

THE LEGEND

6325 Wynne Creek Drive
Biwabik, MN 55708
Clubhouse: 800-688-7669
Golf Shop: 800-688-7669
Type: Public Par: 72
www.giantsridge.com

Region: NorthEast

Course Rating

HOSPITALITY 8.85
PLAYABILITY 8.96
USABILITY 7.78
FACILITY 8.69
VALUE 6.91

OVERALL SCORE

845

Green Fee: \$89.00 (weekend)
1/2 Cart Fee: included in fee

Tees	Men's	Women's	Yards
Red		70.3/126	5084
White	70.1/126		6112
Blue	71.9/129		6528
Gold	73.7/133		6930

The Legend, part of Giants Ridge resort and located just outside of Biwabik, Minnesota, has long been regarded as one of the best ski resorts in Minnesota. In the late 1990s Giants Ridge constructed The Legend golf course to offer year-round sporting entertainment. Later, they built The Quarry as its complement. Both courses are consistently at the top of numerous lists of best golf courses in the country.

The Legend is a startlingly beautiful golf course comprised of steep ridges, deep ravines and hazardous waterways. The challenges begin at the 1st tee box with a 150-yard carry over a cavernous gorge, leading up a steep fairway. The following hole, a par 3, requires another carry over an imposing body of water. The 3rd, a lengthy par 5, presents a short and extreme dogleg off the tee that also requires golfers to negotiate a giant footprint bunker. The difficulties are endless, even on seemingly straightforward shots. Challenging though it might be, The Legend is a fantastic golf experience for anyone who enjoys the game. It provides average golfers with the unique opportunity to enjoy a true championship-level course, just like the pros. And like the pros that play TPC Sawgrass, you too will be humbled by The Legend's signature hole, a 200-yard par 3 on an island green.

This course offers a truly unique golf experience with fine hospitality, albeit at a fairly steep rate of \$89 per round. It offers free range balls and allows golfers to purchase refreshments on the course and pay at the conclusion of the round. Also, the staff offers complimentary club cleaning. Giants Ridge provides year-round lodging with an assortment of activities for outdoor enthusiasts. However, Giants Ridge does fall short with some amenities that could make The Legend much more enjoyable for the first-timer. For instance, the golf carts lack GPS devices, which would make any round more pleasant and playable. Cart paths are generally unpaved and the signage is poor, which makes it easy to get lost especially with the long distances between holes. Nevertheless, Giants Ridge has earned its stellar reputation as home to two of the state's best golf courses.

BIG FISH

14122W True North Lane
Hayward, WI 54843
Clubhouse: 715-934-4770
Golf Shop: 715-934-4770
Type: Public Par: 72
www.bigfishgolf.com

Region: Wisconsin

Course Rating

HOSPITALITY 8.53
PLAYABILITY 7.93
USABILITY 8.35
FACILITY 7.71
VALUE 5.66

OVERALL SCORE

790

Green Fee: \$75 (weekend)
1/2 Cart Fee: included in fee

Tees	Men's	Women's	Yards
Forward		68.6/116	4938
Club	67.5/115	72.2/126	5638
Member	69.5/126		6058
Championship	71.9/131		6608
Tournament	73.9/135		7190

Big Fish Golf Club in Hayward, Wisconsin, was designed by legendary golf course architect Pete Dye, whose better-known designs include TPC Sawgrass and Whistling Straits. If those are his A courses, this is his C. Big Fish is not an entirely bad course; it is half beautiful and a whole lot of fun. However, our expectations when driving five hours to get there were not met. Big Fish's clever advertising and glossy marketing took us hook, line and sinker.

We feel that Big Fish is overpriced. They tout their price as the best of Dye's courses, but that doesn't say much. You don't get what you pay for here. The golf carts should have GPS; they don't. The course charges for range balls; they shouldn't. The fairways are beat up and the greens need some work, as well. They tell you there are distance markers in the fairways, but it's not true. (They don't even have yardage books for sale, as similarly-built premier courses do.) Overall, this is a second-rate course with a first-rate name.

But enough of the bad; there's a lot of good here, too. The front nine is a links-style course with several bunkers and pot bunkers. It's relatively wide open and tree free, but the road and casino views on a couple holes are unfortunate. There is fescue, but on the front it's not tall or thick or even a half-hazard. Holes 3 and 7 try to bait your ball into joining the fish, and #9 is a great finisher, but it can blow up your whole scorecard. Yet the greatness of Big Fish awaits you on the back nine. (Snag a mid-round restroom break and a quick nibble at the comfortable and cute building overlooking the 9th green.)

There's tons of beauty on the back nine. Number 10 was the first hole that met our expectations of the course. Hole 12 is a great downhill par 3 (crazy long but picturesque from the tips), and 13 is unbelievable—a downhill par 5 that, if reversed, would have to be a par 9. We consider either #13 or #16 to be the signature hole, and #18 superbly reels you back into the clubhouse.