

No Coasting Here

Course Even Gave The Great Arnold Palmer Fits, 'But I Loved It'

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Wonderful memories of his youth returned

when Arnold Palmer talked a few years ago about one of his favorite holes.

"The fourth at Shennecossett. What a par-3," the 1956 and 1960 Insurance City Open champion once told *The Courant*. "It gave me fits, sometimes."

Palmer smiled.

"But I loved it, and I always will. Great course, Shennecossett."

Palmer was able to play the course with the links feel when he was in the Coast Guard and stationed in Groton in the early 1950s.

Years have passed, but Shennecossett GC in Groton remains a splendid test. "I don't care what caliber the player, he's not going to hit just a driver and a wedge," Shennecossett pro Todd Goodhue said. "You're going to have to hit just about every club in your bag."

And if the wind, which always seems active at the 6,562-yard, par-71 course by the Long Island Sound and the Thames River, really kicks up, it will be an even a longer walk to complete.

"I remember having to hit a driver on that fourth [208 yards] hole," said Palmer, who competed in the 2003 Senior PGA Championship at Aronimink GC



in Newtown Square, Pa., a course like Shennecossett that was designed by famed architect Donald Ross. "The green is so difficult to keep a ball on because it's like an upside-down coffee cup. You've got a small target area."

This turtleback green sits atop a hill.

"You can't miss left or right because the ball will roll right off the green," Goodhue said. "The best place to miss is short. Many of our members say, 'It's the toughest par-4 out there.'"

Shennecossett features fescue, usually ranging from 18-24 inches in height, on 15 of its holes. The course also has 101 bunkers.

Shennecossett GC, Hartford

IF ARNOLD PALMER thinks the fourth hole is one of the toughest par-3 holes he has played, where does that leave the rest of us?

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GC, Greenwich CC, Wampanoag CC-West Hartford and the CC of Waterbury are the Ross-designed courses in Connecticut.

"There are aficionados of Donald Ross from across the country that make it a point to hit our course," Goodhue said.

And no matter how you're faring, when you get to the par-4 16th hole, you'll be impressed with the sight from the green that overlooks Long Island Sound and the Thames River.

"Sometimes the Coast Guard Eagle is under sail or a submarine is coming in," Goodhue said. "People keep coming back and talking about it. The view is inspirational or motivational to many."