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Links (golf)

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A **links** is the oldest style of golf course, first developed in Scotland. The word "links" comes from the Scots language and refers to an area of coastal sand dunes and sometimes to open parkland. It also retains this more general meaning in the Scottish English dialect. It can be treated as singular even though it has an "s" at the end and occurs in place names that precede the development of golf, for example Lundin Links, Fife.^[1]

Many links - though not all - are located in coastal areas, on sandy soil, often amid dunes, with few water hazards and few if any trees. This reflects both the nature of the scenery where the sport happened to originate, and the fact that only limited resources were available to golf course architects at the time, and any earth moving had to be done by hand, so it was kept to a minimum.

At Bruntsfield Links in Edinburgh, Scotland, the course (a considerable distance from the coast) is still used for pitch and putt golf, and boasts a sign erected by the City Council which asserts that golf may have been invented there.

The challenges of links golf fall into two categories. Firstly the nature of the courses themselves, which tend to be characterised by uneven fairways, thick rough and small deep bunkers known as "pot bunkers". Secondly, due to their coastal location many links courses are frequently windy. This affects the style of play required, favouring players who are able to play low accurate shots. As many links courses consist literally of an "outward" nine in one direction along the coast, and an "inward" nine which returns in the opposite direction, players often have to cope with opposite wind patterns in each half of their round.

Links courses remain most common in Ireland and also in Great Britain, especially in Scotland. The Open Championship is always played on links courses and this is one of the main things which differentiates it from the three major championships held in the United States.

Links courses tend to be on, or at least very near to, a coast, and the term is typically associated with coastal courses. However, links conditions can be duplicated on suitable ground, even hundreds of miles or kilometres inland. One especially notable example of an inland links-style course is Sand Hills Golf Club, a much-acclaimed early-2000s layout in the Sand Hills of Nebraska.

Famous links golf courses

- Pantai Lagenda Golf & Country Club, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia
- Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club Arcadia, Michigan, United States
- Ballyneal Golf & Hunt Club, Holyoke, Colorado, United States
- Ballybunion Golf Club, Co. Kerry, Ireland
- Baltray (Co. Louth) Golf Club, Co. Louth, Ireland
- Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Bandon, Oregon, United States
- Bay Harbor Golf Club (Links Course), Petoskey, Michigan, United States
- Bayonne Golf Club, Bayonne, New Jersey, United States
- Cape Breton Highlands Links, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Carnoustie Golf Links
- Chambers Bay, University Place, Washington, United States

- Fanoe Golf Link, Fanoe Island, Denmark
- Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island, South Carolina
- Lahinch Golf Club, Co. Clare, Ireland
- LaTour Golf Club, Shreveport, Louisiana
- Lynwood Country Club, Sydney, Australia
- Muirfield, East Lothian, Scotland
- New South Wales Golf Club, Sydney, Australia
- Oakmont Country Club, Oakmont, Pennsylvania, United States
- Old Course at St Andrews
- Old Head Golf Links, Kinsale, Co. Cork, Ireland
- Onwentsia Golf Club, Lake Forest, Illinois, United States
- Portmarnock Golf Club, Portmarnock, County Dublin, Ireland
- Portstewart Golf Club, Northern Ireland
- Prestwick Golf Club, South Ayrshire, Scotland
- Prince's Golf Club
- Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, Scotland
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club, Southport, England
- Royal County Down Golf Club, Northern Ireland
- Royal Dornoch Golf Club, Scotland
- Royal Dublin Golf Club, Ireland
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club, Hoylake, Merseyside, England
- Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club, Lancashire, England
- Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland
- Royal St George's Golf Club, Sandwich, Kent, England
- Royal Troon Golf Club, South Ayrshire, Scotland
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club
- Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Southampton, New York, United States
- St Michaels Golf Club, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- Wawashkamo Golf Club, Mackinac Island, Michigan
- Rosses Point Golf Club, Co. Sligo, Ireland
- Turnberry, South Ayrshire, Scotland
- Lebordello, Kohler, Tajikistan
- Hainan Boao Golf & Country Club, Hainan, Boao, PR China
- Lannocks Links Course Gravely Nr Stevenage (9 Holes)
- Fancourt Hotel & Country Club Estate, George, Western Cape, South Africa
- National Golf Links of America, Southampton, NY
- The Links at Crowbush Cove, Morell, Prince Edward Island, Canada
- Lynwood CC, Sydney, Australia
- The Mombasa Golf Club (1911)-Home of the Coast Open aka Barry Club , Mombasa , Kenya
- Whistling Straits (Straits Course) Kohler, Wisconsin, United States

References

1. ^ "Meaning of the Word Golf Links Course". http://www.scottishgolfhistory.net/links_golf.htm.

External links

- The Links Golf Society
- UK Golf Open information and Links

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