

Past meets present in Fredericksburg, VA



Cannon Ridge Golf Club

By BRENT LONG

As a golf destination itself, or as a stopover on the way to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina or maybe even Florida, Fredericksburg, Virginia shouldn't be overlooked.

Our family hopped in the SUV just before the start of school and headed 1,200 kilometres to Virginia Beach for four nights of wonderful beach time and some early morning golf. Aside from a wonderful afternoon of shopping at Prime Outlets Grove City just north of Pittsburg – the best outlet mall my wife has ever visited – we spent a couple of nights in historic Fredericksburg at the vibrant new Homewood Suites on Hospitality Lane.

I didn't know much about the Civil War except what I have seen in the movies over the years, and a trip to this neck of the woods is certainly an educational eye-opener. As I learned from my tour of [Cannon Ridge Golf Club](#) - a great championship caliber golf course that offers an intriguing history lesson along the way – there's history in these hills and valleys.

On December 11, 1862 The Battle of Fredericksburg began. This battle started on the ridge above the scenic Rappahannock River. The Union Army took up camp there in preparation for the battle. Along the banks of the river The Union Army setup cannons that gave cover fire for the troops during the battle. The fighting lasted for four days with General Lee driving out The Union for a Confederate victory.



Meadows Farms Waterfall Hole

On this historic site, Former PGA Tour Player/Commissioner Deane Beman and renown golf course architect Bobby Weed teamed up to create a world-class golf facility that opened to rave reviews in 2003 and includes plaques telling the story as you go along. There are even historic cannon emplacements. There are five sets of tees here on the par-71 Beman Course with the Gold Cannon tees, the tips, playing at 7,010 yards with bent grass tees, fairways and greens. Then there are the Black tees at 6,570 yards; the Blue at 6,035; the White tees at 5,650; and the Red at 4,950.

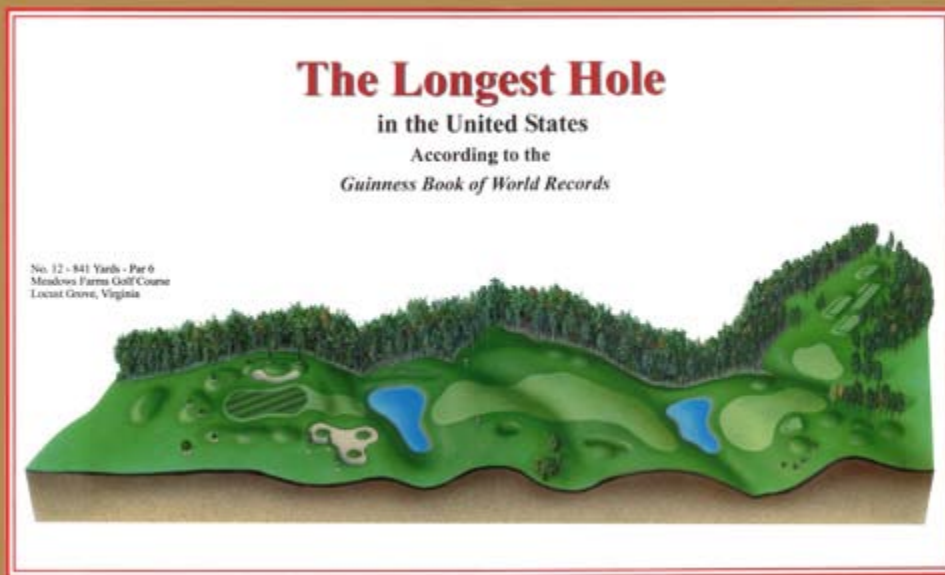


The Gauntlet

While the first two or three holes are welcoming, there's a real battle to be won - especially on the back nine if you're going to score well. This course is certainly the best of the five courses in the Fredericksburg area, and better than anything I played in Virginia Beach. Green fee rates vary from \$49 to \$79 US.

We couldn't resist the temptation to play the longest golf hole in North America as recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records at the friendly 27-hole Meadows Farms Golf Course. A 20 minute drive past several more battlefield sites and we arrived at the family-run operation that offers Canadians a free round of golf if they bring owner Bobby Lewis a 2-4 of Blue or another favourite beer from north of the border – you should see Lewis' bar!

I rarely play golf from the tips, but the Longest Hole Nine plays 3,909 yards, par-37 including the mammoth 841-yard, par-6 third hole that I bogeyed after putting my fourth shot into the greenside pond!



While there's nothing fancy about Meadows Farm, it's a great place to have a ton of fun where

over a towering waterfall that you drive your cart under, an island green and even one hole shaped as a baseball diamond – you have to see it to believe it.

The course opened in 1993, and green fees are \$37 to \$42 US.

My third stop in the area was a short march out to [The Gauntlet Golf Club](#) – which certainly proved to be a handful. Set on the shore of Lake Curtis, it curls around the water's edge with unsuspecting scenic beauty. The wooded parkland layout moves swiftly over the front nine with some tricky shots if you have never played the course before, so paying attention to the GPS tips on your golf cart is my advice to you.

Architect P.B. Dye spins a fabulous back nine including a terrific finish starting on number 15 with a 240-yard par-3 that I hit driver on. It's a rollercoaster finish over the three closing par-4s. Number 17 is memorable for its uphill shot to the wildest green on the course, while number 18 is a narrow tree-line to another elevated green surrounded by deep pot bunkers.

Interestingly, the fairways feature a lush zoysia grass, which the ball sits up very well on putting a premium on staying on the short stuff. Regular green fees range from \$45 to \$57 US.

The [Fredericksburg tourism website](#) provides information on tourist locations, and details about several Civil War sites and monuments. If you like beer, check out [The Capital Ale House](#) on Caroline Street in Old Town Fredericksburg that has a menu of 200-plus beers and awesome burgers.

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