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FEATURE STORY

## Daufuskie Island golf: Close to Hilton Head, but a world away

By Joel Zuckerman,  
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*If you've traveled as far south as Hilton Head Island, go a little farther: Daufuskie Island is South Carolina golf that may be close to Hilton Head, but its untrameled golf courses feel like another place entirely.*

Daufuskie Island is just 10 minutes from Hilton Head by water taxi, but seems a world away. Towering hardwoods line rustic roads, and wildflowers, native vegetation and sparkling ocean views outnumber stores, restaurants and traffic circles by a staggering margin. But just like Hilton Head, golf is paramount on Daufuskie.

The southernmost point of Daufuskie Island is as far south as you can get in the state of South Carolina. It's also home to the Bloody Point Golf Course, a parkland style design by the celebrated architectural duo of Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish. This is a rustic golf experience, far different than what visitors have come to expect at the "tee time factories" on nearby Hilton Head. There's a minimum of signage, housing, cart paths or man made interference of any kind on this 6,900 yard, par 72 track, which boasts a 132 slope.

Fairways are generous and most of the trouble is incidental.



Courtesy photo

The Melrose Course at Daufuskie Island Resort boasts beautiful ocean views and a testing Jack Nicklaus design.

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Wetlands are the prominent hazards, and most are angled off of the line of play, with few forced carries necessary. It's unfortunate the designers didn't make more liberal use of the superb water views that should be available in abundance. As it is, the only clear water view is behind the par-3 17th, the strongest 1-shot hole on the golf course.

A far sterner test in the Nicklaus designed **Melrose Golf Course**, in the central portion of the island, facing the Atlantic Ocean and the southern tip of Hilton Head. This sister course to Bloody Point is about 200 yards longer, a par 72 close to 7,100 yards and sloped at 138. This golf course is significantly more difficult from tee to green. Either water or wetlands front more than half the holes on the course. Serpentine fairway bunkers wait to swallow drives that drift off line, and smallish, elevated greens make accuracy on the approach a necessity.

There are no parallel fairways at Melrose, so foursomes play in relative isolation as the inland holes play through dense woods. The course concludes in stirring fashion close to the ocean, offering the dazzling Lowcountry views that are expected from this island location. The penultimate hole in particular, a medium length par-4, sits hard by the beach with a green jutting into the ocean. It's the best hole on a course full of highlights.

No story on Daufuskie golf would be complete without mention of the premiere property on the island, the **Calibogue Course at Haig Point**. This Rees Jones masterpiece is a par 72 of 7,100 yards, with a 142 slope rating. It remains one of the most scenic and challenging courses in the Southeast, and is undergoing an extensive renovation, which will bring the course back to its original standard upon reopening this fall.

Jones makes far greater use of the water views available on this northern parcel of the island than his architectural contemporaries did elsewhere. The Haig Point golf complex features 29 holes; the championship Calibogue course is a regulation 18, while the softer Haig course is ingeniously intertwined on the same piece of property. There are different tees that minimize the length and forced carries of the signature course. There are also two additional par 3 holes that can be played bump and run style, without requiring a shot launched over hazards. The additional nine holes are known as the Osprey nine, and as opposed to the 19th hole standard most everywhere else, the Haig Point bar is appropriately known as the 30th hole.

Members can sponsor unaccompanied play, and serious real estate prospects can sometimes make their way onto the tee as well. Explore any avenue available, as this is a course you don't want to miss.

May 31, 2007

*Any opinions expressed above are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the management. The information in this story was accurate at the time of publication. All contact information, directions and prices should be confirmed directly with the golf course or resort before making reservations and/or travel plans.*

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