

# THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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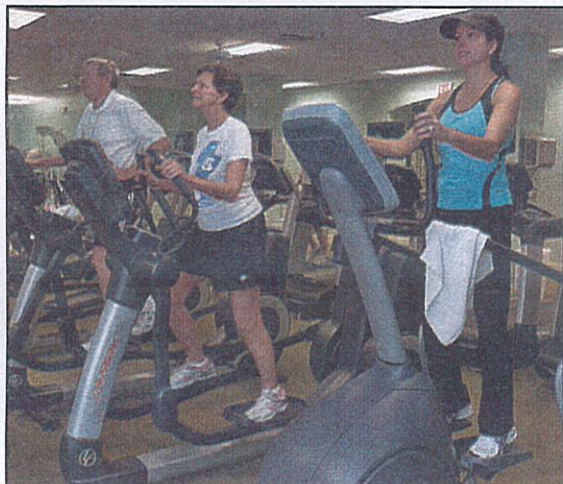
## Join the club



The Triad's private country clubs are hustling to rebuild membership levels and appeal to a younger generation. How? That's the subject of our Special Report this week on country clubs and golf courses, beginning on page 11.

Some clubs, for example, are investing in fitness facilities and programming that help make a membership a "one-stop shop" for entertainment and leisure time. Others are significantly dropping their initiation fees and dues to cater to families with less discretionary income.

Also find Wyndham Championship Tournament Director Mark Brazil's take on the five best holes to play in the Triad and a list of the Triad's top golf course.



PHOTOS BY JULIE KNIGHT/THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Elon University set to begin \$40M in building projects

By KATIE ARCIERI

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

**ELON** — Elon University expects to start construction later this spring or early summer on two student housing projects and a 38,000-square-foot dining hall that combined could cost at least \$40 million.

As of mid-week, contractors for the projects had not been selected, but a small group of builders have been invited to bid.

When fully built out, the three bond-funded projects should make up around one-fifth of a \$250 million construction plan that Elon officials will carry out over the next decade. The projects will also add to a string of campus construction planned by other Triad universities including UNC-Greensboro, High Point University and Wake Forest University.

This week, Elon officials began evaluating bids for the school's "Global Neighborhood," which will provide 620 beds in four dorm-like buildings totalling more than 200,000 square feet. The first two buildings of the neighborhood designed by Winston-Salem-based Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce is slated for completion by December 2012. Construction on the final two buildings is expected to wrap up by August 2014.

PLEASE SEE **ELON**, PAGE 25

## New showroom chief: Vegas, H.P. can grow

By MATT EVANS

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

**HIGH POINT** — The mystery that has simmered about who is buying the largest furniture showrooms in High Point was solved this week when a downtown press conference introduced International Market Centers, or IMC, and its CEO Robert Maricich.

The new company, jointly headquartered in High Point and Las Vegas, is investing around \$1 billion to bring together 11.5 million square feet of space in the two formerly rival cities and instantly become the dominant player in the High Point Market.

In High Point, IMC will own the International Home Furnishings Center, the Market Square complex and Showplace. (Visit [triad.bizjournals.com](http://triad.bizjournals.com) for complete coverage of the announcement.)

Together, the buildings that make up those properties comprise nearly two-thirds of the 10 million square feet of showroom



Maricich

PLEASE SEE **Q&A**, PAGE 25

## Malpractice reform advances in Raleigh



### TRIAD TALK

JUSTIN CATANOSO

Medical malpractice reform in North Carolina, something doctors and hospital officials have been seeking for nearly a decade, is moving through the General Assembly and appears to have a good chance of reaching the governor's desk with strong majorities in both houses of the legislature.

The GOP-led House and Senate have both passed bills, though key differences remain. Last week, a conference committee was established to bridge those differences and draft a compromise. Meanwhile, health care providers, plaintiffs lawyers and their respective lobbyists are working hard to

influence the outcome. But the momentum thus far has clearly been with the health care providers.

For example, both bills call for separating most trials into two phases. The first phase would determine solely whether a defendant was negligent in a bad medical outcome, while the second phase would determine what monetary award should be paid if negligence is found. Compensation should not be discussed unless a doctor is found at fault, health care advocates argue,

PLEASE SEE **TRIAD TALK**, PAGE 26

### HEALTH PLAN:

Novant moving ahead with first phase of \$100M Clemmons project.

