

### **Myrtle Beach 4-Day Golf Itinerary**

#### **Play with Jack Nicholas, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player in four days along the Grand Strand**

In 2011, the golf world's attention will turn to Augusta National, which will play host to the 75th Masters Tournament. Much of the celebration will center on golf's "Big Three": Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player, who between them won 13 green jackets and dominated golf for nearly four decades.

Most weekend players will never get inside the exclusive club in Augusta, but by visiting Myrtle Beach ([www.visitmyrtlebeach.com](http://www.visitmyrtlebeach.com)), they can play golf courses designed by each member of the "Big Three." The Grand Strand, in fact, is one of few places where such a mission is comfortably doable in a four- or five-day golf adventure, covering up to six courses.

Depending on daylight hours, one conceivably could squeeze all six into three days, but a four-day, five-course schedule works best. With Myrtle Beach's huge variety of accommodations and dining establishments and easy access along U.S. 17, start either on the north or south end; fittingly, either way, your first and last rounds likely will be on a design by Nicklaus, the greatest champion in Masters and major-championship history.

**Day 1** – Long Bay Club, Longs

**Day 2** – Myrtle Beach National (three courses), Myrtle Beach

**Day 3** – Blackmoor Golf Club, Murrells Inlet

**Day 4** – Pawleys Plantation, Pawleys Island

#### **Details, Details...**

##### **Day 1 – Long Bay**

350 Fox Tail Drive, Longs

(843) 235-4653

[www.mbn.com/courses/longbay](http://www.mbn.com/courses/longbay)

It might not feel like the beach in this off-the-beaten-path spot on S.C. 9, but the trek is worth it for players seeking a challenge worthy of the great Nicklaus. Built early in his design career, Long Bay is rated one of the Grand Strand's most difficult courses (a brutal 137 slope rating from the 7,021-yard back tees), reflecting a period when the "Golden Bear" built courses that would test even his game.

Four holes (Nos. 7, 10, 13 and 18) have been rated among the "Top 100 Holes on the Grand Strand," and the course features Nicklaus' "chocolate drop" mounds, deep pot bunkers and extensive waste areas. The course is particularly known for its demanding par-3 holes. Its par-5, 543-yard seventh hole features water and multiple fairway and greenside bunkers, plus a shelf running through the green that can reject errant shots.

Golf Digest gave the course 4.5 (of five) stars in its "Places to Play" rankings. The club's pro shop, grill and large practice area make it a place to stay all day.

## **Day 2 – Myrtle Beach National**

4900 National Drive, Myrtle Beach

(843) 448-2308

[www.mbn.com/courses/kings-north](http://www.mbn.com/courses/kings-north)

Fans of “The King,” aka Arnold Palmer, could play an entire weekend here with three courses designed by Palmer and his design associate, the late Ed Seay. If you have one day, though, the wise choice is King’s North and – if time allows – either the West or Southcreek course, depending on your level of play and fortitude.

King’s North, with its 4.5 stars by Golf Digest and ranking among the magazine’s “America’s 100 Greatest Public Courses” in 2004, is the must-play. Best known for its third hole, with its island green and bunkers shaped in outlines of the state of South Carolina, this 6,827-yard par-72 layout is typical of Palmer’s “go for broke” playing style. The par-5 sixth hole, with its shortcut to the green via an island fairway, is nicknamed “The Gambler” for its chances at eagle; that’s how Arnie would play it.

The Myrtle Beach National West course is nearly as challenging as King’s North, also carrying a 4.5-stars rating. Playable for all levels, the course can test even professionals from its 6,866-yard back tees, with numerous doglegs, fairway bunkers and other hazards framed by stands of pine trees.

SouthCreek is the choice for regulars at Myrtle Beach National and distinctly different from its sister courses. Just 6,416 yards from all the way back, the course rewards accuracy more so than pure length, with waste areas, wetlands and hardwood forests. Golf for Women magazine in 2004 named SouthCreek one of its Top 100 in America, recognizing its playability for all golfers.

## **Day 3 – Blackmoor**

6100 Longwood Road, Murrells Inlet

(866) 952-5555

[www.blackmoor.com](http://www.blackmoor.com)

If Nicklaus was about precision and Palmer about daring, Gary Player’s style is best defined as joyful exuberance, and his lone Myrtle Beach design reflects that. Built on the historic Longwood Plantation parallel to the Waccamaw River, Blackmoor (6,614 yards from the back tees) is designed to be fun and playable for all ages and abilities, while still offering a test to accomplished players.

The course has no parallel fairways, promoting an air of isolation and quiet solitude. Blackmoor offers a number of risk-reward holes, but also gives high-handicap players the option to play shots “along the ground” while promoting accuracy over length (a Player specialty). The signature par-5, 499-yard 13th hole has a narrow fairway, grass bunkers and a small green protected by a front-right bunker.

Player, who maintains a home near Greenville, is renowned for his enthusiasm for the game and his love of introducing newcomers to golf. Blackmoor was designed with both in mind.

#### **Day 4 – Pawleys Plantation**

70 Tanglewood Drive, Pawleys Island

(843) 237-6007

[www.pawleysplantation.com](http://www.pawleysplantation.com)

At 7,026 yards and a 140 slope rating from the back tees, this 1988 design on the Strand's southern end is, on paper, more difficult than its Nicklaus cousin, Long Bay. But rather than brutishly difficult, Pawleys Plantation rewards accuracy on tee shots and a studious approach to putting on its subtle greens, while rewarding players with the natural coastal beauty of salt marshes and views of the barrier island – in other words, Nicklaus in his prime.

The club also offers on-site, fully-equipped villa suites, clubhouse, pool, pro shop, grill, tennis courts and dining facilities. Whether players base their weekend here or elsewhere, Pawleys Plantation is a fitting conclusion (or start) to four days spent appreciating the special careers and varied course-design skills of golf's Big Three.