

WHISPERING PINES

# Third time in a row, still a charm

Dallas National remains at No. 2, with Boot Ranch up to 3

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When Corby Robertson began carving what would become Whispering Pines Golf Club out of the dense pines and scrub in the mid-1990s, he wasn't imagining the course would one day become the star.

The co-founder and owner said his vision was to create a course that would attract the best amateur golfers from around the world to Trinity and to use the club as a way to fund charitable donations.

The fact that Whispering Pines became No. 1 in Texas is just icing on the cake.

For the third year in a row and for the 14th time in the last 18 years, Whispering Pines was voted the No. 1 course in Texas by *The Dallas Morning News'* Texas Golf panel. Whispering Pines made its debut at No. 1 in 2006.

Dallas National is No. 2 for the third year in a row. Boot Ranch, the private course in



An aerial view of the par-4 No. 14 at Whispering Pines, which plays 392 yards from the Spirit tees with a wildly undulating green. The Bush Pine in the foreground on the right is named after President George H.W. Bush.

Fredericksburg, jumped from seventh to third, tying its best finish. Brook Hollow Golf Club dropped one spot to No. 4. Cordillera Ranch in Boerne jumped five spots to No. 5. Preston Trail slipped a spot

to No. 6, and The Clubs at Houston Oaks was No. 7. Driftwood Golf and Ranch Club made its debut at No. 8, followed by Colonial Country Club at No. 9 and Black Jack's Crossing at No. 10. The resort

course in Lajitas is the only course in the top 20 open to the public.

"Mr. Robertson had a dream to bring the best amateur golfers around the world, and God gave him the perfect

piece of land to create a golf course worthy to host The Spirit International," Whispering Pines head pro Chris Rowe wrote in an email. "Mr. Robertson didn't set out to have the best course in the state. His

intention was to use golf to give back through his charities and host amateur events."

The Spirit International is a biennial competition with international teams of men and women amateurs playing for individual and team titles.

Whispering Pines has one of the most unusual membership structures anywhere. A person who is accepted as a member makes an annual donation to The Spirit Golf Association. That entitles the donor to a set number of rounds and helps fill the 501-c-3's coffers that pay for the Spirit, and helps a wide array of charitable beneficiaries.

Robertson, in an email, said his goal was "to bring the great amateurs around the world for the best competition and have them live and play together at Camp Olympia to form friendships.

"We are very proud of the Spirit participants' contributions to golf as pros and their conduct on their respective tours around the world. Their professional success and character demonstrate the value of The Spirit in many lives."

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## TOP 100 COURSES IN TEXAS | 1-50

The rankings are determined by the average score of the ratings by *The Dallas Morning News'* Texas Golf panel. Panel members rated courses on a 1-10 scale. To be eligible for the Top 100, a course needed to be rated by 10 of the 74 voters (13%). (x-original design; y-redesign/renovation; NR-not ranked)

Rank	Course	Location	Type	Designer(s)	Year Open	2022 rank
1.	Whispering Pines Golf Club	Trinity	Private	Chet Williams/Nicklaus Design	1999	1
2.	Dallas National Golf Club	Dallas	Private	Tom Fazio	2002	2
3.	Boot Ranch	Fredericksburg	Private	Hal Sutton	2006	7
4.	Brook Hollow Golf Club	Dallas	Private	x-A.W. Tillinghast; y-Keith Foster	1920	3
5.	The Clubs of Cordillera Ranch	Boerne	Private	Jack Nicklaus	2007	10
6.	Preston Trail Golf Club	Dallas	Private	Byron Nelson, Ralph Plummer	1965	4
7.	The Clubs at Houston Oaks	Hockley	Private	Chet Williams	2017	5
8.	Driftwood Golf and Ranch Club	Driftwood	Private	Tom Fazio	2022	NR
9.	Colonial Country Club	Fort Worth	Private	Perry Maxwell, Ralph Plummer, John Bredemus	1936	8
10.	Black Jack's Crossing	Lajitas	Resort	Lanny Wadkins	2011	13
11.	Bluejack National Golf Club	Montgomery	Private	Tiger Woods	2016	6
12.	Escondido Golf and Lake Club	Horseshoe Bay	Private	Tom Fazio	2006	9
13.	Spanish Oaks Golf Club	Bee Cave	Private	Bobby Weed	2006	16
14.	Champions GC, Cypress Creek	Houston	Private	Ralph Plummer	1957	19
15.	Shady Oaks Country Club	Fort Worth	Private	x-Robert Trent Jones Sr. y-Geoff Ogilvy	1958	11
16.	Austin Country Club	Austin	Private	Pete Dye	1984	12
17.	Northwood Club	Dallas	Private	x-William H. Diddel; y-Tripp Davis	1946	20
18.	Carlton Woods, Nicklaus Course	The Woodlands	Private	Jack Nicklaus	2001	25
19.	Summit Rock Golf Club	Horseshoe Bay	Private	Jack Nicklaus	2012	21
20.	Austin Golf Club	Spicewood	Private	Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw	2001	26
21.	Carlton Woods, Fazio Course	The Woodlands	Private	Tom Fazio	2005	18
22.	Oak Hills Country Club	San Antonio	Private	A.W. Tillinghast	1922	14
23.	TPC San Antonio, AT&T Oaks	San Antonio	Resort	Greg Norman	2010	17
24.	River Oaks Country Club	Houston	Private	x-Donald Ross; y-Rees Jones; Tom Fazio	1923	15
25.	Lakeside Country Club	Houston	Private	x-Ralph Plummer; y-Ron Pritchard	1951	36



