

ST ANDREWS LINKS

Golf Rounds Trends
Participation, Capacity & Demand
May 2026

Understanding how participation,
capacity and demand have evolved and
where pressure is emerging.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

The data shows that:

- Participation and utilisation are rising across the courses.
- Access for ticketholders is **structured, protected, and increasingly well-used.**
- The ticket holder/visitor balance remains stable overall.
- The primary change is **demand intensity**, particularly:
 - At peak times
 - On championship courses
 - Within constrained booking windows.

AGENDA

1. Long-Term Growth
2. Who is driving demand?
3. Growth & Changing Behaviours
4. Capacity Opportunity
5. Demand Pressures
6. Summary

LONG-TERM GROWTH IN ROUNDS PLAYED

ROUNDS PLAYED 2019 - 2025

YEAR	TOTAL ROUNDS
2019	254,982
2020	174,289
2021	239,421
2022	254,300
2023	283,082
2024	281,554
2025	296,906

CONTEXT

- Total rounds played have risen steadily since Covid-19 disruption.
- 2022 impacted by The Open Championship and 2024 impacted by The ALG Women's Open.
- Since 2022, c30k rounds per year have been played within dark times.

Total rounds tell only part of the story, to understand pressure we need to separate capacity, occupancy and utilisation.

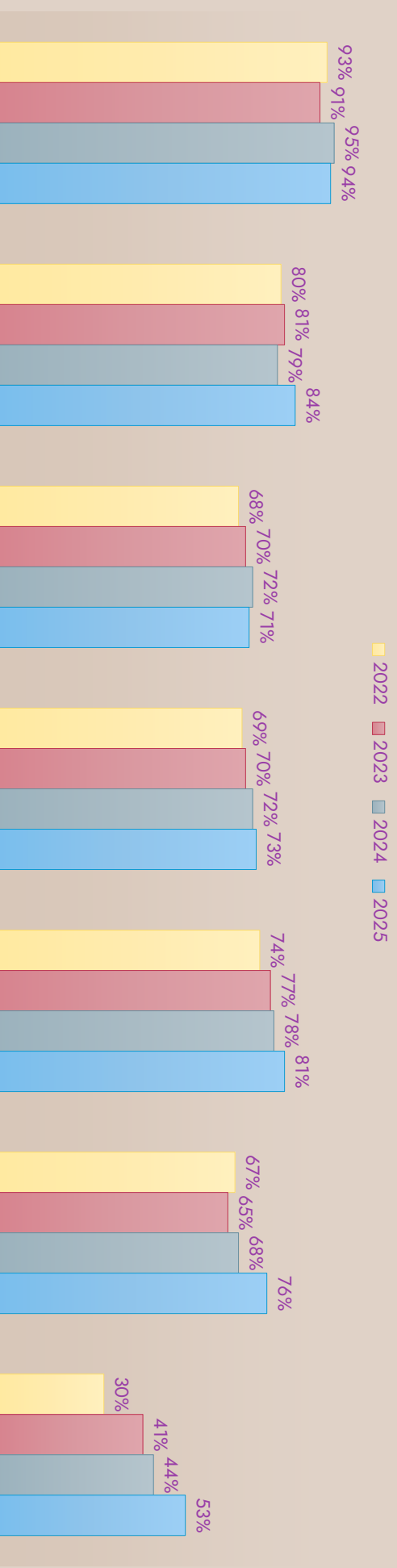
We start by looking at overall growth since 2022.

DEFINITIONS

OCCUPANCY: Number of individual tee times available. A tee time will be considered occupied if at least 1 golfer is playing in that time.

UTILISATION: Total number of golf rounds available. Every tee time has the potential to accommodate 4 golfers.

