

POLO

GOLF

RALPH LAUREN

TOP 100 GOLF COURSES in Britain & Ireland

The definitive new ranking by the people who know

INSIDE

There's a new No.1

Find out which celebrated course is now on top - and which ones have dropped out

Trump's debut

His stunning Scottish links is the highest new entry in Top 100 history

FROM THE
MAKERS OF

**GOLF
WORLD**

HERITAGE, PERFORMANCE & AUTHENTICITY SINCE 1987





THE DEFINITIVE TOP 100

Golf World has been ranking Britain and Ireland's best courses for more than 30 years. That's longer than anyone else, our panel is the best in the business, and the ranking is widely regarded as the most authoritative and definitive there is. But in all that time, there hasn't been a shake-up quite like this.

For a start, there's a new number one; only the fourth new number one ever, following Muirfield, Royal Birkdale and Turnberry. After being top of the tree for the last six years, Turnberry has been nudged off the pedestal by Royal County Down. This is the first time a course from any part of Ireland has been No.1.

And then there's the highest new entry in Top 100 history for Donald

Trump's new links near Aberdeen. Golf World's panellists were the first people in the world to get a preview of Martin Hawtree's finished layout, with a view to considering it for this year's top 100, two months before it officially opened. After very careful deliberation, our panellists see a very bright future for this extraordinary layout – and that's why it has gone straight into the top-10.

It is interesting to note that if there is a trend in this year's ranking, it is towards courses which make the game more fun for us amateurs. Golf participation is down, and part of the reason is that the game is too difficult. People are not playing so much because – too often – the game seems to be a grind.

And so, it is very encouraging that courses which make the game more enjoyable – like Castle Stuart in Inverness, with its wide fairways and numerous tee options – have moved up considerably this year.

At the end of the day, golf course rankings are always going to be subjective. But, given the history of Golf World's ranking, and the fact that it's been compiled by a wide range of experts and ordinary golfers, who really understand what makes a great course, we feel it's as close as you'll get to a definitive Top 100.

As always, we welcome your feedback about the list – whether you agree with the positions or not.

The Top 100 Editors



USE THE LIST

Golf World's Top 100 is the most relevant and up-to-date ranking produced. We talk to every course on the list – and many more besides – to get any updates, check green fees and yardages. Every entry includes the following information:

- 1 **ITS POSITION** And whether it has gone up or down since 2010.
- 2 **THE ORIGINAL DESIGNER** Plus any significant contributions.
- 3 **THE YARDAGE** From the back, often Championship, set of tees.
- 4 **GREEN FEES** A guide to the midweek and weekend prices.
- 5 **CONTACTS** Where you can book a round and find the latest offers.
- 6 **A DESCRIPTION** Which is based on the most up-to-date information.



81 **WORPLESDON**
ABERCROMBY & COLT, 1898 / WOKING,
SURREY / 6,431 YARDS, PAR 71

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £90; Sat-Sun members only
CONTACT: 01483 473287, www.worplesdongc.co.uk
This classic heathland keeps getting better; continued forestry management has helped create greater airflow and improve turf – all with the added bonus of promoting its traditional characteristics. A few other tweaks here and there keep this exquisite heathland among the elite.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Top 100 is a massive undertaking, and it wouldn't happen without the valuable support of our panel, who take so much time and effort to play, rank and talk about the courses. Chris Bertram and Peter Masters assimilated all the information, and called every course. Getty Images' David Cannon has supplied many of the stunning images. Thanks to Polo Golf for again supporting Golf World's rankings. Finally, we'd like to thank all the readers who contact us after every Top 100 is published. Your comments are noted, and will help us improve our next GB&I list.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE NEW GB&I TOP 100



POST: Golf World, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough, PE2 6EA

Heritage

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78

MACHRIHANISH DUNES

McLay Kidd, 2008 / MACHRIHANISH, MULL OF KINTYRE, ARGYLL / 7,175 YARDS, PAR 72

GREEN FEES: £56 (£79 a day) all week

CONTACT: 01586 810000, www.machrihanishdunes.com

David McLay Kidd was at one with nature when he routed Machrihanish Dunes through a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Of the 259 acres on which the course sits, only seven were disturbed by McLay Kidd. It features six greens and five tees on the edge of the Atlantic and only the tees and greens were shaped and seeded.

▲ (21)



ALL CHANGE AT 'MACH DUNES'

- The black tee on the 1st has been moved to the right to make the fairway visible. The green's undulations have been softened a little.
- The 2nd tee has been shifted inland, making the fairway more visible from

- the tee and stunning ocean views. The green's been altered on the right to add new pin positions.
- The blue tee on the 3rd has been moved to higher ground to make the green more visible; the area where the old tee was is

- now used as a path, reducing the length of the walk. The rough 15 yards short of the green has been mown down.
- The landing zone on the 4th fairway has been softened for more playability. To keep the

Only open a few years, every hole has been tweaked to keep improving this magical links.

