

Tempting Two

If you can drive the ball straight and hit the perfect tee shot, feel free to go for the green in two on the par 5, 535-yard second hole at Valhalla GC in Louisville, Ky.

Professional golfers, who will visit Valhalla on Aug. 17-20 to play in the PGA Championship, can hit that ideal drive fairly frequently. For the average golfer, however, the smart play is to lay up on the second shot and hit a wedge to the green, says Mark Wilson, superintendent of the course.

"About 5 percent of your average golfers will be able to hit the drive to the perfect place on the fairway," Wilson says. "There's no shame in taking a par on this hole. If you try to be too bold, you can end up in trouble."

A creek meanders down the left side of the hole and an open, marshy space guards the right. The fairway is narrow until 250 yards out, and then it opens considerably.

The hole is built in a flood plain, and that creates maintenance headaches for Wilson when it rains heavily. Combined with its elevated fairway – 30 feet above the creek on the left – the moisture-retaining fairway can be difficult to mow.

"To take care of those steep slopes, you have to wait until the grass is dry, and that sometimes creates delays," Wilson says. "Flood debris also requires an investment of extra labor hours to clean up."



**Superintendent
Mark Wilson**

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