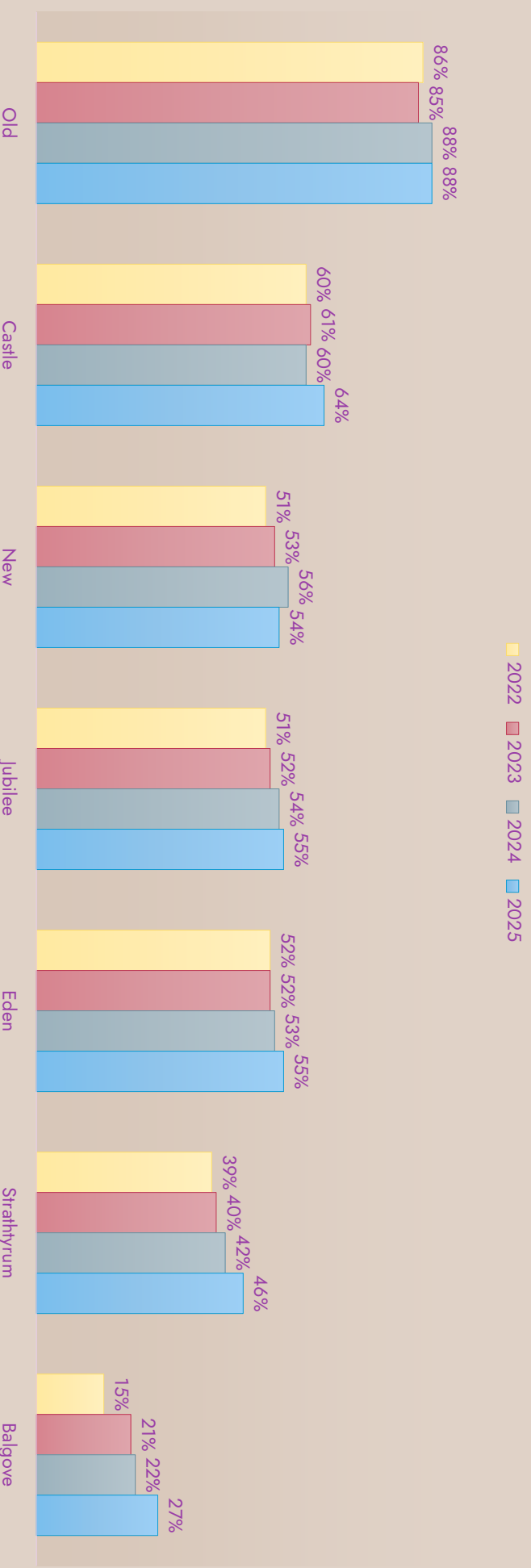
OCCUPANCY (EXC DARK) 2022 - 2025



CONTEXT

- Occupancy across the Old, Castle, New and Jubilee has remained broadly stable across the 4-year period.
- Biggest shift in occupancy levels has been across:
 - Eden 74% to 81%
 - Strathyrum 67% to 76%
 - Balgove 30% to 53%
- Increase in occupancy across the Eden-side courses could be pointed towards growing the game, entry level opportunities, increased participation-focused programmes.
- Overall occupancy has shifted from **67% (2022) to 73% (2025)**. This is a shift from **c80k tee times in 2022 to c95k tee times in 2025**.