Page 2

### UP CLOSE:

Shop.com acquisition has Market America poised for more growth.

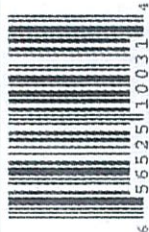
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SPECIAL REPORT:

# COUNTRY CLUBS & GOLF COURSES

May 6 - 12, 2011

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The Business Journal 11

## Changing course

### Triad country clubs make small and large changes to broaden appeal

By OWEN COVINGTON THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Triad country clubs courting a new generation of members are counting on family appeal and lower fees to boost sagging membership roles.

They're making big investments in club house upgrades, fitness centers, tennis courts and programming, while easing dress codes and offering more dining options. It's an adaptation they believe is necessary to better compete for the time of prospective and existing members, especially younger members, and to help set them apart from an array of high-quality public golf courses in the region.

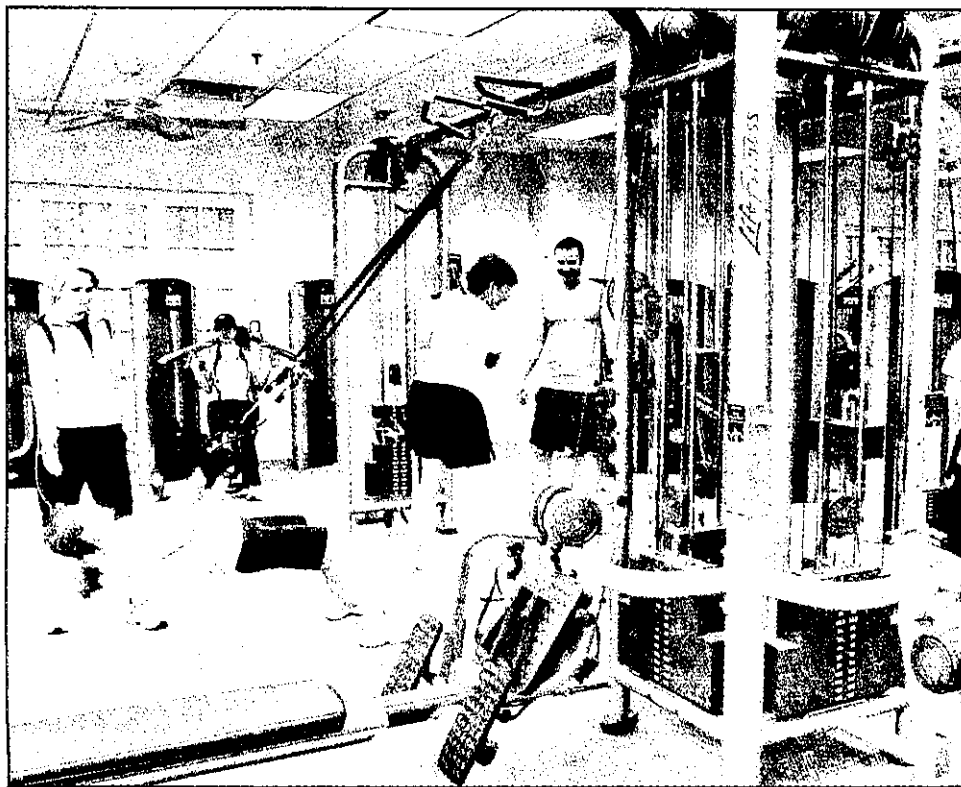
Among the biggest investments has been made by the Greensboro Country Club, which borrowed \$11 to finance its overhaul of its Carlson Farms Course, renovation of its locker rooms and the construction of a \$3.5 million fitness center that opened in 2009.

President George House, a Greensboro attorney, points to a membership that only declined 2 percent over the past three years as proof that the strategy is working. The club has 1,429 members, compared to 1,299 a decade before.

"I think most clubs would have done what we did in 2008 if they'd had the gumption to do it," House said. "But it was a tricky time."

Indeed. The most recent National Golf Foundation data show that after several years of gains, the number of rounds of golf played nationally has dropped three straight years through 2009. North Carolina bucked the trend in 2007, but saw rounds drop between 4 percent and 5 percent in 2008 and 2009. Nationally, private clubs were seeing larger declines than public ones.

