

# Munis in motion

## KINGPINS BETHPAGE BLACK AND CHAMBERS BAY ANCHOR AN OTHERWISE SHUFFLED LINEUP

No. 2 Chambers Bay



COURTESY OF CHAMBERS BAY

**The U.S. has more than 2,000 municipal golf courses,** but there is little doubt which one is the most beloved by American golfers.

Bethpage Black, the A.W. Tillinghast classic that has hosted two U.S. Opens since 2002, remains the clear-cut No. 1 on the 2013 Golfweek's Best Municipal Courses list. Bethpage and No. 2 Chambers Bay, another U.S. Golf Association major site, easily distanced themselves from the rest of the field. Butterfield Trail remains No. 3.

Elsewhere, there was a healthy amount of movement, up and down, on this year's list of top municipal courses – or “munis.”

Chicago's Harborside International (Starboard) was the biggest gainer, jumping 21 spots to No. 25 from No. 46 a year ago. Pacific Grove, which occupies the same coastline as Pebble Beach, fared almost as well, rising 15 spots to No. 22. Others that strongly improved their standing this year were:

No. 10 Indian Wells (Players)



COURTESY INDIAN WELLS/LONNA TUCKER

San Francisco's Presidio, which climbed 12 spots to No. 16; Brackenridge Park, another renovated Tillinghast classic, rose 11 spots; Soldier Hollow (Gold) and Sleepy Hollow (eight spots); Bowes Creek and Washington County GC (seven spots); and Soule Park and Fossil Trace (six spots).

On the flip side, Indian Canyon in Spokane, Wash., fell 13 places to No. 46, Hideout dropped 11 spots, Memorial Park fell 10 spots, and

Aspen GC and Boulder Creek each dropped nine places.

There were four newcomers, led by Max A. Mandel Municipal in Laredo, Texas, which came on line last year and opened at No. 40 on our list. Murphy Creek, Blackthorn and Papago also are new to this year's rankings.

While all of these courses technically are “munis,” the meaning of that term has morphed dramatically over the years. Some on this list are a far cry from the value munis of years past. For instance, green fees at Chambers Bay, site of

the 2010 U.S. Amateur and host course for the 2015 U.S. Open, will peak at \$219 this summer. (Municipal courses typically use higher nonresident fees to subsidize lower – usually significantly lower – resident rates.) At No. 26 SilverRock in La Quinta, Calif., green fees during the recently concluded peak season were \$165.

Suffice it to say, these aren't your father's munis.