UTILISATION (EXC DARK) 2022 - 2025



CONTEXT

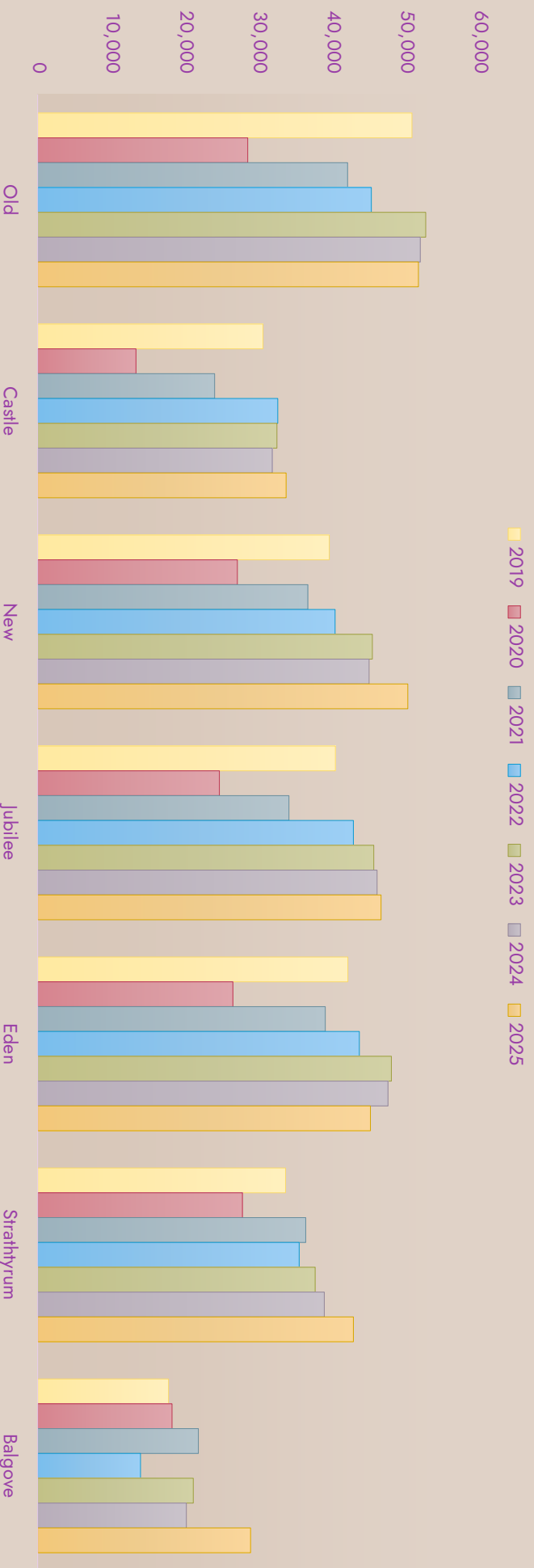
- Overall utilisation has shifted from **48% (2022)** to **52% (2025)**. This is a shift from **228,867 rounds played in 2022** to **270,831 rounds played in 2025**.
- Average group size across our courses of 2.8 players, ranging from Balgove of 2.0 to Old of 3.8.
- Average group size across YTH specific times of 1.9 players, ranging from New & Strathyrum of 1.7 to Old of 3.3.
- Utilisation remains below the maximum due to group size and access mix.

Rounds now exceed pre-Covid levels.

Growth is not uniform across courses or seasons.

Understanding where growth concentrates helps explain emerging pressure.

ROUNDS PLAYED 2019 – 2025



CONTEXT

- Rounds fell sharply in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19, followed by strong recovery in 2022..
- Largest increase in rounds played between 2019 and 2025 has been on the **Balgove**, with a **62% increase** in rounds played.
- **New Course** has seen an **11% increase** in rounds played between **2024** and **2025** – linked to YTH Exclusive times, which has resulted in a **23% increase** in YTH rounds 2024 to 2025.

Rising rounds alone do not explain pressure on access.

