

# New management company returns pleasure to Palmer's premier course at Birkdale

## *Arnold Palmer's only daily-fee golf course in Charlotte*

Arnold Palmer is a legend in the golf business, from his historic PGA days that played a major role in the growth of golf, to his golf course design skills. Arnie has designed more than 300 courses worldwide, but the only daily-fee course in the Charlotte area is Birkdale Golf Club in Huntersville.

With a new management company - Traditional Golf - directing the day-to-day operations, Birkdale certainly has made a striking turn-around after a year and a half of financial difficulties. The company's business strategy is centered on creating customer loyalty including superior service, enhanced course conditions, and tracking the usage and spending habits of their customers.

Improving staff and restocking the Birkdale pro shop gives golfers a very positive first impression. However, it's the on-course changes that are drawing most of the attention as players return to enjoy the challenging 7,000 yard, par-72 layout that opened to rave reviews in 1997.

Located on 200 acres of rolling terrain, carved between tall pines and natural streams, Birkdale is made up of Bermuda fairways and Crenshaw bent grass greens. New turf equipment & maintenance vehicles have

helped make noticeable improvements with more consistent mowing and grooming of greens and fairways.

"We have been able to restart the pre-emergence program on the golf course which will provide for a cleaner, weed-free golf course throughout the golf season," said Mike Riddle, Regional Vice President for Traditional Golf Management. "Our complete renovation of all 64 bunkers on the golf course is about 50% completed, and a regular aerification schedule of our greens has already shown excellent results."

Even with its length, Palmer used the four sets of tees at Birkdale to mix the big "grip-it-and-rip-it" holes with shorter shot-maker holes to test your course management and game strategy. The course features a number of elevation changes, which are appealing to the eye and adds to the challenge. Well-placed water hazards require players to use every shot in their bag.



Many holes have doglegs and a couple of short par-4's are almost drive-able. The par 3 holes are all solid challenges, while two tough holes feature watery approach shots into well guarded greens. One is the 569yd par-5 5th hole where your 3rd shot must carry water over a rock-faced wall to a long, narrow green.

Still another good water approach shot comes on the 436 yard, par-4 18th into another long right-to-left sloping green that is well guarded in both front and back by large well-conditioned bunkers. This hole looks great from the clubhouse patio, but it will certainly keep your attention to the final shot of the day.



“This golf course is blessed with “good bones” providing a solid foundation for our improvement efforts,” said Jeff Thomas, Birkdale Golf Club General Manager. “Many of the players are complimenting our staff on the upgrading of the condition of the course and we are all very happy to see Birkdale getting back in form.”

Improving your game can also be fun at Birkdale. Their practice area includes a 10-acre lighted driving range with Bermuda grass tees, short-game area and putting green. New golf balls and new mats for wet weather have been added, while a new top-of-the-line ball picker helps provide a very ample supply of practice balls well into the evening hours.

Birkdale has several meeting and reception spaces including two conference rooms that are ideal for small meetings and lunches. The 5,000 square foot Palmer Pavilion is a perfect choice for wedding receptions and large events, seating up to 200 guests. The entire perimeter is lined with French doors allowing for an open, outdoor feel without ever going outside.



Arnie’s Tavern, located in the main clubhouse has also seen improvements with a new daily menu and the addition of seven new television sets that will keep you updated with the latest sports news and games while enjoying an excellent full meal or just a snack.

Birkdale Golf Club provides an outstanding daily fee golf experience that should be a part of your fall golf plans. Contact the pro shop at 704-895-838 for tee times, membership information or to set up an outing. Or log-on at [www.birkdale.com](http://www.birkdale.com)