



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

A row of golf carts at Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters.

Business

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“Traffic has been off the charts busy,” said Kevin Story, lead golf professional at Eagle Crest Resort.

“We are looking forward to another full and busy season. Our top priority is to continue providing a great golf experience while adjusting our safety practices with current COVID guidelines.”

The good news is that some of last year’s more stringent COVID-19 restrictions appear to be more relaxed.

Double-occupancy carts are now allowed at most facilities, including Aspen Lakes. “We continue to allow dual riders in carts as long as they live in the

“Joining Broken Top was a great decision. Having a community to share outdoor recreation with in a time of uncertainty has been a welcomed reprieve. The only challenge has been finding a tee time because the course is so busy.”

— Jason Scarlett, a new Broken Top Club member in 2020

same household,” said Howie Pruitt, director of golf operations.

At Widgi Creek Golf Club in Bend, there appear to be glimpses of a return to golf normalcy as well.

“We want our players and customers to feel safe, first and foremost,” said Taylor Giacomini, head professional at Widgi Creek. “With that said, we continue to adhere to CDC guidelines and are now allowing players to remove flags when putting if they choose. As far as business goes, we are picking up

right where we left off last year, which is great.”

With such a marked increase in business, Central Oregon golf courses have readily adapted their policies and procedures to safely handle increased demand.

“Preparation is key,” said Zach Swoffer, Brasada Ranch’s director of club operations. “From a golf standpoint, we continue to use electrostatic sprayer whenever a cart is used. We’re also installing plastic dividers in carts to maximize player efficiency on the course,

while also maintaining social distancing practices on our practice facilities and tee boxes.”

At Meadow Lakes Golf Course in Prineville, safety continues to remain a top priority while restrictions are being carefully lifted.

“The CDC has communicated that touch points aren’t spreading the virus as much as they initially thought,” said Zach Lampert, facility manager at Meadow Lakes. “To that end, we’re leaving foam inside the cup, but are allowing players to remove the flag if they

want. We’ve also put rakes back in bunkers and encourage everyone to enjoy their time here as safely as possible. Masks are still required in the pro shop and our staff is up-to-date on best safety practices and procedures.”

A quick look at any of Central Oregon’s golf courses tells a similar story: golf is once again booming. Like no other time in recent memory, Central Oregonians are turning to the turf for a breath of fresh air, exercise, and interaction with each other in a common pursuit.

While everyone is anxiously awaiting a return to life as we knew it not long ago, it’s nice knowing that peace of mind can safely be found strolling down the fairway.