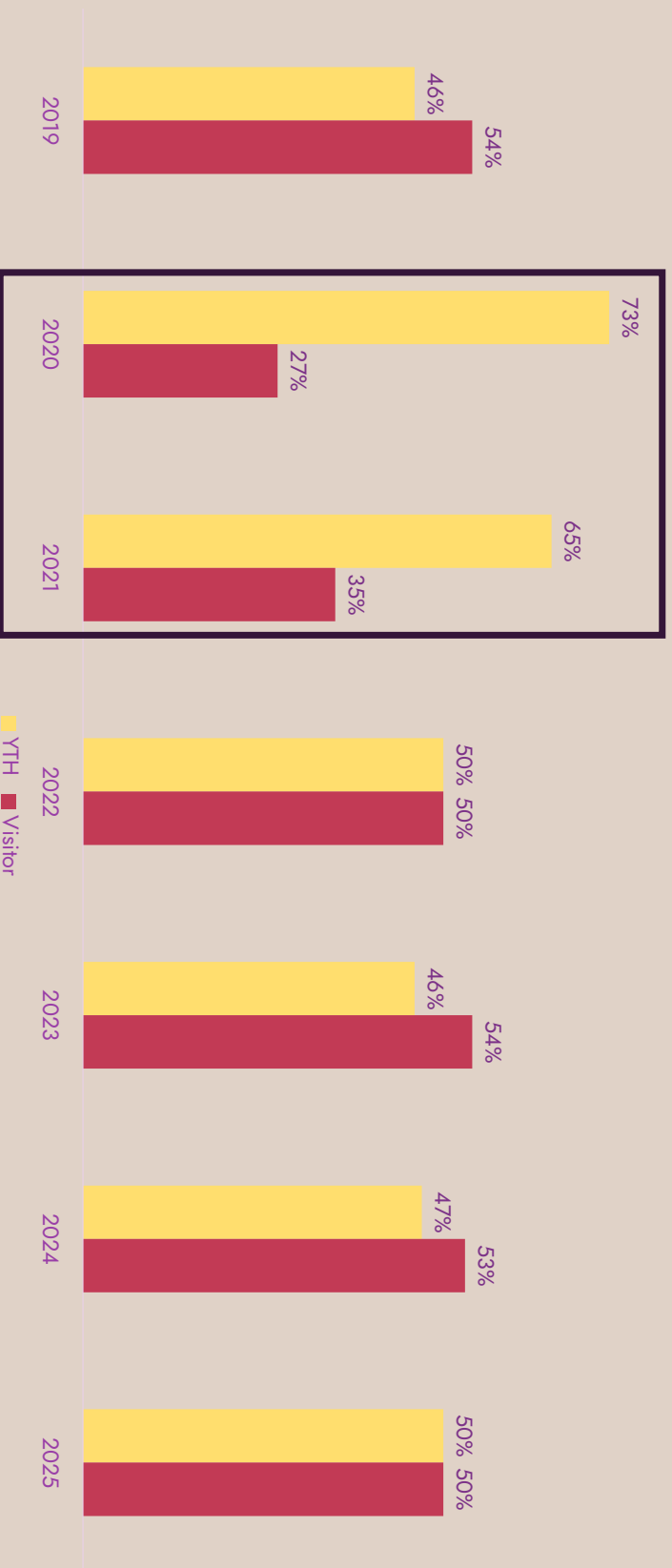
The key question becomes: who is driving this growth and how are they playing?

