

South Carolina's 25 Best Courses You Can Play

Grand Strand, Charleston areas again dominate the elite list

GREENVILLE, S.C.

The Midlands, Upstate and Hilton Head areas each have newcomers on the latest list of premier public access facilities announced by the South Carolina Golf Course Ratings Panel.

The "25 Best Courses You Can Play," the panel's second such release for the pay-and-play golfer, still remains dominated by the Grand Strand and Charleston markets as it was in 2005. Those two major tourism regions account for a combined 18 of the top 25.

The trio of fresh faces in the lineup includes May River Club in Bluffton, The Walker Course at Clemson University and the Country Club of South Carolina on the outskirts of Florence. Their arrival in the top echelon is all the more meritorious given that the panel this year trimmed its list from 30 to 25 courses.

Notable departures include the TPC of Myrtle Beach, which has undergone a change of ownership and only recently reopened with newly grassed greens, and Pine Lakes International Country Club, which has been closed for a year awaiting a major overhaul.

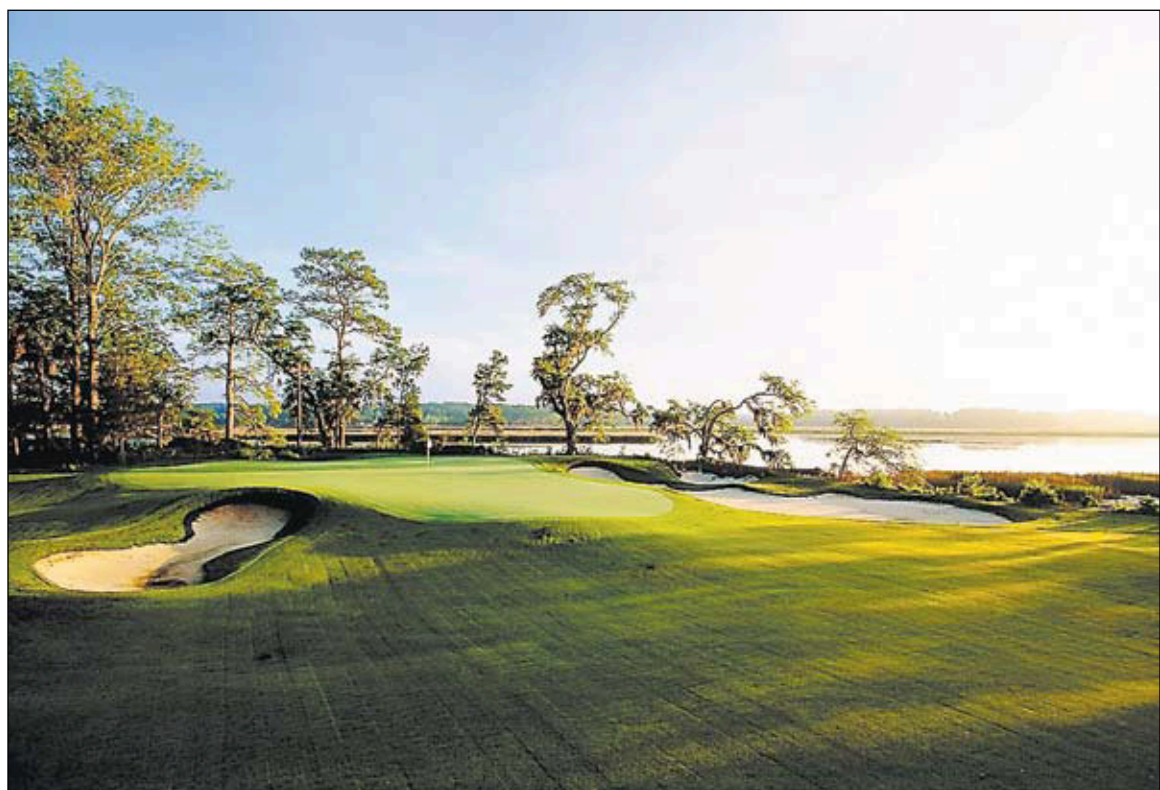
"The list we have released is one

that any state in the nation would be proud to offer," golf panel executive director Michael Whitaker, said. "To be truthful, it is a list that the vast majority of states would die to have."

Whitaker can hardly be accused of parochialism. No fewer than 10 of the top 25 courses you can play in the Palmetto State also appear on *Golf Digest* magazine's list of the best 100 public play facilities in the nation.

An 11th, May River is missing from the *Golf Digest* list but ranks higher than some of the other 10 when it comes to the magazine's list of best courses of any kind in the state.

The apparent anomaly could be explained by the fact that May River, voted best new course in the state by the S.C. golf panel in 2005, is a private course that allows public access for



May River Golf Club at Palmetto Bluff

guests staying at Palmetto Bluff Resort.

This is also true of the Country Club of South Carolina, host of this year's South Carolina State Amateur Championship, which extends playing privileges to guests using on-site accommodations. The

course was designed by Ellis Maples, who was tutored in the craft by the legendary Donald Ross.

The Walker Course at Clemson University has been the recent training ground for PGA Tour stars including Lucas Glover, Charles Warren, Jonathan Byrd and D. J. Trahan. Designed by D. J. DeVictor, the course winds over rolling terrain and heads for home alongside Lake Hartwell.

The most talked about hole on the course is the par-3 17th that uses four bunkers be-

hind the green to create the footprint of Clemson's renowned Tiger paw.

"I think we are spoiled in South Carolina when it comes to golf," Whitaker says. "And this list of the best 25 public access courses in the state is just one reason why."

'I think we are spoiled in South Carolina when it comes to golf.'

