



THE PAR-4 FIRST AT MUSKET RIDGE IN MYERSVILLE, MARYLAND

FINALLY, REAL INNOVATION

Musket Ridge redefines the beverage cart

IN AN AGE OF DRIVERLESS CARS AND drones, Musket Ridge Golf Club is partnering with a tech start-up to reinvent the beverage cart. Ranked No. 6 on *Golfweek's* list of the best public courses in Maryland, Musket Ridge is no stranger to innovation with previous breakthroughs in water monitoring and zero food waste. Now the course is partnering with online ordering developer Foodio to eliminate that dreaded wait for the beverage cart. Golfers can order whatever they want from the clubhouse bar and restaurant whenever they want it during their round.

The concept was born when one

of Musket's managers joined Foodio's board of directors. "We thought that if people can order a cocktail to be delivered to their apartment in L.A. or Manhattan, then we could surely find a way to deliver food and drinks from our own kitchen to our golfing customers mid-round," says Damon DeVito of Affinity Management, which operates Musket. "We're always looking for ways to make the golf experience better. Many of those ideas cost tens of thousands of dollars and make little impact. This is something we all got excited about and the cost was negligible compared to the benefit."

It is the age-old plight of the golfer who, playing the game of his or her life, is interrupted by the groan of an empty stomach. The sun beats down, bringing about desire for a cold beer or Gatorade to wash down victory. But the beverage cart is nowhere to be found.

And what are the odds of getting what you want, when you want it on a golf course? You tip generously to encourage a speedy return, but the beverage cart stays on its circuit and arrives back on its own time. On slow days it sits idle.

Many courses have arranged for a pit stop at the clubhouse at the ninth hole to try to solve this issue, but that interrupts your game and takes time walking to and from the clubhouse. Beverage cart service blindly roams the course seeking to aid parched golfers, but offers only crackers and perhaps a sandwich made hours earlier and wrapped in plastic in hopes of preserving freshness. Paying is slow, corralling orders for the group is slow and noisy, and ultimately you never get exactly what you want when you want it.

All that is in the past at Musket Ridge. When the all-too-familiar pang of hunger hits, those two cheeseburgers with extra onions that you've been craving since the third hole are at your fingertips with Foodio's smartphone app. And so are the cold beers to wash them down. Need sunscreen? Forgot your hat? Rinsed your last golf ball in the hazard? It can all be delivered, and you pay online with little interruption to your game. Your order will be brought right to you. The future has arrived on the fairways at Musket Ridge. ■

— By Phoebe Holiday