WHO IS DRIVING DEMAND? YEARLY TICKETHOLDERS VS VISITORS

VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS



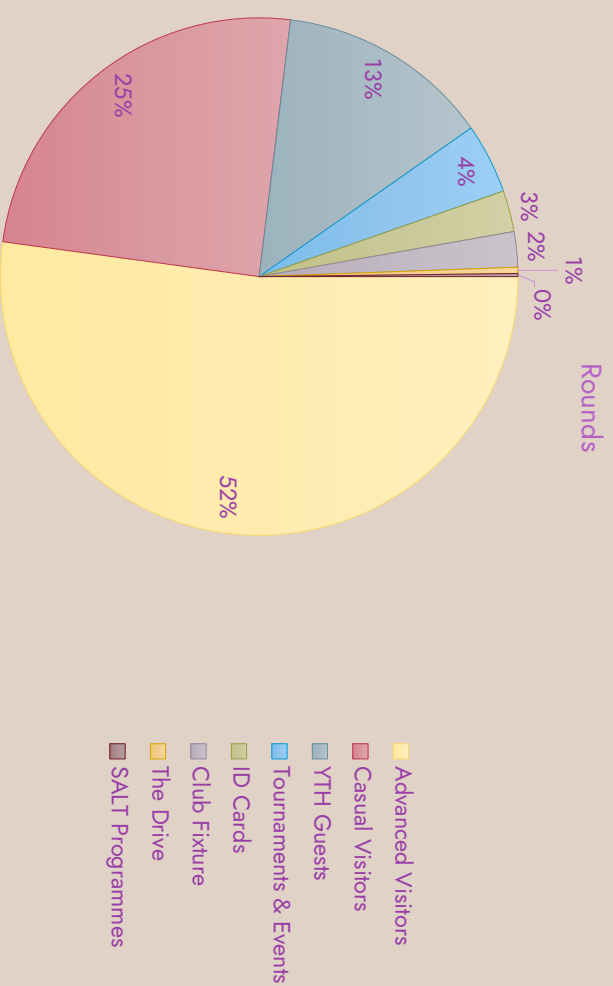
YTH v VISITOR SPLIT 2019 – 2025



CONTEXT

- Since 2019 visitor rounds have increased by c9% from c137k rounds (2019) to c150k rounds (2025).
- Since 2019 YTH rounds have increased by c28% from c117k rounds (2019) to c150k rounds (2025).
- 2025 saw the balance of YTH play and visitor play at 50/50 – highest level of YTH play (excluding Covid years) since 2019.
- Shows growth in demand, not just proportional balance.

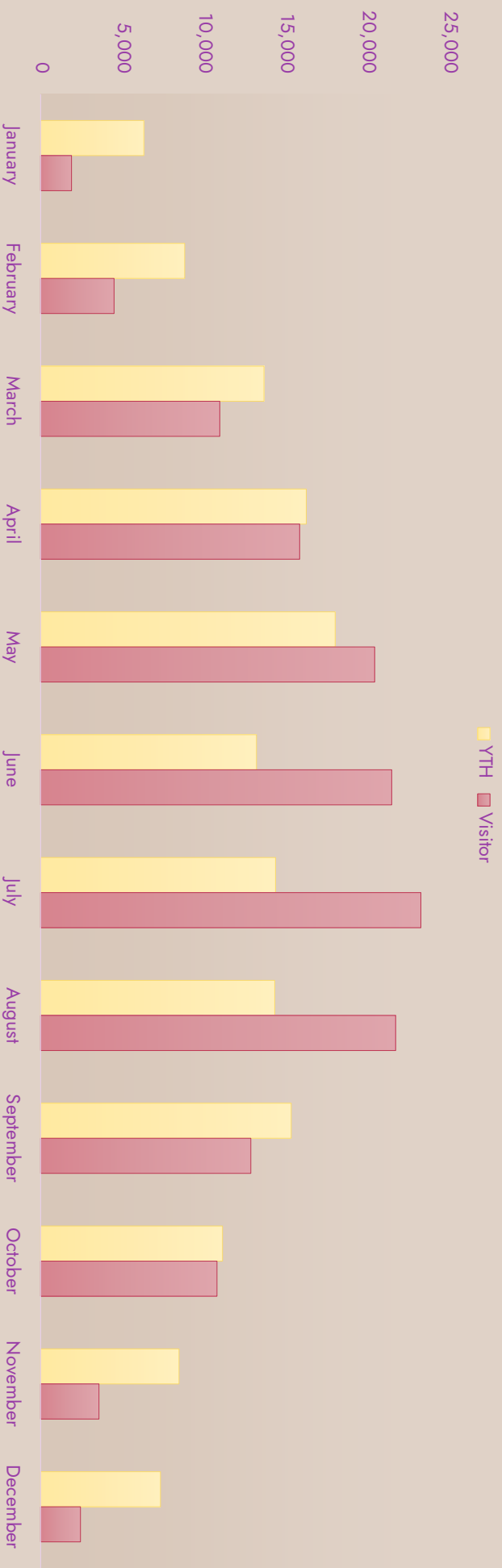
VISITOR ROUNDS PLAYED 2025



CONTEXT

- **13% (c19k)** of visitor rounds in 2025 were played by YTH guests, this is an **increase of 46% from 13k in 2023**.
- **23%** of visitor rounds are played within specific demographics.
- **52% (c78k)** of visitor rounds are advance visitor rounds, booked more than 7 days in advance.
- **25% (c37k)** of visitor rounds are casual visitor rounds, booked as part of the Old Course ballot or within 24 hours of the tee time.