– Martin Kaufmann

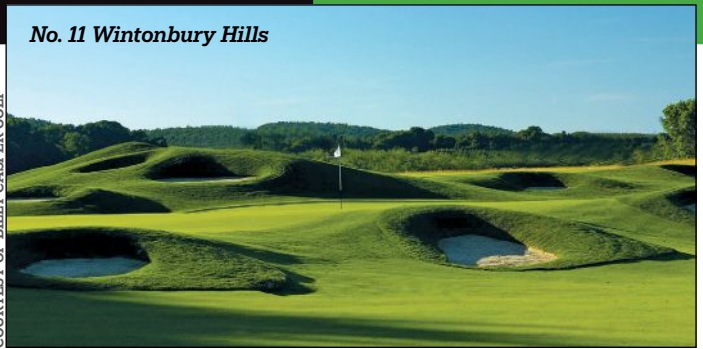
No. 3 Butterfield Trail

COURTESY OF BUTTERFIELD TRAIL



No. 11 Wintonbury Hills

COURTESY OF BILLY CASPER GOLF



# Golfweek's Best: Municipal Courses (2013)

	Location	Opened	Architect(s)	Avg. rating
1. Bethpage State Park (Black)	Farmingdale, N.Y.	1935	A.W. Tillinghast	8.03
2. Chambers Bay	University Place, Wash.	2007	Robert Trent Jones Jr., Bruce Charlton	7.66
3. Butterfield Trail	El Paso, Texas	2007	Tom Fazio	6.46
4. Torrey Pines (South)	La Jolla, Calif.	1957	William F. Bell	6.18
5. TPC Scottsdale (Stadium)	Scottsdale, Ariz.	1987	Jay Morrish, Tom Weiskopf	6.01
6. Arrowhead Pointe	Elberton, Ga.	2003	Robert Walker	5.98
7. Highlands of Elgin	Elgin, Ill.	2010	Keith Foster, Art Schaupeter	5.97
8. Pinon Hills	Farmington, N.M.	1990	Ken Dye	5.97
9. Olympic Course at Gold Mountain	Bremerton, Wash.	1996	John Harbottle	5.94
10. Indian Wells Golf Resort (Players)	Indian Wells, Calif.	2007	John Fought	5.81
11. Wintonbury Hills	Bloomfield, Conn.	2003	Pete Dye, Tim Liddy	5.78
12. TPC Harding Park	San Francisco	1925	Willie Watson	5.77
13. Bowes Creek	Elgin, Ill.	2009	Rick Jacobson	5.74
14. Soldier Hollow (Gold)	Midway, Utah	2004	Gene Bates	5.74
15. Sleepy Hollow	Brecksville, Ohio	1925	Stanley Thompson	5.70
16. Presidio	San Francisco	1921	Herbert Fowler, Tom Simpson	5.70
17. Torrey Pines (North)	La Jolla, Calif.	1957	William F. Bell	5.69
18. Brackenridge Park	San Antonio	1915	A.W. Tillinghast	5.67
19. Olivas Links	Ventura, Calif.	2007	Forrest Richardson	5.65
20. Memorial Park	Houston	1936	John Bredemus, Baxter Spann	5.65
21. Laurel Hill	Lorton, Va.	2005	Bill Love	5.64
22. Pacific Grove Golf Links	Pacific Grove, Calif.	1932	H. Chandler Egan, Jack Neville	5.64
23. Indian Wells Golf Resort (Celebrity)	Indian Wells, Calif.	2006	Clive Clark	5.61
24. Washington County GC	Hartford, Wis.	1997	Arthur Hills	5.60
25. Harborside International (Starboard)	Chicago	1996	Dick Nugent	5.60
26. SilverRock	La Quinta, Calif.	2005	Arnold Palmer	5.60
27. Bethpage State Park (Red)	Farmingdale, N.Y.	1935	A.W. Tillinghast	5.59
28. Hideout	Monticello, Utah	2002	Forrest Richardson	5.56
29. Sunbrook (Point/Woodbridge)**	St. George, Utah	1991	Ted Robinson	5.55
30. Crandon Park	Key Biscayne, Fla.	1972	Bruce Devlin, Robert von Hagge	5.54
31. Neshanic Valley	Neshanic Station, N.J.	2004	Michael Hurdzan	5.53
32. ThunderHawk	Beach Park, Ill.	1999	Robert Trent Jones Jr.	5.53
33. Desert Willow (Firecliff)	Palm Desert, Calif.	1997	Michael Hurdzan	5.51
34. Breckenridge GC	Breckenridge, Colo.	1987	Jack Nicklaus	5.50
35. Soule Park	Ojai, Calif.	1962	Robert Baldock, William F. Bell, Gil Hanse	5.50
36. Chaska Town Course	Chaska, Minn.	1997	Arthur Hills	5.49
37. George Wright GC	Boston	1935	Donald Ross	5.48
38. North Palm Beach CC	North Palm Beach, Fla.	2006	Charles Banks, Jack Nicklaus, Seth Raynor	5.42
39. Fossil Trace	Golden, Colo.	2003	Jim Engh	5.42
40. Max A. Mandel GC*	Laredo, Texas	2012	Robert Trent Jones Jr.	5.41
41. Audobon Park Executive GC	New Orleans	2002	Dennis Griffiths	5.40
42. Montauk Downs State Park	Montauk Point, N.Y.	1968	Rees Jones	5.39
43. Murphy Creek*	Aurora, Colo.	2000	Ken Kavanaugh	5.38
44. Blackthorn*	South Bend, Ind.	1995	Michael Hurdzan	5.38
45. Aspen GC	Aspen, Colo.	1970	Frank Hummel	5.38
46. Indian Canyon	Spokane, Wash.	1935	H. Chandler Egan	5.36
47. Shepherd's Crook	Zion, Ill.	1999	Keith Foster	5.34
48. Boulder Creek	Boulder City, Nev.	2003	Mark Rathert	5.33
49. Papago*	Phoenix	1964	William F. Bell	5.33
50. Lassing Pointe	Union, Ky.	1994	Michael Hurdzan	5.32

\* new to list \*\* returns to list