies as much as Chicago's finest courses. TV Guy can smell a fun course like a bloodhound on the scent of a fox. The best player of our crew, with a handicap just under six.

**Lefty:** Plays the most golf of our regular gang, not to mention scheduling a couple annual golf school check-ups, which is why he has dropped his handicap to single digits.

**T-blade:** Swings old school Ben Hogan Apex blades that were forged before he was. T-blade knows his strengths and earns par with course management.



South Course Hole 9

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four hours. Sure, we were trying to beat a storm, but the parking lot was full. I give credit and thanks to the rangers and spacing between groups. In my opinion, the par-4s are an interesting strength at Arrowhead. The prevailing winds and elevation dictate club selection as much as yardage markers on the longer par-4s. A helping wind can also rattle your club selection on the strategic, short par-4s. Killian's bunkering sent our gang into the greenside silica more than I would like to admit; plenty of hard fought pars and bogeys were battered from the beaches. Before your round, be sure to bang some balls on Arrowhead's practice range and to splash some sand from the practice bunkers.

I should have written my clubhouse segment before we put the peg in the ground; there are so many good holes at Arrowhead that I just want to talk golf. The clubhouse shocked T-blade ("This is a muni?"). No, T-blade, this is not your garden-variety public facility. The pro shop is on par with upmarket resort shops. The American Grill is the post-round, after-work gathering spot at Arrowhead. This 19th hole is draped with high definition televisions, yet maintains a tasteful ambiance. We parked ourselves in a booth and ordered an impossibly huge plate

of nachos (fantastic salsa!) then devoured burgers and waffle fries. Trust me, the food so delicious that I plan to couple a meal with my next trip to Arrowhead.

Course: 8.5

Courtesies: 10

Value: 8

### Lefty:

If you haven't visited Arrowhead in the past few years, what are you waiting for? Arrowhead's 27 holes are a perfect day on the golf course. They are a perfect evening too. I'm the first to join TV Guy at extra holes until dark. Playing all the holes at Arrowhead also gives me another opportunity for appetizers and a juicy burger after golf.

My favorite loop is the East Course. Hole 15 may be the weakest handicap hole, but don't let that fool you as you approach this short par-5. It plays uphill and into the prevailing breeze. Foresight and course management habits will come in handy, too. You see, the approach to the green needs to be played from the far-left side of the fairway to have a clean look at the green. The right side is jail, guarded by a huge oak tree and a pair of sleepy bunkers. Prepare yourself for the closing two holes on the East Course.



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At hole 17, a par-3 that plays alongside a pond, regardless of where the cup is cut, play your shot to the right side of the green. The slope of the green will funnel your shot down to the left. And hopefully, leaving you with a chance at stealing a skin with a par. Our group repelled par with some ugly shots off the tee; not a favorable lie going into a tight finishing hole. The last hole on the East Course is a short par-4 that inflates many scores due to the tight landing strip of a fairway. From the tee box it looks no wider than 30 yards, but at the same time, it tempts you to hit it there. Try to gauge the wind and hit a confidence club that will leave you inside 150 yards. The rest is up to your putter.

Arrowhead's courses do offer variety. I loved the East Course, the Linkrat and T-blade took a liking to the South Course, and our TV Guy favored the West Course. This Wheaton Park District facility has something for all golfers, and of course, that says a lot about this place. Get out to Butterfield Road and feel what it is like to be a member of a "private club" for an entire day.

Course: 7

Courtesies: 9

Value: 8

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