I love golf. I love to play golf, I love to watch golf, and I always knew it would have a place of some sort on this website. Between my golf league, playing with clients, and playing with pals on the weekend ... I get out pretty often. These are my 25 favorite public golf courses in the northeast Ohio area.

Of the ones I've played, here's how I'd rate em. Note that I am a northeast Ohioan, so many of the great couses in the middle to southern portion of the state probably won't appear on this list.

1. Boulder Creek - The course has so much character. Always well kept, and at 7400 from the tips ... plays longer than the Open did at Winged Foot this week. 1 and 10 are par fives, I love that. Number 17 is an island green (pictured above) a la Sawgrass, that always looms large with any wagers you may have going. Just an absolutely gorgeous golf course with all different kinds of holes, and a great test of your game. Breaking 90 there (89) on Fathers Day was the highlight of my golf year to this point.

2. Longaberger - Played there twice, not this year yet. A two and a half hour haul from Cleveland, but worth the ride. The view from the #1 tee with the giant basket and a gorgeous and demanding par 4 awaiting you is one of the best in the state. Greens are like ice. Incredibly tough course that hosted the PGA Tour Club Pro Championship 3 years ago, and could easily host a PGA Tour event. Expensive, but worth the investment once a year to me.

3. Avalon Lakes - Also played here twice, but not yet this year. Used to host an LPGA event. Incredibly manicured, water and sand everywhere and the greens are always perfect. Very challenging Pete Dye design. If you are spraying the ball, you can burn through several sleeves of balls here. A pristine track whose hazards can drive you nuts, but one of my favorites.

4. Stonewater - Hosts a Nationwide event, my buddy belongs here so I've been able to get out there 4-5 times. Semi - private now. Probably the best greens in Ohio. An incredible course, but homes being built all along it (replacing woods that gave the course character) have detracted from the feel and atmosphere of the

course. That said, this is a helluva track.

5. Blue Heron - A buddy I do business with belongs here, so I've been lucky enough to play here 5-6 times, and am again this coming Wednesday. A new course out in Medina. It's a Troon course. Which means landing areas, large crevices and waste areas, and it's gorgeous to the eye. Will be even more so once the course fills in around it over the next 2-3 years. Not too many holes you can unleash driver, several where you need to strike straight shots between 170-220 yards.

6. Links At Firestone Farms - Down in Columbiana County, have played there one time each of the last three years. A relative unknown, but has recieved high accolades from Golf Digest, and is a great track that id reasonably priced. A sprawling links type course that puts an emphasis on shot making, and forces you to use all the clubs in your bag. Long, challenging, and a good amount of water and sand. An absolute ass-kicker of a golf course.

7. Thunder Hill - Out in Madison, twenty minutes east of my Mentor home, no course has given me more fits than Thunder. The word challenge personified. Very long, lightning quick greens with severe undulation, what seems like hundreds of small lakes, literally hundreds of bunkers, and a plethora of holes that require carry of 200 yards or more. great scenery, and just a great course. The fact this is ranked seven speaks volumes about the great golf courses in this area.

8. Little Mountain - Right by me in Concord, and just 5-6 years old, I've only played Little Mountain once. Very challenging par 70 course (three par fives, five par threes) with sand EVERYWHERE. Many of the bunkers are deep, with high lips, and every time you enter one you run the risk of posting a poor round killing score. Lots of elevation change, and the greens are heavily sloped. An impressive course.

9. Windmill Lakes - Nothing spectacular about Windmill, but it's just an all around great golf course. Challenging, well kept, great people work there, and the best pro shop in the area. I make it a point to get out here at least one time a year.

10. Fowlers Mill - Located in Chesterland, which is a hotbed of great courses (Fowlers Mill, Sandridge, Berkshire Hills, Orchard Hills). 27 hole Pete Dye layout complete with a number of different kinds of holes, railroad ties, split fairways,

elevation changes, and numerous doglegs. Affordable to play, with great weekday specials.

11. Painesville CC - Where I play my Tuesday night golf league. A great golf course with loads of character. The two nines are dramatically different with the back much tighter and more challenging. The par 3's are murder here. Affordable as well. $40 to play 18 on the weekend, and $1.80 for a Labatt Blue.

12. Wicked Woods - Another personal favorite, out in Newbury just past Chardon. Not incredibly long, but challenging. Very scenic, with different types of holes ... makes for an enjoyable round.

13. Glen Eagles - Like Painesville CC and Wicked Woods, not an elite course like the denizens of my Top 10, but one of my favorites to play. The city of Twinsburg bought in 6-7 years ago, and improved it greatly. Creeks, sand traps, mounds, and very well maintained.

14. Orchard Hills - Also semi-private, and in Chesterland, right next door to Patterson Fruit Farm. The smell of apples in the air, and the view overlooking the course from the balcony are both epic. Small greens that are tough to hit, and many doglegs. Also a Pete Dye layout, with elevation changes and tough short par fours.

15. Bunker Hill - In Medina, I've hosted an NFL Draft party here each of the last three years that starts with 18 holes on this course in the morning. A neat track, with massive elevation changes and a host of doglegs. The finishing holes are amongst the best in the state. Both 9 and 18 are bears. Course is very well kept, and is improved each time I am there.

16. Sleepy Hollow
17. Manakiki
18. Berkshire Hills
19. Chardon Lakes
20. St. Denis
21. Eagle Creek
22. Hemlock Springs
23. Shawnee Hills
24. Astorhurst
25. Grantwood

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