- diversity of plants in the area, there has been a major rough management (reduction) programme, protecting wild flowers.
- On the 5th, again there has been a lot of rough management while the 6th's greenside bunkers

- have been re-shaped.
- The 7th green has been altered to increase pin positions, the shape of the fairway bunker has been modified and extensive rough management.
- The 8th green has been moved 40-50 yards closer

- to the fairway, reducing the carry to the green.
- The 9th fairway has been widened and the large fairway bunker on the 10th has been made into two smaller ones.
- The entrance to the fairway on the 11th has

- been widened and the thick rough has been thinned out.
- The 12th green has been softened on the right and the approach widened.
- A new aiming marker for the 13th green has been added to this short

- par 4 while on the 14th the green has been enlarged and the rough around the green thinned out.
- The 15th tee location has been altered while extensive rough management has taken place on 16.

- A large, hidden bunker that made the second on the par-5 17th too exacting has been taken out. More visible marker poles have been installed. The 18th fairway has been moved to the right and the back of the green.



77 LITTLE ASTON
VARDON, 1908 / STAFFORDSHIRE / 6,813 YARDS, PAR 72

GREEN FEE: £90 all week
CONTACT: 0121 353 2942, www.littleastongolf.co.uk
Though it's fallen since 2008, it is still one of just a few parklands to make the list. They've cleared trees and added bunkers on the 9th while on the next, tree thinning to the left carry allows views of the green and where drives finish. Scrub and tree thinning on the 5th allows sight of the whole green.



76 DONEGAL
HACKETT, 1973 / COUNTY DONEGAL, IRELAND / 7,385 YARDS, PAR 73

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri €60; Sat-Sun €70
CONTACT: 00 353 7497 34054, www.donegalgolfclub.ie
No significant changes to the course since Pat Ruddy directed upgrades to Eddie Hackett's design, with less of an emphasis on blind tee shots at this robust links on a peninsula in Donegal Bay. Off the tips it's an absolute beast, so choose your tees wisely; the par-3 5th, 'Valley of Tears', is awesome.



75 WOBURN (DUKE'S)
LAWRIE, 1976 / WOBURN, BEDS / 6,976 YARDS, PAR 72

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £139
CONTACT: 01908 370756, www.woburn.co.uk/golf
Bunker renovations have been undertaken on the Duke's - as it has elsewhere at Woburn - to ensure the hazards are of the very highest quality and as close to the original design as they can possibly be. To have two courses in the Top 100 and another in the Second 100 is a considerable achievement.



74 WALTON HEATH (NEW)
FOWLER, 1907 / TADWORTH, SURREY / 7,175 YARDS, PAR 72

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £135 (£205 a day); Sat-Sun £165
CONTACT: 01737 812060, www.whgc.co.uk
Some of its holes were used in the composite course over which the British Senior Open was played last year and provided a stiff test. Herbert Fowler created a typically thoughtful challenge and unlike others of this ilk it has always remained true to its heathland character.



