

Round 1 – June 29, 2017 U.S. Senior Open Course Setup Notes from Ben Kimball

		Weather	<p><i>Here is the 5 a.m. forecast from Thor Guard Chief Meteorologist Jake Swick:</i></p> <p>Overall not a bad looking day ahead, just not as nice as yesterday. The sun will peek out some over the next couple of hours, however we are to generally expect more clouds than sun for the better part of this morning. On radar these clouds streaming in from the west and northwest do have some sprinkles with them across NY, however they will struggle to drop through our drier air here in MA. Therefore I'll put us at a 20% chance of a measurable shower for after 8 AM through lunchtime with a 40% chance that we will see a few sprinkles, probably around 11 AM or so. Then as these mid to high level clouds push farther east, we'll find the sun popping out a bit more this afternoon heating temps up just over 80 degrees. The short term models show the distinct possibility that a shower or two could form at any point this afternoon, but the chance of a measurable shower is only at 40%. I've dropped the threat of electricity down to a 20% chance for this afternoon because that chance is looking lower and lower today. What will not be lower is the wind despite the forgettable start this morning, the wind is forecast to dramatically increase from 5-10 mph during the first half of the day with maybe a gust 10-15 mph to 10-20 mph with gusts of 25 mph very possible later today, especially as we approach the 5 PM to 8 PM time frame. Along with this increase in south and southwest winds will be an increasing dewpoint climbing towards 60 at times today, but look for dewpoints to remain well into the 60s for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.</p> <p>There should be more showers and storms redeveloping out to our west tonight as this area of low pressure in the Great Lakes spins its way towards the Northeast. The showers and storms tonight are supposed to stay to our northwest, so we'll have a 40% chance of showers/storms (I want to see more model consistency to go up to 60% for overnight tonight in the event we get clipped by the southern end of tonight's activity in VT/NH). Once the action to our north and west slides by Friday morning, most of Friday's weather concerns will turn to the heat as highs push near 90 and the heat index feels even hotter. The 40% chance of showers and storms again by Friday afternoon/evening will require more monitoring of the radar as well. The wind is also going to be more consistent on Friday spending the majority of the day in the 10-15 mph range with gusts 15-20 mph common (there should be some subtle tapering back of the wind later in the day). And the forecast does not change much for Saturday with showers and storms still possible on Sunday too.</p>
		Setup Specifics	<p>The entire golf course was mown last night and regular putting green maintenance was performed. This morning greens were single-cut and rolled and, on average, achieved Stimpmeter readings between 10½ and 11. We</p>

			anticipate speeds settling out in the mid-10s by the afternoon. Greens remain very receptive due to the ½ inch of rain that the golf course received on Tuesday.
Hole	Par	Yardage	
1	4	401	Play will likely be from this back tee all week. The tee shot along with the approach will have the prevailing wind helping it throughout the day. Today's front-right hole location (10-4R) is accessible, but distance and spin control will be needed to hold this green that is fronted by a typical Salem false front.
2	4	481	The second hole will play right back into today's predominantly west wind. Given that, the tee markers are set 12 yards forward of where the tee sign is located. Today's back left hole location (27-7L) can be difficult to access because the left hand portion of the green tilts from left to right so balls will repel away from the hole on approach, leaving an uphill putt from the center of the green.
3	3	136	One of two very good short par 3s here at Salem. The tee markers have been pushed up to the front of the 149 teeing ground and centered to provide a slightly broader view on this front right hole location. This putting green is heavily tilted from back to front so balls with any spin will have a good chance of getting close though some could also find the fringe in front as a resting place. Where this green is situated the players won't feel as much westerly wind on the tee as they will see with the flagstick on the green.
4	4	341	This short par 4 will play very similar all week and we should see the westerly breeze have some impact on the club selection to the punchbowl in this fairway today. The westerly breeze will make the hole play a bit longer, however, the tee shot is significantly downhill. Today's middle-left hole location (19-8L) is on a plateau with a sizable back stop behind it. With wedges or the like in hand into this green spin control is going to be at premium. Anything left below this hole location will likely run back towards the front of the putting green or even into the approach. By far one of the more benign hole locations you will find on this green believe it or not.
5	3	206	We are using the player's right teeing ground on this par 3 today with the tee markers pushed up 7 yards to give the players a slightly better angle at this middle left hole location (18-5L). The hole location is just beyond a front middle collection area and borders closely to a runoff on the player's left of the hole that will keep them focused on club selection.
6	5	517	The dogleg sixth hole will play back into the prevailing wind for both the tee shot and approach for most of the day. I would expect to see both par 5s here at Salem to yield a lot of birdies given their overall length. Today's hole location may be one of the better bargains you will see all week on this green. A front/middle hole location (11-13R) should be relatively easy to get close to as both sides of this putting green tend to funnel balls back to a center location, its longest for the week today, but will play with a helping breeze.