26.	<b>Vaquero Club</b>	Westlake	Private	Tom Fazio	2001	22
27.	<b>Miramont Country Club</b>	Bryan	Private	Robert Trent Jones II	2004	24
28.	<b>Trinity Forest Golf Club</b>	Dallas	Private	Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw	2017	31
29.	<b>Lochinvar Golf Club</b>	Houston	Private	Jack Nicklaus	1980	23
30.	<b>Rawls Course</b>	Lubbock	Public	Tom Doak	2003	46
31.	<b>Maridoe Golf Club</b>	Carrollton	Private	Steve Smyers	2017	32
32.	<b>Royal Oaks Country Club</b>	Dallas	Private	x-Billy Martindale, Don January; y-Jay Morrish; Weibring-Wolford; Chet Williams	1969	30
33.	<b>Lakewood Country Club</b>	Dallas	Private	x-Tom Bendelow; y-Coore-Crenshaw	1912	37
34.	<b>Shadow Hawk Golf Club</b>	Richmond	Private	Rees Jones	1999	29
35.	<b>Willow Brook Country Club</b>	Tyler	Private	x-Ralph Plummer; y-Joe Finger; Mark Hayes; Tripp Davis	1922	27
36.	<b>Briggs Ranch Golf Club</b>	San Antonio	Private	Tom Fazio	2002	34
37.	<b>Woodlands CC, Tournament Course</b>	The Woodlands	Private	Robert von Hagge, Bruce Devlin	1978	41
38.	<b>Houston Country Club</b>	Houston	Private	x-Robert Trent Jones Sr.; y-Coore-Crenshaw	1955	48
39.	<b>University of Texas Golf Club</b>	Austin	Private	Roy Bechtol, Randy Russell	2003	42
40.	<b>Pine Dunes Resort</b>	Frankston	Resort	Jay Morrish	2001	51
41.	<b>Omni Barton Creek Resort, Fazio Foothills</b>	Austin	Resort	Tom Fazio	1986	38
42.	<b>TPC San Antonio, AT&amp;T Canyons</b>	San Antonio	Resort	Pete Dye	2010	39
43.	<b>Champions Golf Club, Jackrabbit Course</b>	Houston	Private	x-George Fazio; y-Tom Fazio	1957	63
44.	<b>Deerwood Club</b>	Kingwood	Private	Joe Finger, Ken Dye, Byron Nelson	1982	48
45.	<b>BraeBurn Country Club</b>	Houston	Private	x-John Bredemus; y-Carlton Gipson	1926	81
46.	<b>Westwood Country Club</b>	Houston	Private	x-John Bredemus; y-Ralph Plummer; Keith Foster	1928	28
47.	<b>Omni Barton Creek Resort, Canyons Course</b>	Austin	Resort	Tom Fazio	2000	71
48.	<b>Grand Pines Golf Club at Bentwater</b>	Montgomery	Private	Jeffrey Blume	2005	35
49.	<b>TPC Las Colinas</b>	Irving	Resort	x-Jay Morrish, Byron Nelson, Ben Crenshaw; y-D.A. Weibring, Steve Wolfard	1983	70
50.	<b>Mira Vista Country Club</b>	Fort Worth	Private	Tom Weiskopf, Jay Morrish	1987	52

COURSE RATING CRITERIA

- VERSATILITY:** Does the course create a good mix for the high and low handicappers? Are better players challenged, while the high handicappers are able to enjoy play through the use of shorter teeing areas, alternate routes, location of hazards and accessible pins?
- SHOTMAKING:** Does it test accuracy, finesse, length and putting without putting too much emphasis on any of these skills?
- DESIGN:** Is there a good balance? Differing lengths? Doglegs right and left? Placement of hazards? Contours and shapes of greens?
- AFTERTHOUGHTS:** How much do you remember about the course? Do one or two holes stand out as great or bad?
- BEAUTY:** Do the scenic values add to the pleasure of a round? Trees, shrubs, hills, mounds, flowers, etc.?
- MAINTENANCE:** How would you rate the course conditions, factoring in all aspects — tees, greens, fairways, bunkers? Spring, summer, fall or winter when viewed?
- ENJOYMENT:** How do you feel about being at the course? What about the amenities? From arrival to departure, was it a good, bad or indifferent golf experience?

