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## Celebrating the Best of New Zealand Golf

New Zealand is widely recognised as one of the world's great golf destinations, and the release of the 2026 New Zealand Golf Rankings provides an opportunity to celebrate not only our finest courses but also the clubs and people that make the game so special here.

The rankings highlight the exceptional quality and diversity of golf throughout the country and, hopefully, inspire golfers to explore more regions and experience courses they may not have yet discovered. So, how many of New Zealand's best courses have you played?

For the fifth time in the past decade, Tara Iti has been ranked New Zealand's number one golf course. While access remains highly exclusive, those fortunate enough to have played it understand why. The combination of world-class design, spectacular coastal scenery, and a course that sits naturally within the landscape creates an unforgettable golfing experience.

Te Arai Links South and Te Arai Links North occupy second and third positions respectively, confirming this stretch of Northland coastline as one of the world's premier golfing destinations. Together, they now rival iconic golf regions such as Pebble Beach, Bandon Dunes, and Melbourne's famous Sandbelt. The combination of outstanding golf, luxury accommodation, quality dining, and breathtaking scenery has made Te Arai a must-play destination for golfers from around the globe.

The success of these courses is no surprise given the calibre of their architects. Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw designed Te Arai South, while Tom Doak was responsible for Te Arai North and Tara Iti, creating layouts that work in harmony with their natural surroundings.

Jack's Point Golf Course retained fourth position and remained the highest-ranked course in the South Island, narrowly ahead of Cape Kidnappers Golf Course, which climbed to fifth. Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary slipped one place to sixth, while Paraparaumu Beach Golf Club rose three places to seventh. The Hills Golf Club dropped to eighth and is preparing for significant redevelopment, while Kinloch Club and Kauri Cliffs completed the Top 10.

The competition among New Zealand's elite courses has never been tighter. Just half a point separated the courses ranked third through tenth, highlighting the exceptional standard of the country's leading golf destinations.

Many of New Zealand's strongest member-based clubs occupied positions 11 through 20, with relatively little movement from the previous rankings. Millbrook Resort's Coronet and Remarkables courses again featured prominently, alongside Titirangi Golf Club, Royal Wellington Golf Club, Royal Auckland and Grange Golf Club, Christchurch Golf Club, Tieke Golf Estate, Clearwater Golf Club, Muriwai Golf Club, and Arrowtown Golf Club.

The depth of quality throughout New Zealand golf is perhaps best demonstrated by the narrow margins within the Top 40. Terrace Downs Resort, ranked 21st, received 26.86 points, while Wānaka Golf Club, ranked 40th, received 26.22 points. Such a small gap illustrates the strength of courses throughout the country and confirms that simply making the Top 40 remains a significant achievement.

Several courses enjoyed strong gains. Waipu Golf Club and Omaha Beach Golf Club both climbed 13 places following extensive redevelopment and course improvements, while Mangawhai Golf Club rose six positions.

The rankings were compiled from submissions by 25 panelists representing more than 850 years of combined golfing experience. The panel included PGA professionals, accomplished amateur golfers, course superintendents, golf industry professionals, and experienced club golfers from throughout New Zealand.

Courses were assessed across seven criteria: Risk and Reward, Playability, Layout, Design, Scenic Values, Conditioning, and Ambience. Each category carried a maximum score of five points, creating a possible total of 35 points per course.

The rankings have now been conducted every two years since 2012, providing a valuable benchmark for measuring course improvements and long-term trends across New Zealand golf.

Several highly regarded courses narrowly missed inclusion in the Top 40, including Ōhope International Golf Club, Poverty Bay Golf Club, and Invercargill Golf Club. Tokarahi Golf Club and Mahia Golf Club also received praise as outstanding nine-hole courses.

Panelists were equally enthusiastic about the hospitality offered at many clubs. Te Arai (Ric's place prior to the fire) Millbrook Resort, Mount Maunganui Golf Club and Waipu Golf Club were recognised for their excellent clubhouse experiences, food offerings, and welcoming atmosphere.

For golfers, perhaps the challenge this year is simple: play more of New Zealand's Top 40 courses. Seek out a hidden gem, explore a new region, and discover whether you agree with the rankings. While rankings provide a guide, the true beauty of golf in New Zealand lies in the unique blend of scenery, character, challenge, and hospitality found throughout the country.

From world-renowned destinations to treasured local clubs, New Zealand continues to offer memorable golfing experiences for players of all abilities. So, grab your clubs, hit the road, and start ticking a few more courses off the list.