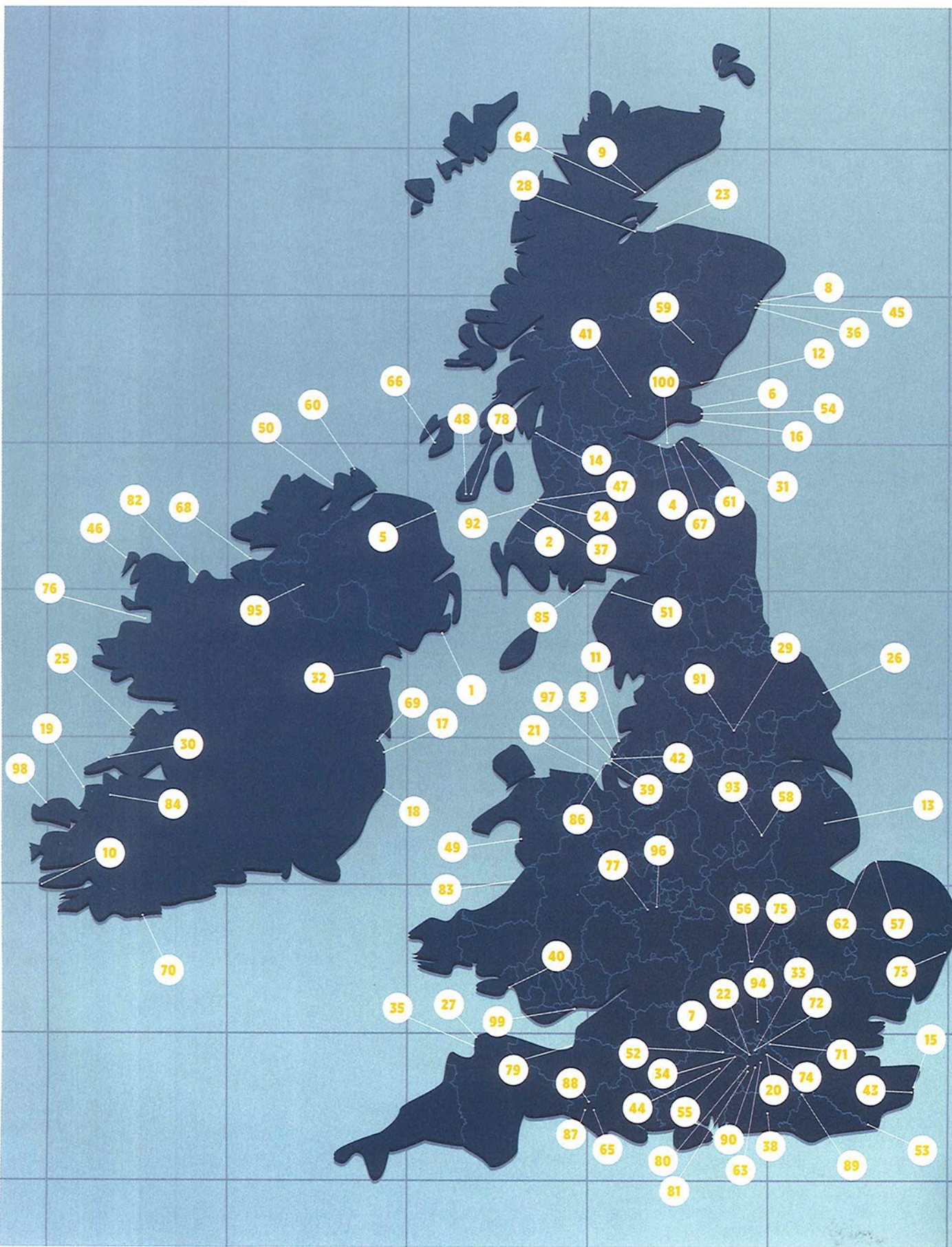
73 ALDEBURGH
FERNIE & THOMPSON, 1884 / ALDEBURGH, SUFFOLK / 6,603 YARDS, PAR 68

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £75 (day ticket); Sat-Sun £80
CONTACT: 01728 453309, www.aldeburghgolfclub.co.uk
A new tee has been reconstructed on the 4th and older bunkers have been brought up to the standard of the new ones. There is still plenty of gorse on every hole, but not quite as acutely intimidating as it used to be. There are now clever run-off areas around greens and the par remains very stingy.



72 WENTWORTH (EAST)
COLT, 1924 / VIRGINIA WATER, SURREY / 6,201 YARDS, PAR 68

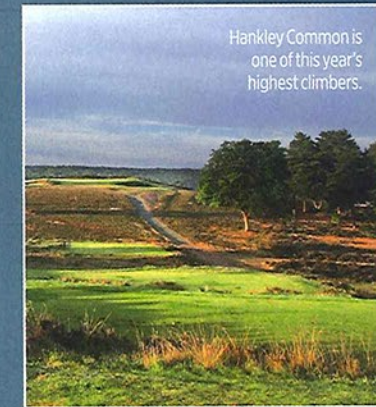
GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £160 (guests only Sat-Sun)
CONTACT: 01344 842201, www.wentworthclub.com
Much better value than the West and many would suggest it retains more of Colt's original philosophy. Long-time Wentworth professional Bernard Gallacher believed it was always better in terms of design and aesthetics. The springy, sandy turf means it is in super condition all year round.



THE GB&I TOP 100 LIST IN FULL

Your at-a-glance guide to who's in, who's up and who's down in Golf World's new course ranking, by the best panel in the business.

