

## Northern New Jersey



The Architects Golf Club

There are probably a few individuals more qualified to discourse on the fine public golf options in northern New Jersey than Hank Gola, but not many. The longtime sportswriter and avid public golfer was born in Garfield, and has lived in Parsippany for some thirty five years. “Our area gets the attention of the golf world every time a Major championship is held at **Baltusrol**,” states Gola, speaking of the host venue of the 2016 PGA Championship, “but there are a number of fine courses around the area that welcome public play.”



Hominy Hill Hole 11

**Hominy Hill** is one of the area’s crown jewels. Located in Colt’s Neck, this municipal facility was twice the host of the U.S. Pub Links Championship. Highlights include the staunch eleventh, a long, water-

laden par-3 stretching more than 200 yards. While water is mostly an incidental experience, (just four holes) there are nearly 140 bunkers dotting the landscape.



Galloping Hill

**Galloping Hill** also deserves mention, the home venue of the New Jersey State Golf Association, and a parkland style beauty just fifteen minutes from Baltusrol in Union County. Course conditions have improved drastically in recent years, though the grounds can occasionally be soggy. However the course has some lovely rolling terrain, is very hilly, and provides plenty of visual interest. “It’s the first public golf course in the state to have hosted the New Jersey Open,” explains Gola, who spent more than thirty years writing for the New York Daily News and New York Post, and has covered more Super Bowls, Major championships and other significant sporting events than he can accurately count. “It’s a municipal course, but lots of money has been put into it over the years. It was originally built in 1928, and has been renovated several times. Robert Trent Jones did the first redesign twenty years after it opened, and his son Rees Jones did a redesign just a few years ago. It has elevated tees and greens, lots of challenging holes, and is definitely one of the area’s best examples of a public-access facility.”



Neshanic Valley

**Neshanic Valley** is due west of Baltusrol, a scenic, forty minute drive through the rolling farmland of Somerset County. Considered one of the nation's fifty finest municipal courses, much like the aforementioned Hominy Hill, it also hosted a U.S. Pub Links Championship, the women's side, in 2012. Designed by the architectural team of Hurdzan and Fry, the course features 27 holes of excellent golf, the Meadow, Lake and Ridge nines. The bedraggled muni concept is nowhere to be found, as Neshanic Valley is known for consistently fine conditioning. The 450 acre facility has an open feel, with capacious fairways. But trouble lurks on the periphery, as thick fescue grass is found off the fairways and greens. Environmentally sensitive wetland areas come into play throughout with some holes featuring hazards running down the entire left or right side.



Old Tom Morris @ Architects Golf Club

[Architects Golf Club](#), in the tiny burgh of Lopatcong, is not quite a replica course, but considered a tribute course, mimicking the design style of some of the greatest names in golf course architecture. Designed by Stephen Kay, himself a New Jersey native, the holes are reminiscent of the styles employed by Old Tom Morris (symbolically, the first hole, in homage to the first course architect) as well as luminaries such as Donald Ross, Seth Raynor, Hugh Wilson (most famous for nearby Philadelphia's Merion) Alister Mackenzie (who created Augusta National and Cypress Point) A.W. Tillinghast (who designed Baltusrol, Winged Foot and many others.) The course is a fun lesson for architectural aficionados, and just a fun round of golf for those who have little or no interest in the admittedly arcane subject matter.

Plenty of fine dining options are available in Summit, the town adjacent to Springfield, where Baltusrol is located. "The downtown area has a lively feel, lots going on," continues Gola. "[The Summit Diner](#) is a legendary diner, in a state famous for diners in general," offers the veteran newsman, who spent a decade at Jersey papers before moving across the river to the bigtime at the New York dailies. Because the area is such a Melting Pot, quality eateries of many ethnic stripes abound. [The Bombay Bistro](#) is one of the more popular Indian restaurants, as is the [Summit Greek Grill](#), which is a simple, order-at-the-counter setup with wonderful gyros and popular breakfasts. "[La Focaccia](#) is a four-star Italian experience, with all the traditional dishes in a very posh setting. And my state is almost as famous for Italians as it is for diners," concludes Gola, with a chuckle. "And if you live in New Jersey, you're part Italian, no matter what!"