PANELISTS

- William Aycok, The Woodlands amateur  
Mike Bailey, Houston-based golf writer  
Robert Banta, Frisco amateur  
Brent Blackburn, head professional Corpus Christi CC  
Curt Breaux, Montgomery amateur  
John Brechin, Dallas amateur  
Bruce Burger, superintendent The Quarry Golf Club  
Ben Burns, head professional Crown Colony CC, Lufkin  
Mark Button, director of business development, Texas Golf Association  
Tony Campagna, golf course sands and materials consultant  
Miles Carlson, golf course superintendent at Grand Pines GC in Montgomery, Texas  
Greg Clark, Frisco amateur  
Beth Cleckler, Austin amateur  
John Cochran, Texas Golf Association director of competitions for South Texas, Kingwood amateur  
Brent Cooper, Dallas amateur  
Jacque Cooper, Rowlett amateur  
Daniel Coughlan, director of golf Bent Tree CC  
Robert Couture, Dallas amateur  
Thomas Devanna, assistant professional Tangle Ridge GC, Grand Prairie  
Cameron Doan, head professional Preston Trail Golf Club, Dallas  
Camm Dougherty, Corpus Christi amateur  
Lou Duran, Frisco amateur  
Bob Elliott, PGA life member, Dallas  
Zane Ellis, Golf course architect, League City amateur  
Gilbert Freeman, PGA professional emeritus, Lakewood CC, Dallas  
Don Gafner, Sunnyvale amateur  
Edward Gatlin, PGA life member, Athens  
Bill Hanley, past president of Texas Golf Association, Fort Worth amateur  
Mark Harrison, CEO Northern Texas PGA  
Danny Jones, head professional, Walden on Lake Conroe  
Mark Kazlowski, Texas Golf editor, Cedar Hill amateur  
Robbie Kearney, GM Cimarron Hills Golf and CC  
Trey Kemp, golf course architect, Dallas amateur  
Randy King, Horseshoe Bay amateur  
Keith Kirkendall, The Woodlands amateur  
Nancy Kromar, Austin amateur  
Kellen Kubasak, COO of Golf San Antonio, San Antonio amateur  
Phyllis Kwedar, Fort Worth amateur  
Ricky Lyons, general manager Westwood

Golf Club, Houston  
Katie Manor, executive director Texas Golf Hall of Fame  
Cathy Marino, Jesuit golf coach, LPGA professional  
James McAfee, Former NTPGA executive director, golf writer, Plano amateur  
Mike McCabe, general manager Golf Clubs at the Tribute  
Callum McNeil, Hockley professional golfer  
Sam Morrow, Houston amateur  
Terry Olson, director of sales and marketing, Lajitas Golf Resort  
Casey Paulson, president of sales and operations, Driftwood Golf Club  
Mike Peterson, PGA Tour senior tournament referee, Garland amateur  
Kevin Porter, Dallas amateur, Texas Golf Association director of competitions for North Texas  
George Priolo, GM of golf operations, Ross Rogers and Comanche Trail Golf Complexes, Amarillo  
Jim Quinn, Golf sales rep, Arlington amateur  
Jerry Ransom, Greenville amateur  
Jan Rapp, Dallas amateur  
Paul Richards, Austin amateur  
Corey Roberson, director of golf Cordillera Ranch, Boerne  
Robert Rodriguez, San Antonio amateur  
Chris Rowe, director of golf Whispering Pines, Trinity  
Linda Sackett, San Antonio amateur  
Lee Sandlin, Dallas amateur  
Zach Sewill, president BestGrips.com, Conroe amateur  
Jonathan Shipley, Texas Golf Association president, Katy amateur  
Marty Slade Perlman, Dallas amateur  
Randy Smith, PGA professional emeritus, Royal Oaks CC, Dallas  
Shane Smith, Conroe amateur  
Mark Steinbauer, vice president of Spirit Golf Association  
Tom Strueber, PGA professional emeritus Maridoe Golf Club, Carrollton  
Eldon Tarver, Austin amateur  
Steve Termeer, GM/COO University of Texas Golf Club, Austin  
Tammy Trichell, San Antonio amateur  
Mark Tylanda, Lewisville amateur  
Pat Wheeler, Host of Texas Links on the Air, Dallas amateur  
Nannette Wheelis, Waco amateur  
Jim Whitten, Arlington amateur  
Greg Wille, Belton amateur  
Chris Winn, Houston amateur