And with that has come sharp declines in



JULIE KNIGHT/THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Members of Greensboro Country Club work out in the \$3.5 million fitness center that was built in 2009. Country clubs are much more than golf courses these days.

revenues for private clubs. A National Golf Foundation survey of 201 private clubs found that revenues fell 4.2 percent on average from 2008 to 2009. Average annual initiation fee revenue fell 17.6 percent to \$270,000, and clubs were pulling back on capital expenditures, spending 19 percent less in 2009 than the year before, according to the survey.

Corinne Grimaldi, managing director of

the Carolinas chapter of the Club Managers Association of America, clubs are trying to become a "one-stop shop" with more casual dining, fitness programs and family activities.

"For all of those clubs, just going through this economic time has been a matter of re-evaluating the product," Grimaldi said.

Though Greensboro Country Club has

held its \$25,000 initiation fee and held dues steady over the past three years, others have targeted the perceived lack of affordability of a country club membership to boost their appeal.

Among those is Forest Oaks Country Club, which knocked \$65 off its monthly dues this year in reducing them to \$290 a month. The club historically had a \$9,000 initiation fee and a waiting list, but now members pay just \$250 to join.

"Those days are over, at least for us," said Geoff Dail, general manager, said of high initiation fees.

Like other clubs, Forest Oaks, located near Pleasant Garden in southeast Guilford County, is seeing the age of its members creep up. Among the 412 members, the median age is 61.

"The younger families are not as interested in joining a country club," Dail said.

Jack Nance, executive director of the Carolinas Golf Association, said more and more clubs are targeting that younger generation by increasing their family appeal. That can mean more sports programming for children and a more casual atmosphere at clubs that have traditionally been dominated by male golfers and dress codes.

"If the kids are involved, then the parents are going to follow," Nance said. "Everything used to be solely about golf. The health clubs are more family oriented."

High Point Country Club has had a fitness center for several years, but what's been crucial to its turnaround has been bringing on board the management team at Carolinas Golf Group. Since the Raleigh-based golf operations company took over full manage-

PLEASE SEE MEMBERSHIP, PAGE 12

### Join the club: A snapshot of a few of the Triad's top country clubs

#### Greensboro Country Club

**Members:** 1,429  
**Initiation fee:** \$25,000  
**Monthly dues:** \$395

One of the larger private country clubs in the Triad, the Greensboro Country Club invested heavily in capital projects in recent years. Its \$7.5 million makeover of the club's Farm Course paid off with it being named the best golf course renovation of 2010 by Golf Magazine and named the best new course of 2010 by the North Carolina Golf Panel.

Investing in the Farm Course during the recession ended up saving the club since materials costs were down and competition for work was high, said club President George House.

"We clearly built this golf course for less than we could have two years earlier," he said.

House believes the club is positioned to take advantage of the expansion of Greensboro in the area surrounding its Farm Course. A club traditionally draws its members from within a three-mile radius, and the Carlson Farms area is a spot where Greensboro is growing, he said.

#### Forest Oaks Country Club

**(southeast Guilford County)**  
**Members:** 412  
**Initiation fee:** \$250; previously \$9,000  
**Monthly dues:** \$290

Owned by Nisshin Corp., Forest Oaks Country Club has been leased for the past year by Steve and Pam Sharpe, who live at Forest Oaks and have been members of the club since 1985. The Sharpes have helped make capital investments needed including a new HVAC system and a new roof on the clubhouse.

At the end of the three-year lease, the Sharpes will have the option to extend the lease or negotiate the purchase of the club.

"I think our service to our members has greatly improved," said club General Manager Geoff Dail.

Forest Oaks is giving its members incentive to help boost membership through a new "paired membership" program just unveiled that would see a member's monthly dues drop to \$200 if they sponsor a new member, who

would also receive the \$90 monthly discount on dues.

Like other clubs, Forest Oaks is increasing its fitness offerings, but hasn't made the jump to building a fitness center. The club began a fitness program in January that Dail said members have responded to well.

Dail said the club is trying to better appeal to members' appetites, too. This year, the club started buying locally grown produce and has planted an herb garden to help produce the flavors used by its chefs.

#### High Point Country Club

**Members:** 700  
**Initiation fee:** \$250; previously \$8,000-\$10,000  
**Monthly dues:** \$365

Managed since January 2010 by Carolinas Golf Group, the High Point Country Club has seen its membership levels bounce back substantially. Like other clubs, High Point is targeting younger members and competing hard for their attention and time.

