SI.COM

SEARCH THE WEB SI.com [   ] (GO)

> SUBSCRIBE TO SI Try 4 issues free

NFL | COLLEGE FOOTBALL | MLB | NBA | COLLEGE BASKETBALL | GOLF | NASCAR | MORE SPORTS | SCORECARD | FANTASY | SCORES

Scott Wraight *Inside Golf*

Wraight Archive

The Front Nine
Top golfers who have become course designers

Posted: Thursday March 17, 2005 12:02PM; Updated: Monday March 21, 2005 5:44PM

☼ FREE E-MAIL ALERTS   ✉ E-MAIL THIS   🖶 PRINT THIS   ✉ SAVE THIS   ☆ MOST POPULAR

Each week, SI.com's Scott Wraight will offer his Front Nine, which will focus on a specific golf topic and offer up a list of the nine best (or worst, as the case may be).

Have you ever watched a round of golf and wondered who designed the course? There's a good chance that a golfer had some input with the design process. And if you watch this week's Bay Hill Invitational, you'll hear Arnold Palmer's name come up more than once when someone mentions the design and/or layout of the course. Palmer is one of several big-name golfers who have turned their attention to designing courses.

When compiling this list, a few factors were taken into account: number of courses, uniqueness of courses, courses on various tours and popularity of courses.

1. Jack Nicklaus

One of the greatest golfers of all time, Nicklaus has put his golf knowledge into designing world-class courses. Nicklaus Design, which consists of Jack, his sons and son-in-law, has 235 courses open for play worldwide -- 196 being solo designs by Nicklaus. There are close to 500 professional tournaments on 77 Nicklaus-designed courses. And there's no sign of Nicklaus slowing down; he's involved in 14 new courses for 2005. "I don't design courses to suit myself as far as difficulty goes. I design them to match the golfers who are going to play the course," the Golden Bear said.

Jamie Squire/Getty Images

2. Arnold Palmer

Founded in 1984, Palmer Golf Management is involved with more than 300 course projects. There are currently 10 Palmer-designed courses used on various tours. The most recognizable event is the Bay Hill Invitational, played at the Bay Hill Golf Course and Lodge. Some of Palmer's other world-class courses include the Palmer Course at LaCantera, The Plantation Course at Ponte Vedra and Turtle Bay. "A golf course must be built for all golfers and should be truly beautiful," said Palmer.

Chris McGrath/Getty Images

3. Greg Norman

Established in 1987, Greg Norman Golf Course Design has completed or has ongoing projects on four continents. The TPC at Sugarloaf, the Tiburon Golf Club and the Grand Golf Club are just a few of Norman's more recognizable courses. "I'm a firm believer in using what Mother Nature gives us on a particular site," Norman said. Norman's design company has 24 courses in the United States and 19 throughout Asia and Australia.

A. Redington/Getty Images

4. Ben Crenshaw

Early on, Crenshaw did a lot of renovation and restoration projects -- looking to build a reputation in the design field. After receiving positive feedback, Crenshaw felt it was time to start designing. Ben Crenshaw and **Bill Coore** established Coore and Crenshaw Inc. in 1986. Crenshaw and Coore have been involved with 28 courses and have designed and completed 14. The most recognizable Crenshaw-Coore course is the Plantation Course in Hawaii, which hosts the Mercedes Championship.

Scott Halleran/Getty Images

5. Peter Jacobsen

In 1990, Jacobsen collaborated with Jim Hardy on his first full-size course -- the Oregon Golf Club. Both Jacobsen and Hardy shared the same belief that each hole should be beautiful and playable, but most of all, it had to be unique. Shortly after their work together in Oregon, Jacobsen and Hardy formed the Jacobsen-Hardy Golf Course Design Company in 1995. Jacobsen-Hardy have 13 finished courses and are working on eight projects. Among their best courses: Redstone (host of the Shell Houston Open), Creekside Country Club and Black Horse.

6. Tom Weiskopf

Weiskopf, who got involved with course design in 1983, has an impressive portfolio of nearly 40 courses (23 courses with former partner **Jay Morrish**). Weiskopf is a traditionalist that started his own design firm in 1994 and believes each hole must have its own identity. You can see Weiskopf's design ideas at work in some of his best courses: Troon Golf and Country Club in Arizona, Loch Lomond in Scotland and The Ridge at Castle Pines North in Colorado.

Stuart Franklin/Getty Images

7. Gary Player

Gary Player Design -- which has been around since the early '80s -- has more than 200 design projects across four continents, including 35 in North America and 15 in South Africa. Player has always felt that a course must be flexible enough to provide enjoyment for the average golfer, while also being tough enough to set up for a major championship. Among Player's best courses: TPC at Jasna Polana in New Jersey, The Links at Fancourt in South Africa and Blackmoor in South Carolina.

A. Redington/Getty Images

8. Johnny Miller

Miller's first taste with course design was in the mid-1970s when he served as a golf course design consultant. Shortly after that, Miller created his own design company -- Johnny Miller Design, founded in 1984. Miller has completed 24 courses and has 10 projects underway. Entrada at Snow Canyon, Collingtree Park and Binks Forest are just a few of Miller's renowned courses. "Nature has a great impact on our golf courses," said Miller.

Stephen Dunn/Getty Images

9. Nick Faldo

Established in 1991, Faldo Design has completed projects in 12 countries. Faldo, who has a deep appreciation of the world's great courses, contributes significantly to each project and is involved in all stages of the design process. Faldo Design has completed 10 projects, including several award-winning designs. Some of Faldo's best courses include The Sporting Club Berlin in Germany, Ocean Hills in Vietnam and Marriott's Shadow Ridge in Palm Desert.

Jamie Squire/Getty Images