

Hole lotta love - SA's greatest 18

Like many good ideas, South

Australia's Best 18 was dreamed up in a pub.

It began with Royal Adelaide Teaching Professional Daniel Blackwell, Sunday Mail Sports Editor Tim Hilferty, The Advertiser's sport-loving artist Matt Shepherd and me debating the merits of our favourite holes. Those earning general consensus were written on the back of a beer coaster.

But Tim's the boss, and he decided this project needed more depth of research than that evident on a front bar. So 40 courses, 337 holes, and around 10,000km later...

We're not about to label it definitive. There are many more courses we would have loved to visit if real life wasn't so darned meddlesome.

The holes aren't laid out in order of preference, just a suitable spread to play as if this was one links.

We expect debate and disagreement amongst fellow golf lovers.

But we think everyone will concur that our Best of Golf in South Australia would be one almighty course.



Ben Hook

Daniel Blackwell



Royal Adelaide 3rd hole



Naracoorte 8th hole



Edithburgh 7th hole

Grange East 14th hole

1 Victor Harbor 1st Par 4, 402m

An SA icon, it was once rated by Arnold Palmer as one of the great golf holes he had seen, and who are we to argue with old Arnie? **PRO'S TIP:** Easy to neglect your approach after the grandeur of that elevated tee shot. Clear your mind and make a good swing to the centre of this green.



2 Grange East 14th Par 4, 368m

Greg Norman recently completely revamped the East Course at the Grange. This peach was left virtually untouched from tee to the front edge of the putting surface. Norman blew up the old green and opted for an outrageous design, leaving two separate zones divided by a raised narrow ridge. If your approach is the wrong side, the party's just starting. **PRO'S TIP:** Visually deceptive approach so commit to your club and shot selection to avoid the threatening bunker.



3 Clare 7th Par 3, 115m

A much-loved adventure, where the opening challenge is simply climbing the steep slope up to this elevated tee. When you make it up there, knocking a ball back down to the green is golfing utopia. **PRO'S TIP:** Know your club yardages and commit to the swing to avoid steering the shot which could easily miss the green nestled down below.



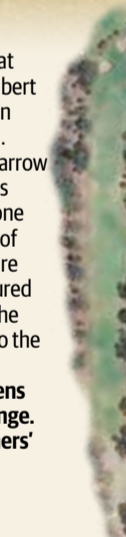
4 Renmark 11th Par 4, 339m

The Riverland boasts plenty of quality golf holes, but this sweeping par 4 was our choice as the region's standout. This hole's beauty is its green complex. Two tiers with a championship back-right pin placement, the distinct drop away at the back of the putting surface creates an appearance resembling an infinity swimming pool. **PRO'S TIP:** Avoid any second guessing with your shot selection on this approach as you will be found out.



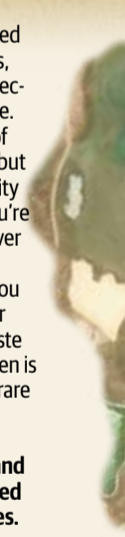
5 Naracoorte 8th Par 5, 458m

After arguing over the legitimate claims of holes at Mt Gambier, Robe, Lake Albert and Millicent, we settled on Naracoorte's pristine par 5. A strong drive through a narrow chute to a fairway that rolls gently downhill presents one of the best birdie chances of our 18. The standout feature of Naracoorte is its manicured green complexes, where the putting surfaces are akin to the Melbourne sand belt. **PRO TIP:** These slick greens present their own challenge. Study your playing partners' putts to get a feel for the speed.



6 Copperclub 2nd Par 4, 322m

Greg Norman has produced nine gems at Port Hughes, but we plumped for the second as our most enjoyable. Mr Norman offered one of golf's broadest fairways, but that is where his generosity ended. If you go right, you're approaching the green over some of the game's most intimidating bunkers. If you head left, you get a better look, but must clear a waste area. And this double green is a brute, complete with a rare mid-green bunker. **PRO'S TIP:** The sand in these bunkers is thick, and delivers plenty of plugged lies, so avoid the beaches.



7 Edithburgh 7th Par 3, 133m

It was a three-hour round trip just to play this and we are truly glad we did. The tee block sits on a tiny spit of land while the green is nestled 133m away the other side of a deep narrow bay. What sits in between is called the Southern Ocean. Sure, the green is a scrape, but this is as exhilarating as golf gets. I dare you to play it just once. **PRO'S TIP:** You will potentially be hit by extreme windy conditions on this hole, so balance is important when teeing off.



8 Royal Adelaide 3rd Par 4, 266m

It's rated one of the world's finest, so it's a shoe-in to make this list. Alister MacKenzie's masterpiece looks straight forward enough, but asks challenging questions at every stage. It's drivable on its day, but it's a huge gamble. A 3-wood over the fairway can leave a devilish short wedge from a tight lie. An iron short of the mound leaves a blind second. And that's before you've arrived at the exquisitely framed green. It's a true pleasure. It's a true treasure. **PRO'S TIP:** Be careful of your club selection and check the tree tops for the severity of the wind.



9 Glenelg 18th Par 5, 496m

One of SA's best closing holes on one of SA's best courses. The drive requires meticulous accuracy while any decision to push your second towards the green must be tempered by the line of bunkers up the right. A range of diverse pin positions call for short game mastery. All this must be played out in front of the Glenelg members perched on the elegant clubhouse balcony. **PRO'S TIP:** We all want to par the last, and that's improbable from the fairway bunkers or water, so take your trustiest club off the tee.