"Trying to get younger people to spend their dis-

cretionary dollars in a country club setting is a real challenge today," said Dan Breneman, vice president of private club operations for Carolinas Golf Group.

The club has instituted a dues credit program that offers members a reduction in dues if they sponsor new members, and has seen 140 new members join since Carolinas Golf Group took over.

The key is operating the club more like a business and focus on cutting administrative costs, Breneman said. Each of the private clubs Carolinas Golf Group now manages were losing money prior to the company taking over, and they are now operating in the black, Breneman said.

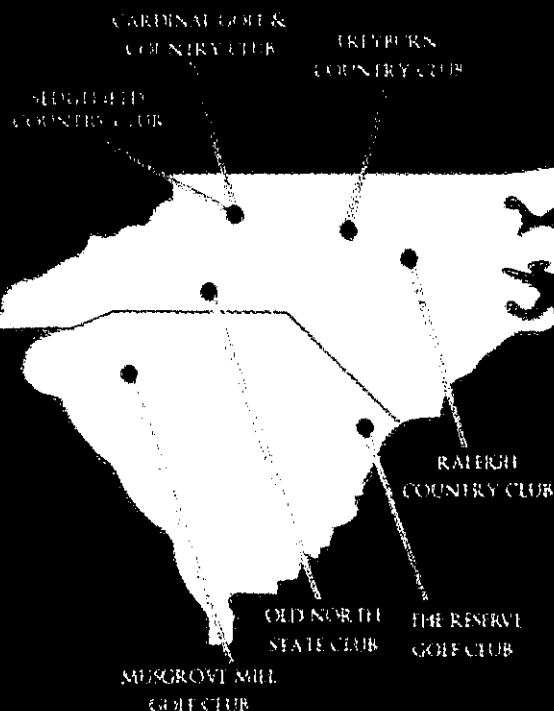
"The biggest thing that we do is operate a country club as a business instead of a country club," Breneman said.

Carolinas Golf Group has also helped with long-term capital needs, and has established three-, five- and 10-year plans that will be funded in part by capital dues paid by members. Recent investments include a new HVAC system and roofing for the clubhouse.

PLEASE SEE SNAPSHOT, PAGE 12

# McConnell Golf

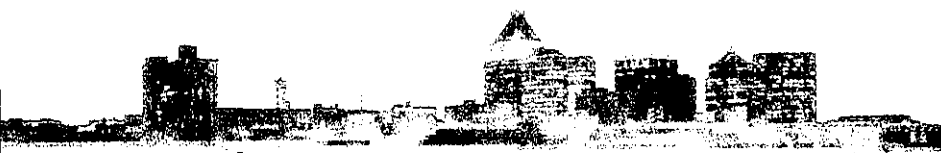
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## Mark your calendar for the 2011 Piedmont Triad Business Showcase



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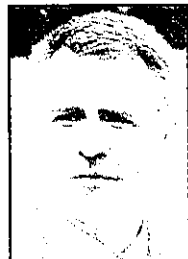
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[www.greensborochamber.com/thechamber/tradeshow.php](http://www.greensborochamber.com/thechamber/tradeshow.php)

## COUNTRY CLUBS & GOLF COURSES

# Wyndham Championship director offers take on Triad's private courses

While not a professional, Mark Brazil, director of the Wyndham Championship, is an avid golfer with extensive experience in the sport having spent his entire career in the industry. Brazil managed to take some time away from preparing for this year's PGA Tour event at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, set for Aug. 15-21, and offers his take on the most interesting holes in the Triad and why:



Brazil

"There are a lot of great public and private courses in Triad, but since we are talking about country clubs in *The Business Journal*, here are my choices from private courses in our region:

- **Sedgefield Country Club (Greensboro) No. 2:** This gradual downhill par four demands two really good shots. You don't have to hit driver off the tee, but you have to hit it far enough to clear the bunkers on the right but not so long that you challenge the creek at the bottom of the hill. Byron Nelson made eagle here to win his second Greater Greensboro Open in 1945, the first tournament after World War II. The second shot demands a precision approach to a green that slopes from left to right and is guarded by a creek on the right and a front-left bunker. A good drive will leave you with a wedge to a seven iron into this difficult Donald Ross-designed green; the shot into the green is very challenging with a long iron.

