

A Quick Nine: Best links-style courses in the US

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Here at PGA.com, I guess you could say we developed a case of, "Open Championship fever," after watching the world's oldest major contested last week at Royal St. George's on the southeast coast of England.

Isn't it just so cool to watch links golf? Everything about the golf is different. Instead of the majestic, towering shots we're accustomed to seeing the pros hit on most of the courses they play in the U.S. that spin back 15-20 feet, on the other side of the pond they're required to take into account the wind, fairways cut almost as short as the greens, uneven fairways, etc. It's a game of chess, really.

Well, guess what? As special as those courses are, believe it or not, we have some unbelievable links golf in the U.S. too.

In this week's, 'A Quick Nine,' feature, we asked our PGA.com Facebook fans to identify their favorite, "links-style," course in the U.S. It's one of the most passionate debates we've seen around here in a while with nearly 300 responses thanks to all of you!

Without further adieu, and for what's sure to spark more spirited debate, here are the top-9 links-style courses in the U.S., according to you:

9. Pebble Beach Golf Links. You had to know this was making the list, right? It's played host to six major championships (five U.S. Opens and one PGA Championship). Even people who aren't into golf know what you're talking about when you say, "Pebble Beach."

Facebook fan quotes:

"Best links course has to be Pebble Beach. It only takes one glimpse from the tee at the short par-3 7th to prove this is true." -- Jake Jones

"No doubt Pebble Beach!" -- Larry Luper

"Pebble Beach is possibly the nicest course of any type in the US. Clearly the nicest links course by default." -- Seth Kennedy

8. Newport National Golf Club in Middletown, R.I. OK, in the interest of full disclosure, as a native Rhode Islander, I was delighted to see Newport National make the list. I've played there a handful of times and it is unlike anything else around here -- an absolute delight to play. There isn't a bad hole out there. Each time I arrive at NN after a 30-minute drive from my home, the look and feel makes me believe I should have traveled several thousand miles to get there. What a treat.

Facebook fan quote:

"Newport National in Middletown, R.I." -- Tim Dawson

7. Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Shinnecock Hills, N.Y. Interesting to note that Shinnecock has hosted four U.S. Opens in three different centuries. It's been around for quite some time!

Facebook fan quote:

"Shinnecock Hills. The closest thing there is to a 'TRUE' Links course in the U.S." -- Simon Dewsbury

6. The Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, S.C. Remember the 1991 Ryder Cup? It was one of the most hotly contested Ryder Cup matches in the event's history, with the U.S. squeaking out a one-point

victory. It will also host the 2012 PGA Championship.

Facebook fan quotes:

"The Ocean Course at Kiawah is the best." -- Patrick Belk

"Ocean course @ Kiawah. Tough challenge any day. Wind changes direction and speed on every shot."
-- Howard Artrip

"If you consider it a true links-style course then The Ocean Course at Kiawah is just phenomenal." --
Patrick Shanley

5. Chambers Bay, University Place, Wash. It hosted the 2010 U.S. Amateur and will also host the 2015 U.S. Open. Most of the time when you think "links style" you might also think "old." That's not so with Chamber's Bay, which opened in 2007.

Facebook fan quotes:

"Chambers Bay! That's top-shelf American links golf!" -- Matt Clark

"Home of the 2015 U.S. Open Chambers Bay is the best links course in the U.S. You feel like you're in Scotland!!" -- Travis Hannula

4. Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Bandon Dunes, Ore. This was by far the overwhelming favorite among our readers.

Facebook fan quotes:

"Bandon Dunes in Oregon!" -- Samantha Gotcher

"Bandon Dunes the closest links style course this side of the Atlantic." -- Arthur Kelsch

"Hands down... Bandon Dunes." -- Mike Mabini

"The Bandon courses. The only 'true links' courses in the U.S." -- Mark Staben

"Bandon Dunes Golf Resort. When watching The Open last weekend, I thought I was watching golf at Old MacDonald on several occasions. The same could be said for the Bandon and Pacific Dunes courses." -- Jim Johnson

"Bandon Dunes no question about it. I'm from Aberdeen, Scotland so I'm spoiled, the east coast of Scotland is the best stretch of coastline for links golf in the world, but lived in Vancouver for a few years and played in Oregon often and it's fantastic!" -- Mark Rennie

3. Erin Hills, Wisc. It will host the 2017 U.S. Open.

Facebook fan quote:

"Erin Hills in Erin, WI." -- Josh Kohnhorst

2. Whistling Straits in Kohler, Wisc. It's hosted a couple of PGA Championships now and when you're on the grounds, it's another one of those places that just takes your breath away because it's so different from what we're used to in the U.S.

Facebook fan quotes:

"Straits course at Whistling Straits. Not even a toss up." -- Joe Wetrich

"Whistling Straits, Kohler, WI." -- John Blaguski

1. Nags Head Golf Links, N.C. Here's the website description: At Nags Head Golf Links, Nags Head, North Carolina, you'll discover a true Scottish links-style championship course nestled into the natural, windswept environment of the Outer Banks where sand dunes and rugged coastline create a different golfing experience.

Facebook fan quotes:

"Nags Head Golf Links in North Carolina is best kept secret in links golf... GREAT links course." -- Scott Rose

"I'm not gonna go with the obvious, so I say Nags Head Golf Links and the Wild Dunes Resort - Links Course. Both of them are amazing places to experience a true links feel..." -- Daniel Reedy