—Michael Whitaker

Courses are listed below alphabetically within region. *New to the list of 25 Best You Can

Play.Midland: *Country Club of South Carolina, Florence; Mount Vintage Plantation, North Augusta.

Upstate: *The Walker Course at Clemson University.

Charleston: Kiawah Island Resort – The Ocean Course; Osprey Point; Turtle Point; RiverTowne Country Club; Wild Dunes Resort Links Course.

Hilton Head: Daufuskie Island Resort Melrose Course; *May River Golf Club at Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton; Palmetto Dunes Resort, Arthur Hills Course; Sea Pines Resort Harbour Town Golf Links.



Caledonia Golf & Fish Club - Hole 6

Grand Strand: Barefoot Resort Love Course, Dye Course, Fazio Course; Caledonia Golf & Fish Club; Grande Dunes Resort Course; Legends Resort Heathland Course; King's North at Myrtle Beach National; Pawleys Plantation Golf and Country Club; Prestwick Country Club; The Dunes Golf and Beach Club; The Heritage Club; Tidewater Golf Club and Plantation; True Blue Plantation.

The South Carolina Golf Course Ratings Panel is composed of golf enthusiasts representing a diverse range of occupations, handicaps and backgrounds. These individuals have been charged with the task of identifying the best that South Carolina golf has to offer.

The objective is to promote excellence in golf course design and operations through competitive rankings, education and public advocacy. The Panel serves as an ambassador for golf in South Carolina by striving to stimulate and facilitate the promotion and marketing of the outstanding golf courses, resorts, and real estate developments.



Kiawah island Resort - Turtle Point Hole 14

As new courses open during the year panelists are asked to evaluate and rate them. The results of these ratings are used to recognize courses for outstanding achievement in course design. These awards are presented annually.

Bi-annually (in even-numbered years) members of the Panel identify their choices for the "50 Best Courses" in the state, public or private. In odd-numbered years the Panel releases a listing of the best non-private courses in the state. Every resort, public access, and daily-fee course is eligible for this elite listing.

In determining their ratings panelists consider the following criteria:

Routing — How the course flows from hole to hole in harmony with existing topography.

Design Balance — Degree to which the course demands a full range of shot requirements.

Strategy — How design features test course management.

Equity — The course's capacity to reward good shots and penalize poor ones.

Memorability — The distinctiveness of the golf course and its individual holes.

Aesthetics — The degree to which scenery and surrounds lend to enjoyment.

Experience — Incorporates all elements of the course from pro shop, to practice range, clubhouse and more.

The 25 Best You Can Play in South Carolina

Listed alphabetically within region
* New to the list of 25 Best You Can Play

Midlands:

*Country Club of South Carolina Florence	843-669-0920	www.countryclubsc.com
Mount Vintage Plantation North Augusta	803-279-5422	www.mountvintage.com

Upstate:

*The Walker Course at Clemson University Clemson	864-656-0236	www.clemson.edu/madren/toc/walker
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Charleston:

Kiawah Island Resort – The Ocean Course Kiawah Island	800-576-1570	www.kiawahresort.com
Kiawah Island Resort – Osprey Point Kiawah Island	800-576-1570	www.kiawahresort.com
Kiawah Island Resort - Turtle Point Course Kiawah Island	800-576-1570	www.kiawahresort.com
RiverTowne Country Club Mt Pleasant	888-576-1311	www.rivertownecountryclub.com
Wild Dunes Resort - Links Course Isle of Palms	888-778-1876	www.wilddunes.com

Hilton Head:

Daufuskie Island Resort - Melrose Course Daufuskie Island	800-648-6778	www.daufuskieresort.com
*May River Golf Club at Palmetto Bluff Bluffton	843-706-6500	www.palmettobluffresort.com
Palmetto Dunes Resort - Arthur Hills Course Hilton Head Island	800-827-3006	www.palmettodunes.com
Sea Pines Resort - Harbour Town Golf Links Hilton Head Island	800-955-8337	www.seapines.com

Grand Strand:

Barefoot Resort – Love Course North Myrtle Beach	800-856-0501	www.barefootgolf.com
Barefoot Resort – Dye Course North Myrtle Beach	800-856-0501	www.barefootgolf.com
Barefoot Resort – Fazio Course North Myrtle Beach	800-856-0501	www.barefootgolf.com
Caledonia Golf & Fish Club Pawleys Island	800-483-6800	www.fishclub.com
Grande Dunes - Resort Course Myrtle Beach	888-886-8877	www.grandedunes.com
Legends Resort - Heathland Course Myrtle Beach	800-299-6187	www.legendsgolf.com
King's North at Myrtle Beach National Myrtle Beach	800-882-3420	www.mbn.com
Pawleys Plantation Golf and Country Club Pawleys Island	800-367-9959	www.pawleysplantation.com
Prestwick Country Club Myrtle Beach	888-250-1767	www.prestwickcountryclub.com
The Dunes Golf and Beach Club Myrtle Beach	866-386-3722	www.dunesgolfandbeachclub.com
The Heritage Club Pawleys Island	800-299-6187	www.legendsgolf.com
Tidewater Golf Club and Plantation Little River	800-446-5363	www.tide-water.com
True Blue Plantation Pawleys Island	888-778-1876	www.truebluegolf.com

The Panel consists of up to 125 members, eight of which serve as Regional Directors. Twenty-five percent of the panel represents each of the following geographical regions: The Upstate, The Midlands, The Lowcountry, and The Grand Strand. Twenty percent of the panel members are women. The governing body of the Panel is its Board of Directors, consisting of the eight Regional Directors plus two at-large members.