- **Alamance Country Club (Burlington) No. 8:** A 180-yard uphill par three, this hole is a gem and my favorite par three in the region. The green is small and narrow requiring a demanding tee shot that rewards accuracy with a birdie and pun-

ishes an error with a quick double bogey. It's one of the best and most fun par threes in the state.

- **Old Town Club (Winston-Salem) No. 16:** A par four where your uphill tee shot must be on the left side of the fairway. The perfect tee shot leaves anywhere from a six iron to an eight iron into a challenging, elevated green protected by the steep front and a bunker at the back. If you miss the green short, the ball can roll down the hill back into the fairway leaving an awkward third shot. The undulating green provides multiple pin locations at this

Perry Maxwell-designed course. This spectacular course is consistently ranked among the finest in the United States.

- **Forsyth Country Club (Winston-Salem) No. 15:** It's a 525-yard par 5 that's reachable in two. An uphill tee shot to the top of the ridge gives you a clear view of the green. The second landing area has three pot bunkers requiring a precision layout or a decision to go for the green in two. The most interesting feature is a triangular-shaped green that horse shoes around a center swell. Any ball hit onto the wrong section of the green away from the pin will take eagle away and make birdie extremely challenging.

- **Greensboro Country Club Farm Course No. 13:** This par five is one of the new holes in Donald Steele's redesign, which was recently named the best redesign in the country. It's a reachable par five and a good risk/reward hole. Hitting a three wood or hybrid into the green doesn't mean you'll make birdie because the three-tiered green is guarded by two bunkers, and it has two more staggered about 40 and 100 yards off green making a lay-up more difficult.

**MARK BRAZIL**, Wyndham Championship tournament director, is in his 10th year running the Piedmont Triad's PGA Tour event.

Sedgefield Country  
Club No. 2

## MEMBERSHIP: Clubs target families, youth

From page 11

ment of the club in January 2010, the club has added 140 new members to top 700. In 2009, the club had added just four.

Carolinas Golf Group has brought economies of scale to the operation of High Point Country Club and six other clubs Breneman oversees, and seen cost savings as a result. Food and beverage is often an area where clubs lose money, so to address that, High Point shares an executive chef with other clubs in the group, and enjoys the buying power that comes with purchasing for six clubs, not just one.

"The business model previously was just to manage a private club as an entity for everyone who wanted to come in and enjoy the club," said Dan Breneman, vice president of private club operations for Carolinas Golf Group. "In its heyday, fiscal responsibility was an issue, but not a priority."

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## Triad's top country clubs

From page 11

### Old Town Club (Winston-Salem)

Members: 500

Initiation fee: \$40,000

Monthly dues: \$500

Through the recession, Old Town Club has maintained its initiation fee and dues level, and continued to add members to become one of the few clubs in the Triad that has a waiting list.

"We've seen a little bit of attrition at Old Town, and have rebounded from that," said General Manager Clint Wood.

The ingredients for that success are what other clubs are focusing on — creating an environment for a family, not just golfers. Wood notes that with the generational changes, parents are more involved in their children's sporting events and fathers aren't just spending their Saturdays on the golf course. The club has 120 children on its swim team, which has meant more parents are involved, Wood said.

Though Old Town does have some fitness offerings, it's not ready to move toward a full-blown fitness center. "We just haven't gotten a huge push from our members," Wood said. "There are just so many (fitness) places in town. Once the rumblings get a little louder, that's something we'll think about."

— Compiled by Owen Covington

# THE Most Difficult Golf Courses in the Triad

(Ranked by USGA Men's course rating, then by slope rating<sup>1</sup>)