1 Royal County Down County Down	Up 2 ▲	39 Formby Lancashire	Down 5 ▼	63 St George's Hill Surrey	Down 13 ▼
2 Turnberry Ayrshire	Down 1 ▼	40 Royal Porthcawl South Wales	No change ◀	64 Skibo Castle Sutherland	Up 31 ▲
3 Royal Birkdale Merseyside	Down 1 ▼	41 Gleneagles King's Perthshire	Down 12 ▼	65 Ferndown Old Dorset	Up 6 ▲
4 Muirfield Lothian	No change ◀	42 Hillside White Lancashire	Down 3 ▼	66 The Machrie Argyll	Down 1 ▼
5 Royal Portrush County Antrim	Up 2 ▲	43 Royal Cinque Ports Kent	Down 2 ▼	67 The Renaissance Lothian	Up 6 ▲
6 St Andrews Old Fife	Down 1 ▼	44 Hankley Common Surrey	Up 30 ▲	68 County Sligo County Sligo	Down 9 ▼
7 Sunningdale Old Surrey	Up 1 ▲	45 Cruden Bay Aberdeenshire	Up 3 ▲	69 The Island County Dublin	Down 9 ▼
8 Trump International Aberdeenshire	New entry	46 Carne County Mayo	Up 1 ▲	70 Old Head of Kinsale County Cork	Up 6 ▲
9 Royal Dornoch Invernesshire	Up 2 ▲	47 Western Gailes Ayrshire	Down 5 ▼	71 The Addington Surrey	Up 17 ▲
10 Waterville County Kerry	Up 2 ▲	48 Machrihanish Argyll	Up 1 ▲	72 Wentworth East Surrey	Down 17 ▼
11 Royal Lytham & St Annes Lancashire	Up 2 ▲	49 Royal St David's Gwynedd	Down 6 ▼	73 Aldeburgh Suffolk	Down 5 ▼
12 Carnoustie Angus	Down 6 ▼	50 Rosapenna Sandy Hills Co Donegal	Up 31 ▲	74 Walton Heath New Surrey	Down 5 ▼
13 Woodhall Spa Hotchkin Lincolnshire	Down 4 ▼	51 Silloth-on-Solway Cumbria	No change ◀	75 Woburn Duke's Bedfordshire	Down 14 ▼
14 Loch Lomond Dunbartonshire	Down 4 ▼	52 Swinley Forest Berkshire	Up 1 ▲	76 Donegal County Donegal	Down 13 ▼
15 Royal St George's Kent	Up 4 ▲	53 Rye East Sussex	Down 1 ▼	77 Little Aston Staffordshire	Down 15 ▼
16 Kingsbarns Fife	Down 1 ▼	54 Castle Course Fife	Up 2 ▲	78 Machrihanish Dunes Argyll	Up 21 ▲
17 Portmarnock Old County Dublin	Down 1 ▼	55 The Berkshire Blue Berkshire	Up 11 ▲	79 Burnham & Berrow Somerset	Down 9 ▼
18 The European County Wicklow	Down 1 ▼	56 Woburn Marquess Bedfordshire	Down 2 ▼	80 Woking Surrey	No change ◀
19 Ballyunion County Kerry	Down 5 ▼	57 Royal West Norfolk Norfolk	Down 11 ▼	81 Worplesdon Surrey	Up 1 ▲
20 Walton Heath Old Surrey	No change ◀	58 Notts/Hollinwell Nottinghamshire	Down 14 ▼	82 Enniscrone County Sligo	Up 11 ▲
21 Royal Liverpool Merseyside	Down 3 ▼	59 Blairgowrie Rosemount Perthshire	Down 1 ▼	83 Aberdovey Gwynedd	Up 1 ▲
22 Sunningdale New Surrey	Up 4 ▲	60 Ballyliffin Glashedy County Donegal	Up 4 ▲	84 Adare Manor County Limerick	Down 12 ▼
23 Nairn Highlands	Up 1 ▲	61 Gullane No.1 East Lothian	Down 4 ▼	85 Southernness Dumfriesshire	Down 2 ▼
24 Royal Troon Ayrshire	Down 2 ▼	62 Hunstanton Norfolk	Up 5 ▲	86 West Lancs West Lancashire	New entry
25 Lahinch County Clare	Up 2 ▲			87 Broadstone Dorset	No change ◀
26 Ganton Yorkshire	Up 2 ▲			88 Remedy Oak Dorset	Up 4 ▲
27 Saunton East North Devon	Down 6 ▼			89 Royal Ashdown Forest E Sussex	No change ◀
28 Castle Stuart Highland	Up 17 ▲			90 New Zealand Surrey	No change ◀
29 Alwoodley West Yorkshire	Up 4 ▲			91 Moortown West Yorkshire	Re-entry
30 Doonbeg County Clare	Up 6 ▲			92 Dundonald Ayrshire	Up 2 ▲
31 North Berwick East Lothian	No change ◀			93 Sherwood Forest Nottinghamshire	New entry
32 County Louth County Louth	Down 7 ▼			94 The Grove Hertfordshire	Re-entry
33 Wentworth West Surrey	Down 10 ▼			95 Lough Erne Fermanagh	Down 10 ▼
34 The Berkshire Red Berkshire	Down 2 ▼			96 The Belfry Brabazon Warwickshire	No change
35 St Enodoc Cornwall	Up 3 ▲			97 Southport & Ainsdale Merseyside	Up 1 ▲
36 Royal Aberdeen Highland	Down 1 ▼			98 Tralee County Kerry	Down 19 ▼
37 Prestwick Ayrshire	No change ◀			99 Celtic Manor Gwent	Down 21 ▼
38 West Sussex West Sussex	Down 8 ▼			100 Archerfield Fidra East Lothian	New entry



Hankley Common is one of this year's highest climbers.