YTH v VISITOR SPLIT 2025 – By Month



CONTEXT

- During the peak months May to August, Yearly Ticketholder Exclusive times ran at **69% occupancy and 45% utilisation**. There were c3.5k tee times that were unoccupied, which has the capacity for **c14k additional rounds**.
- During peak months May to August compared to 2023 and 2024 there has been a **20% increase in YTH rounds from c49k to c59k**.
- During peak months May to August compared to 2023 and 2024 there has been a shift from **35% YTH play to 41% YTH play**.
- During peak months May to August **20% (c17k)** of visitor rounds were played by YTH Guests, ID Card, Tournaments and Events.

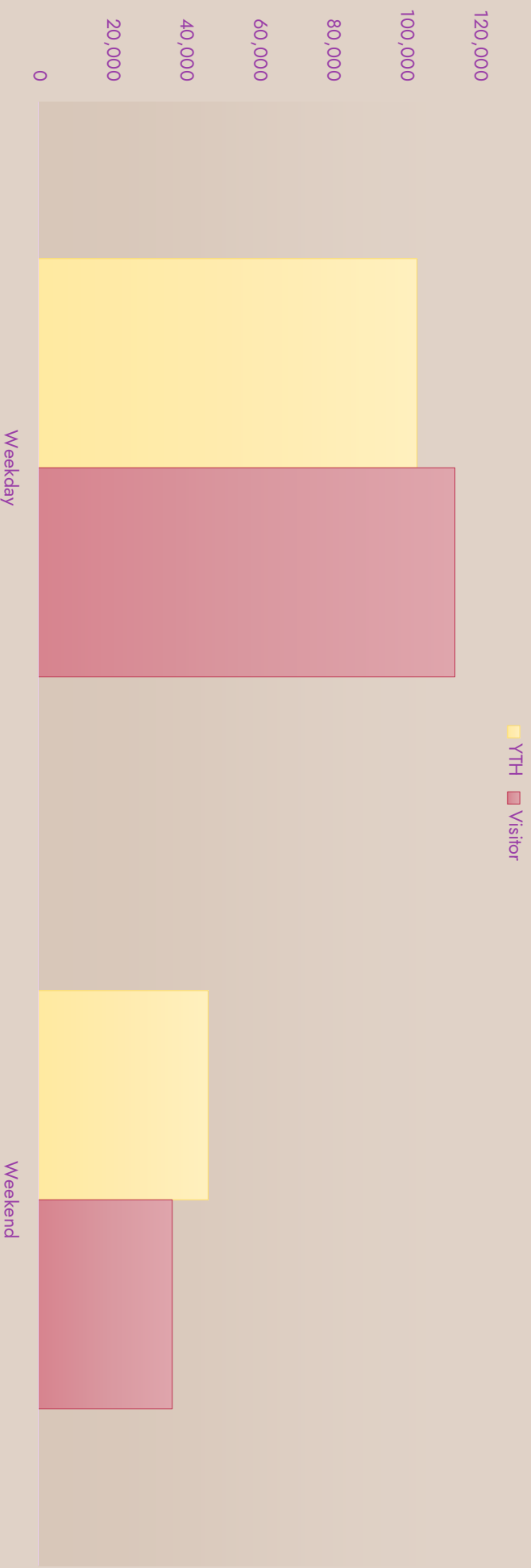
YTH EXCLUSIVE TIMES 2025

COURSE	ROUNDS	OCCUPANCY	UTILISATION	AVG GROUP SIZE
Castle	5,135	75%	49%	1.9
New	9,268	61%	44%	1.7
Jubilee	11,120	66%	48%	1.9
Eden	10,148	74%	49%	2.0
Strathyrum	11,973	70%	44%	1.8
TOTAL	47,644	69%	46%	1.85

CONTEXT

- YTH Exclusive times in 2025 ran at **69% occupancy**, meaning that there are c7,500 tee times which were unoccupied.
- There is capacity for an **additional c50k rounds** within YTH Exclusive times.

YTH v VISITOR SPLIT 2025 – Weekday v Weekend



CONTEXT

- Weekday split consists of 48% YTH play and 52% visitor play.
- Weekend split consists of 56% YTH play and 44% visitor play.