Researched and compiled by Stephanie Nickell

Rank	Golf course name Phone number/website	Men's course rating/ slope	Women's course rating/ slope	Golf Pro	Rank	Golf course name Phone number/website	Men's course rating/ slope	Women's course rating/ slope	Golf Pro
1	<b>Bryan Park Champions Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27214 (336) 725-2200/www.bryanpark.com	76/ 147	74.5/ 135	Chris LeClerc	26	<b>Tanglewood Reynolds Course</b> Clemmons, NC 27012 (336) 778-6321/www.forsyth.cc/parks	72.5/ 136	73.8/ 136	Mike Wilcox
2	<b>Forest Oaks Country Club</b> Greensboro, NC 27406 (336) 674-2241/www.forestoaksgcc.com	75.4/ 143	74.8/ 134	Anthony Miller	27	<b>Sapona Country Club</b> Lexington, NC 287295 (336) 956-6245/www.saponacc.com	72.4/ 138	79.2/ 150	Marshall Stott
3	<b>Tanglewood Championship Course</b> Clemmons, NC 27012 (336) 778-6321/www.forsyth.cc/parks	75.4/ 142	76.2/ 138	Michael Wilcox	28	<b>Greensboro National Golf Club</b> Summerfield, NC 27358 (336) 342-1113/www.greensboronatl.com	72.2/ 136	72.5/ 129	Jarrod Davsko
4	<b>Sedgefield Country Club</b> Greensboro, NC 27407 (336) 299-5324/www.sedgefieldcc.org	75.1/ 143	75.4/ 141	Rocky Brooks	29	<b>Jamestown Park</b> Jamestown, NC 27282 (336) 454-4912/www.jamestownparkgolf.com	72.2/ 129	75.7/ 135	Michael Hutcheon
5	<b>Greensboro Country Club Farm Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27410 (336) 288-3415/www.greensborocc.org	75.1/ 140	75.8/ 139	Jim Deaton	30	<b>Tot Hill Farm</b> Asheboro, NC 27205 (336) 857-4455/www.tothillfarm.com	72.1/ 144	73.6/ 141	Alan Martini
6	<b>Cardinal Golf and Country Club</b> Greensboro, NC 27410 (336) 668-2749/www.cardinalcc.com	74.8/ 143	77.6/ 145	Scott Stratton	31	<b>Starmount Forest Country Club</b> Greensboro, NC 27410 (336) 299-0425/www.starmountforest.com	72.1/ 135	75.9/ 140	Derrick DeHart
7	<b>Grandover Resort East Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27407 (336) 294-1800/www.grandover.com	74.3/ 140	71.9/ 132	Jonathan York	32	<b>Quarry Hills Country Club</b> Graham, NC 27253 (336) 578-2602/www.golfquarryhillsnc.com	71.9/ 136	75.2/ 136	Mike Long
8	<b>Oak Valley Golf Club</b> Advance, NC 27006 (336) 940-2000/www.oakvalleygolfclub.com	74.1/ 143	74.4/ 133	Randall James	33	<b>Pudding Ridge Golf Course</b> Mocksville, NC 27028 (336) 940-4653/www.puddingridge.com	71.9/ 133	68.4/ 109	Dan Ward
9	<b>High Point Country Club Willow Creek</b> High Point, NC 27262 (336) 882-4312/www.hpcountryclub.com	74.1/ 140	76.7/ 140	Mark Black	34	<b>Holly Ridge Golf Links</b> Archdale, NC 27263 (336) 861-4653/www.hollyridgegolf.com	71.7/ 136	75.5/ 140	Ralph Sanderlin
10	<b>Bermuda Run Country Club</b> Bermuda Run, NC 27006 (336) 998-8154/www.bermudaruncc.com	74/ 136	75.4/ 137	Jeff Nichols	35	<b>Oak Hollow Golf Course</b> High Point, NC 27265 (336) 883-3260/www.oakhollowgc.com	71.7/ 132	72.8/ 134	Doug Hodges
11	<b>The Challenge at Hideaway Farms</b> Graham, NC 27253 (336) 578-5070/www.thechallenge.com	73.7/ 139	73.4/ 133	Mike Long	36	<b>Indian Valley Municipal Golf</b> Burlington, NC 27217 (336) 584-7871/www.ci.burlington.nc.us	71.7/ 130	75.3/ 136	William English
12	<b>Pinewood Country Club</b> Asheboro, NC 27203 (336) 629-4444/www.pinewoodclub.com	73.5/ 134	73.9/ 130	Chad Newton	37	<b>Crooked Tree Golf Course</b> Browns Summit, NC 27214 (336) 656-3211/www.crookedtreetreegolf.com	71.6/ 132	70.5/ 123	Paul Workman