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For more information visit: [golfrankings.co.nz](http://golfrankings.co.nz)

## 2026 RANKINGS

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Golf Course</b>	<b>Change</b>
1	33.13	Tara Iti	same
2	32.56	Te Arai Links South	same
3	31.08	Te Arai Links North	same
4	31.02	Jacks Point Golf Course	same
5	30.98	Cape Kidnappers Golf Course	up 2
6	30.9	Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary	down 1
7	30.85	Paraparaumu Beach Golf Club	up 3
8	30.81	The Hills	down 2
9	30.79	The Kinloch Club	down 1
10	30.59	Kauri Cliffs Golf Course	down 1
11	29.23	Millbrook Coronet	same
12	28.46	Titirangi Golf Club	up 1
13	28.35	Millbrook Remarkables	down 1
14	28.21	Royal Wellington Golf Club	same
15	28.18	Royal Auckland and Grange Golf Club	up 2
16	27.81	Christchurch Golf Club	down 1
17	27.75	Tieke Golf Estate	up 3
18	27.55	Clearwater Golf Club	down 2
19	27.44	Muriwai Golf Club	down 1
20	27.39	Arrowtown Golf Club	up 1
21	26.86	Terrace Downs Golf Resort	down 2
22	26.71	Waipu Golf Club	up 13
23	26.62	Omaha Beach Golf Club	up 13
24	26.6	Windross Farm Golf Club	new
25	26.56	Manawatu Golf Club	up 3
26	26.54	Hastings Golf Club	down 4
27	26.53	Hamilton Golf Club	down 2
28	26.52	Mount Maunganui Golf Club	down 5
29	26.5	Otago Golf Club	down 5
30	26.49	New Plymouth Golf Club	up 2
31	26.48	Queenstown Golf Club	down 5

32	26.47	Mangawhai Golf Club	up 6
33	26.46	Pegasus Golf Resort	down 6
34	26.41	Cromwell Golf Club	down 5
35	26.4	Dunedin Golf Club (Chisholm Links)	down 1
36	26.39	Harewood Golf Club	down 6
37	26.35	Wanganui Golf Club	same
38	26.32	Waverley Golf Club	up 1
39	26.26	Nelson Golf Club	new
40	26.22	Wanaka Golf Club	same

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Risk Reward	How well does the course pose risks and rewards and equally test length, accuracy and finesse?
Playability	How difficult, while still being fair, is the course for a scratch player from the back tees?
Layout	How varied are the golf course's holes in differing lengths, configurations, hazard placements, green shapes, and green contours?
Design	How well do the design features (tees, fairways, greens, hazards, vegetation, and terrain) provide individuality to each hole, yet a collective continuity to the entire 18?
Scenic Values	How well do the scenic values of the course (including landscaping, vegetation, water features, and backdrops) add to the pleasure of a round?
Conditioning	How were the tees, fairways, and greens on the day you played the course?
Ambience	How well does the overall feel and atmosphere of the course reflect or uphold the traditional values of the game?

#### **RISK / REWARD**

4.6	Tara iti
4.49	Te Arai South
4.49	Kinloch
4.44	Paraparaumu Beach
4.41	Jacks Point

#### **PLAYABILITY**

4.66	Tara Iti
4.55	Te Arai South
4.49	Paraparaumu Beach
4.42	Te Arai North
4.41	Wairakei

#### **LAYOUT**

4.7	Tara Iti
4.64	Te Arai South
4.57	Paraparaumu Beach
4.51	Kinloch
4.46	Te Arai North

## DESIGN

4.87	Tara Iti
4.63	Te Arai South
4.57	Paraparaumu Beach
4.56	Kinloch
4.35	Te Arai North

## SCENIC VALUES

4.88	Te Arai South
4.8	Tara Iti
4.76	Jacks Point
4.67	The Hills
4.64	Cape Kidnappers Golf Course

## CONDITIONING

4.78	Tara Iti
4.73	Te Arai South
4.69	Te Arai North
4.64	The Hills
4.54	Wairakei

## AMBIENCE

4.73	Tara Iti
4.65	Te Arai South
4.54	Wairakei
4.46	Cape Kidnappers Golf Course
4.45	Kauri Cliffs Golf Course

### THE 2026 RANKINGS PANEL:

Alan Rose, Barry Brown, Benn Ashford, Blair Dibley, Denise Langdon, Duncan Croudís, Grant Moorhead, Hamish Campbell, Hamish Robertson, Harry Bateman, Jamie McIsaac, John Rowland, Kieran Muir, Leo Barber, MacKenzie Gibson, Michael Glading, Nigel Merrett, Patrick Moore, Phil Aicken, Phil Ellison, Sam Vincent, Simon Forshaw, Toland Henderson, Tony Houpt and Willie Moore.

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