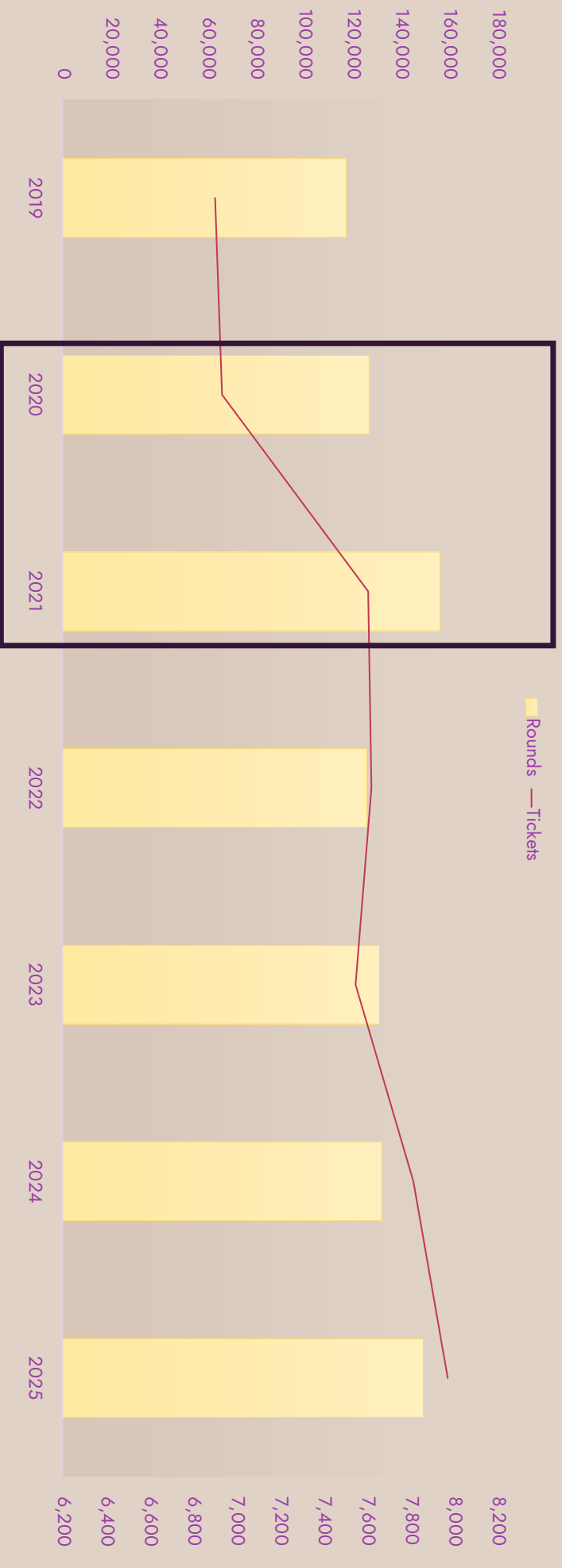
Both YTH and visitor demand have grown since 2019.

Within this growth, playing patterns are shifting by time, season and course.

YEARLY TICKETHOLDERS

GROWTH & CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

YTH PLAY v YTH NUMBERS 2019 - 2025



CONTEXT

- Between 2019 to 2025 there has been a 15% increase in yearly ticket holders – 6,902 (2019) to 7,972 (2025).
- There has been a 66% increase in junior/youth ticket holders – 343 (2019) to 572 (2025).