13	<b>Old Town Club</b> Winston-Salem, NC 27106 (336) 722-1584/www.oldtownclub.org	73.5/ 132	76.5/ 140	Logan Jackson	38	<b>Gillespie Golf Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27406 (336) 373-5850	71.6/ 132	71/ 120	Bob Brooks Jr.
14	<b>Lake Louise Golf Club</b> Mocksville, NC 27028 (336) 998-1786	73.4/ 129	79/ 137	Lee Renegar	39	<b>Colonial Country Club</b> Thomasville, NC 27360/(336) 475-0596 www.colonialcountryclub.net	71.6/ 128	75.8/ 136	Jay Smith
15	<b>Quaker Creek Golf Club</b> Mebane, NC 27302 (336) 578-5789/www.quakercreekgolf.com	73.3/ 137	75/ 134	Richie Belton	40	<b>Pine Tree Golf Club</b> Kernersville, NC 27284 (336) 993-5598	71.6/ 125	74.8/ 128	Tom Williams
16	<b>Salem Glen Country Club</b> Clemmons, NC 27012 (336) 712-1010/www.salemglen.com	73.1/ 134	74.2/ 136	Britt Tuttle	41	<b>Bermuda Run Country Club West Course</b> Bermuda Run, NC 27006 (336) 998-8155/www.bermudaruncc.com	71.5/ 135	72.3/ 126	Brian Vest
17	<b>Meadowlands Golf Club</b> Winston-Salem, NC 27107 (336) 769-1011/www.meadowlandsgolf.com	73/ 137	73.8/ 130	Adam Bowles	42	<b>Pine Brook Country Club</b> Winston-Salem, NC 27105 (336) 767-0034/www.pinebrookcc.com	71.4/ 132	74.7/ 136	Brian Barry
18	<b>Millicreek Golf Club</b> Mebane, NC 27302 (919) 563-4653/www.golfmillicreek.com	72.9/ 137	75.8/ 141	Ron Lambert	43	<b>Winding Creek Golf Course</b> Thomasville, NC 27360 (336) 475-5580/www.windingcreekgolf.com	71/ 130	73.1/ 127	Jason Gentel
19	<b>Cedarbrook Country Club</b> Elkin, NC 28621 (336) 835-2320/www.cedarbrookcc.com	72.9/ 130	76.4/ 135	Zim Zimmerman	44	<b>Shamrock Golf Club</b> Burlington, NC 27215 (336) 227-8566	70.9/ 127	72.4/ 130	Ralph Johnson
20	<b>Brookwood Golf Course</b> Whitsett, NC 27377 (336) 449-5544	72.9/ 118	71.3/ 115	Willy Noah	45	<b>Meadow Greens Country Club</b> Eden, NC 27288 (336) 623-6381	70.7/ 127	70.7/ 122	Bryant Reeser
21	<b>Forsyth Country Club</b> Winston-Salem, NC 27104 (336) 768-0220/www.forsythcc.org	72.8/ 136	75.8/ 139	Lee Smith	46	<b>Winston Lake Golf Course</b> Winston-Salem, NC 27105 (336) 727-2703	70.6/ 133	75/ 130	Earnest Morris
22	<b>Alamance Country Club</b> Burlington, NC 27215 (336) 584-5450/www.alamancecc.com	72.8/ 128	73.7/ 126	Grant Hauk	47	<b>Pennrose Park Country Club</b> Reidsville, NC 27320 (336) 349-5163	70.6/ 129	75.2/ 139	Alan Kelley
23	<b>Montgomery Country Club</b> Troy, NC 27371/(910) 576-1487/ www.themontgomerycountryclub.com	72.7/ 134	75.5/ 137	Buddy Waiser	48	<b>Pine Knolls Golf Club</b> Kernersville, NC 27284 (336) 993-8300/www.pineknolls.com	70.6/ 124	74/ 130	Pearse Mahon
24	<b>Cross Creek Country Club</b> Mount Airy, NC 27030 (336) 789-5131/www.crosscreekcc.com	72.6/ 139	73.6/ 139	Todd Hutcherson	49	<b>Pleasant Ridge Golf Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27409 (336) 668-7107	70.5/ 125	69.5/ 115	Lee Brame
25	<b>Grandover Resort West Course</b> Greensboro, NC 27407 (336) 294-1800/www.grandover.com	72.5/ 136	70/ 125	Jonathan York	50	<b>Asheboro Country Club</b> Asheboro, NC 27204 (336) 625-6910/www.asheborocc.com	70.1/ 136	70.2/ 127	Harold Jordan

Information was gathered from the United States Golf Association and course websites. The course rating is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring difficulty of the scratch golfer. The slope rating indicates the measurement of the relative difficulty for the bogey golfer compared to the course rating.

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