10 Tea Tree Gully 15th Par 4, 353m

Followers of big-time golf will recall the 18th hole at the famed Arnold Palmer Invitational, set on Florida's superb Bay Hill course. South Australia's answer to that white, dimpled adrenalin rush is right here at the Gully. If the flag is over on the right, you'll need a clear mind and a clean strike. **PRO'S TIP:** Driver brings water into play off the tee, and there is no point flirting with any hazard twice.



11 Flagstaff Hill 7th Par 3, 147m

The signature hole on this under-rated hills course. It's at once intimidating, awe inspiring and smile invoking. There's water front and water right. Oh, and water behind. And a bunker on the left for anyone considering a bale out. Just harden up and shoot for the pin. **PRO'S TIP:** Not an overly deep green so a fade ball flight may suit this tee shot to help stop the ball quickly.



12 Blackwood 15th Par 5, 475m

A delightful par five that curls snugly around two hefty dams before winding up at an exquisitely presented green. The tee shot requires accuracy, while your approach must negotiate water left, sand in front, a deep swale right and a steep rise at the rear. Like a maximum security prison, there is no escape. **PRO'S TIP:** Whether you choose to lay up or go for it, use the willow tree right of the green as your firing line.



13 Fleurieu 6th Par 4, 353m

The R & A should change the rules and allow golfers to play two balls on this hole. One for sensibility and slide a long iron beside the hazard, and another for that reckless streak to smack a drive over it. If you pass that test, a three-tier green awaits your approach. **PRO'S TIP:** Whichever route you take, your approach must finish under the hole. A downhill putt may mean a wasted stroke.



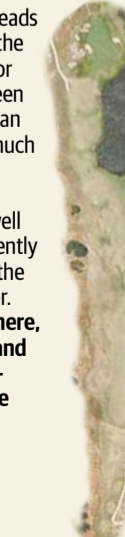
14 Grange West 17th Par 4, 415m

Another icon of the Grange. It's probably a bit long for the average player off the back tees, but the view of the pin nestled behind that gorgeous little valley framing the approach will inspire golfers of all standards. **PRO'S TIP:** Deep greenside bunker right is there to tease you into error so take an extra club and hit with a higher trajectory.



15 Links Lady Bay 7th Par 5, 509m

A straight forward drive leads to a lay-up that requires the precision of a surgeon. For the longer hitters this green is reachable, but more than 200 metres away, with much of it water carry, means length must be matched by courage. The green, well guarded by bunkers, is gently dome-shaped to ensure the two-putt is no snap either. **PRO'S TIP:** Be sensible here, keep your lay up short and be satisfied to hit something longer than wedge into the green.



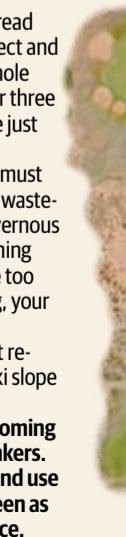
16 Bordertown 10th Par 4, 329m

Yep, you read it correctly. Not only is there a golf course at Bordertown, it is truly a diamond in the rough. The 10th has it all: a classic rolling fairway with three pencil pines in the distance giving you a great target to shoot for, then a green complex that rivals anything on offer at Royal Melbourne. **PRO'S TIP:** Variety of options with the approach shot to a cleverly designed green. Play a low runner or go with the egotistical spinner so you can use the slopes to dance the ball around the pin.



17 Royal Adelaide 7th Par 3, 167m

We tried so hard to spread the wealth of this project and limit selection to one hole per course, but this par three is such a stand-out, we just couldn't overlook it. A pure ball-strike is a must here. There's a vicious waste-land, then a ring of cavernous bunkers to catch anything mis-hit. But if you take too much club and go long, your ball is probably lost. The green is ample but resembles an Olympic ski slope from back to front. **PRO'S TIP:** Avoid becoming distracted by the bunkers. Take one more club and use a tree beyond the green as your point of reference.



18 Kooyonga 18th Par 4, 378m

A wonderful closing hole that can make a hero of a hacker just as easily it can puzzle a pro. Big hitters can take on the corner, but any ball that finds the traps or the trees has bogey written all over it. For the rest of us, a fairway wood off the tee short of the trouble, followed by a crisp iron to the green gives a good chance at par in front of that majestic clubhouse. **PRO'S TIP:** Tight lies surround this green, so a chip-and-run third stroke is a far more reliable means of getting up-and-down.



MENS COURSE		
1	Par 4	402m
2	Par 4	368m
3	Par 4	339m
4	Par 3	115m
5	Par 5	458m
6	Par 4	322m
7	Par 3	133m
8	Par 4	266m
9	Par 5	496m
	PAR 36	2899m
10	Par 4	353m
11	Par 3	147m
12	Par 5	475m
13	Par 4	353m
14	Par 4	415m
15	Par 5	509m
16	Par 4	329m
17	Par 3	167m
18	Par 4	378m
	PAR 36	3126m
	PAR 72	6025m
LADIES COURSE		
1	Par 5	395m
2	Par 4	323m
3	Par 4	287m
4	Par 3	110m
5	Par 5	447m
6	Par 4	207m
7	Par 3	133m
8	Par 4	250m
9	Par 5	430m
	PAR 37	2582m
10	Par 4	286m
11	Par 3	110m
12	Par 5	405m
13	Par 4	318m
14	Par 4	321m
15	Par 5	449m
16	Par 4	323m
17	Par 3	120m
18	Par 4	313m
	PAR 36	2285m
	PAR 73	4867m