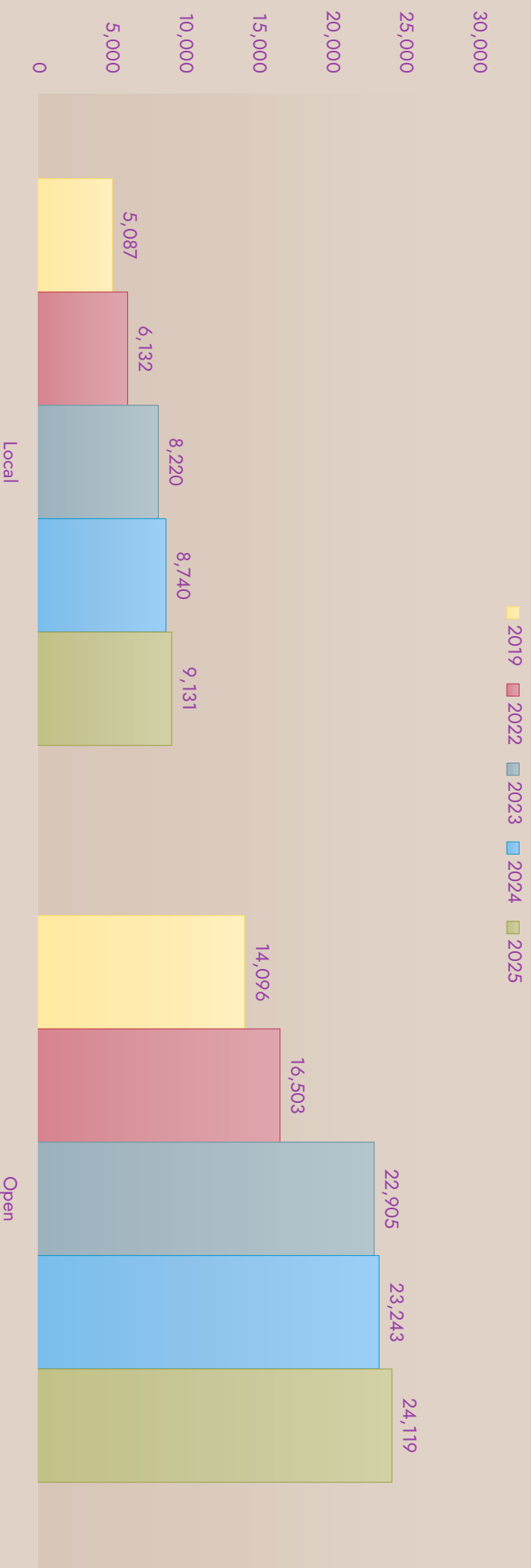
Capacity remains, but access is unevenly experienced across courses and times.

Pressure is most visible at peak times on championship courses, and within tight booking windows.

DEMAND PRESSURE

OLD COURSE CASE STUDY

OLD COURSE BALLOT 2019 - 2025



CONTEXT

- There has been a **79% increase** in local ballot applications between 2019 to 2025.
- There has been a **71% increase** in open ballot applications between 2019 to 2025.
- Overall success probability has been at an **average of 24% since 2022**.

Access protections are working but are being used more fully.

The focus now shifts to what this means going forward.

LOOK FORWARD

LOOK FORWARD

- Craigtoun presents an opportunity for additional capacity.
- Continued monitoring of golf access trends.
- Yearly Ticketholder Exclusive times YTD 2026 are showing **57% occupancy which is down from 62% occupancy YTD 2025.**
- Rounds played YTD 2026 are **c42k YTH (57%) and c31k Visitor (43%)** in comparison to **c45k YTH (57%) and c33k Visitor (43%)** YTD 2025 showing potential impact of weather and Old Course changes to reduction in rounds.
- Occupancy YTD 2026 is **43%** in comparison to **47%** YTD 2025. If you include Craigtoun Occupancy YTD 2026 is **42%**.

SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Taken together, the data shows that:

- Participation and utilisation are rising across the courses.
- Access for locals is **structured, protected, and increasingly well-used**.
- The ticket holder/visitor balance remains stable overall.
- The primary change is **demand intensity**, particularly:
 - At peak times
 - On championship courses
 - Within constrained booking windows.
- Continued analysis of golf trend data.

A photograph of a golf course at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the sky and the grass. In the background, a large, multi-story building with many windows is visible. The text 'THANK YOU' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

THANK YOU

ST
ANDREWS
LINKS

THE HOME OF GOLF