

The List: Slew of newcomers score among toughest 18-hole courses in Mass.

If the Boston Business Journal's list of the Toughest 18-Hole Golf Courses in Massachusetts looks a little less familiar this year, there is good reason for that.

“Courses are re-rated on a regular basis. Because of that you're likely going to see a lot of movement in the rankings from year to year,” explained [Mark Gagne](#), the director of member services at the Massachusetts Golf Association, which ranked the courses for the BBJ based on the [United States Golf Association's](#) men's course ratings.



GreatHorse in Hampden is the second toughest 18-hole course in Massachusetts with a... [more](#)

As a result of the new ratings by the USGA this year, several courses that were not on the 2016 list have now cracked the BBJ's top 25, including GreatHorse, the former Hampden Country Club which reopened under its new name in 2015 following a \$50 million renovation. With a men's course rating of 77.2, GreatHorse earns the distinction of being the second toughest 18-hole course in the Bay State.

“We hired [Brian Silva](#) to redesign our course,” said GreatHorse President [Guy Antonacci](#), “and we told him to make it a fair course but at the same time totally challenging. The course that is long (nearly 7,600 yards) with a lot of bunkers (205 of them) and angles that takes a lot of strategy to play.”

Despite the debut of GreatHorse on this year's BBJ list, the 8,133-yard [International Golf Club](#) in Boston easily retains its crown as the state's most difficult course with an 81.7 course rating from the Gold tees.

The other newcomers to the BBJ list of the toughest golf courses this year include: No. 8-ranked Pinehills Golf Club's Nicklaus Course in Plymouth, The Ranch Golf Club in Southwick at No. 12, No. 14-ranked TGC Sacconnesset in East Falmouth, The Kittansett Club in Marion at No. 17, Crestview Country Club in Agawam at No. 24 and Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton at No. 25.

With the Jones Course taking up the No. 5 spot, Pinehills scores a double appearance on this year's list.