

McConnell Golf: Nothing Finer in Carolinas

Raleigh-based McConnell Golf courses continue to dominate the rankings of North and South Carolina's best. The McConnell Golf stable now includes eight of the most highly regarded layouts, as well as some of the most memorable golf experiences, in either state.

RALEIGH, N.C. — As it enters its second decade of existence, Raleigh-based McConnell Golf has forged an outstanding reputation for a commitment to presenting its members the finest possible private club offerings. The company's attention to quality is a chief reason why each of the McConnell Golf-owned courses in North and South Carolina were ranked among the two states' best released earlier this month.

Ranking the golf courses in the two states is not an easy task, given that both Carolinas have been described as having "50 Top-10 golf courses." The North Carolina Golf Panel — comprised of golf media (including some of the top daily newspapers in the state), as well as a number of golf club pros, noted amateurs, college golf coaches and business leaders — provides a well-researched list of the top golf courses in the state each year. The South Carolina Golf Course Rating Panel is composed of 125 golf enthusiasts from throughout the state and represents a diverse range of occupations, handicaps and backgrounds. The organization's objective is promoting excellence in the state's golf course design and operations through the competitive rankings, education and public advocacy.

In North Carolina's 2014 rankings, Old North State Club at Badin Lake checked in at No. 4 in the Tar Heel State, while Raleigh Country Club (No. 21), Sedgefield Country Club's Ross Course in Greensboro (No. 22) — home of the PGA TOUR's Wyndham Championship — and Treyburn Country Club in Durham (No. 28) all landed in North Carolina's Top 30 for yet another year.

Not to be left out, McConnell's popular Pete Dye layout, formerly The Cardinal Golf and Country Club and now part of Sedgefield CC's 36-hole offering, moved up a spot to No. 56 in the state while its newest acquisition, the Hale Irwin-designed Tournament Players Club at Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, home of the Web.com Tour's Rex Hospital Open, enjoyed one of the biggest jumps in 2014 state rankings, catapulting from No. 90 to No. 73.

Meanwhile in the Palmetto State, McConnell Golf's renowned Musgrove Mill in Clinton, S.C., remained a raters' favorite, checking in at No. 22 in 2014, while McConnell Golf members along Myrtle Beach's storied Grand Strand continue to be bedazzled by the brilliance of Greg Norman's The Reserve Club of Pawley's Island, now ranked No. 40 in South Carolina. In addition, Musgrove Mill was recognized for the Most Challenging Finishing Hole in the Upstate region of South Carolina.

Members of the North Carolina Panel also voted on the top dozen courses in six regions of the state — Old North State and Sedgefield Ross were Nos. 1 and 2 in the Piedmont Triad, while Raleigh CC and Treyburn made up two of the top three in the Triangle — plus two specialty categories: Best Greens Complexes and Best Finishing Holes. In addition, the Panel had fun with two other ballots: a determination of North Carolina's All-Time Best Golfers (required to either be born in or have significant

ties to our state), and the Best “19th hole,” a salute to the relaxing post-round tradition enjoyed by many golfers.

Sedgefield’s Ross Course was voted the Best Greens Complexes in the Piedmont Triad followed by Old North State Club at No. 4, while Raleigh CC and Treyburn were top 4 in the Triangle. Among the Best Finishing Holes, Raleigh Country Club was No. 1 in the Triangle, while Old North State Club was No. 1 in the Piedmont Triad and Sedgefield’s Ross Course was No. 4. Sedgefield’s Ross, Raleigh CC and Old North State Club all three offer among the state’s finest 19th holes.

North Carolina’s Top 100 courses are determined by a scoring system where panelists consider among these factors: routing, design, strategy, memorability, fairness, variety and aesthetics. The Panel’s 2014 rankings are detailed in the April issue of Business North Carolina magazine and at NCGolfPanel.com.

South Carolina’s judging criteria includes routing, variety, strategy, equity, memorability, aesthetics and experience. The best courses, public or private, are selected in even-numbered years, and the best public courses are ranked in odd-numbered years. Information on South Carolina rankings can be found online at www.scgolfpanel.org.

“With new panel members and the renovations and upgrades on a lot of courses, you’re always going to have fluctuations on the list,” said Michael Whitaker, the South Carolina Golf Course Rating Panel’s executive director. “There are so many good ones that a lot of quality golf courses don’t make the Top 50.”

About McConnell Golf

McConnell Golf’s mission during its first decade of existence has been to offer all areas of the Carolinas some of the finest private golf and country clubs. McConnell Golf expands its new club management division at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, S.C. It offers pure golf for the true golfer as a privately held company offering one membership and access to seven private club experiences at world-class facilities and golf courses designed by legends Donald Ross, Pete Dye, Tom Fazio, Arnold Palmer, Greg Norman and Hale Irwin. Founded in 2003, McConnell Golf provides 153 holes of championship golf at these properties: Raleigh Country Club in Raleigh, N.C.; Treyburn Country Club in Durham, N.C.; Old North State Club at Badin Lake, N.C.; Musgrove Mill Golf Club in Clinton, S.C.; The Reserve Golf Club in Pawleys Island, S.C.; Sedgefield Country Club Dye Course and Ross Course in Greensboro, N.C.; and Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, N.C. All clubs are maintained and serviced to the highest standards with an emphasis on true golf, complete service and absolute quality. McConnell Golf offers numerous unique membership opportunities that are tailored to young families, avid golfers, corporate executives and culinary enthusiasts. Membership offerings include individual club memberships, as well as innovative corporate, national and legacy memberships that deliver unmatched access to the top courses in the Carolinas. www.McConnellGolf.com