7	4	428	This hole will play with a crosswind today, likely making the tee shot to fairway slightly more challenging. The back-left hole location (24-5L) is tucked behind a pronounced ridge likely forcing players again to play to center of the green then putt toward the corner.
8	4	429	The tee shot and approach at hole 8 will play down-breeze with the westerly wind. Longer hitters may be able to catch the downslope of this fairway to give them less in their hand into this very difficult green complex. Today's hole location (24-6L) from the fairway will appear to being sitting in space but given that the greens remain receptive, this is a hole location that they should attack despite how daunting it looks from afar.
9	4	438	We will be using the newer teeing ground at 439 yards here today. This teeing ground roughly provides 20-30 yards more length on this hole than it did in 2001. The wind will be coming from 4 o'clock and will slightly help tee shots here. Another great fairway (no bulldozer required) at Salem that produces all sorts of lies which could present some challenges for an approach shot into this elevated green. Today's hole location (14-5R) is positioned just 9 paces beyond a severe false front that could leave players with a wedge in their hand for their third if they are not mindful of their distance/spin.
10	4	394	The 10th hole is playing back into the wind (coming from 10 o'clock) today which will lengthen one of the shorter par 4s at Salem. A pronounced mound (no bulldozer required) in the left half of this fairway is the primary aiming point, knowing balls will repel down to a flat area right. Longer hitters can certainly challenge this mound and find a relatively flat lie as the fairway pinches towards the green. The hole location (11-6R) is just over the right frontal lobe of this green. Any approach shots coming up short could wander in two different directions of this green leaving a tough opportunity to recover.
11	4	403	One of very few doglegs on the course, this par 4 will likely require players to look at 3 wood or hybrid off the tee in order to keep their ball in short grass on this sharp turning hole. The first cut of primary rough on the right hand side of this hole was slightly widened during advance week to accommodate some running out of the golf ball as things begin to firm up. A wonderful green complex that slopes primarily from back to front should be relatively receptive yet players won't be able to see this green complex from the drive zone. Today's hole location (29-9R) is on the back ledge of this green and that will likely bring in some delicate recovery shots from over the green into play.
12	3	156	The tee markers favor the left side of this teeing ground today to a left hole location that is snugged up near the left greenside bunker. This putting green runs from back right to front left making any ball left above hole high a challenging putt.
13	4	389	The westerly breeze is hurting off the tee which will likely make this hole play much longer than expected. The tee markers have been pushed up 11 yards to accommodate. A very straight forward middle back hole location

			will provide a reasonable birdie opportunity early in the back nine. Center of the green is the play to have a very straight and uphill putt to this hole location.
14	5	500	This par 5 hole will be very reachable for a majority of the field during the week. Players should take advantage of this scoring opportunity because the stretch of holes to close out the back nine becomes increasingly difficult. Today's hole location is in the front right quadrant of the green, which is actually an area that became available for use due to the recent green expansions at Salem. Birdies will be plentiful here today.
15	3	205	Tee markers are 8 yards forward but centered on this back upper teeing ground. Tee shots from this elevated tee will be significantly impacted by the westerly breeze. The hole location is in the front left portion of this green snuggling up to the left greenside bunker but there is some slope between the hole location and bunker that will push balls back towards the center of the green. Not much movement otherwise in this area of the green.
16	4	387	The turn for home will be wind-aided most of the week but the closing stretch of holes beginning with this challenging hole is no bargain. Hitting this fairway is a must in order to have an opportunity to control your approach into this elevated putting green. The hole location is 12 paces on from the right side and should provide a decent birdie chance. A very pronounced ridge (back to front) in the back right portion of this green could be used as a backstop to help feed the ball down to this hole. As to be expected, putts from back to front on this green will be slippery at times.
17	4	499	The 17th will be the longest par 4 on the scorecard today, however, it will play straight downwind with the westerly breeze. No drive-zone hazards to contend with so this hole will be all about the power game this week in order to shorten up approaches into this tabletop green. The hole location (21-7) is in the back left portion of the green bringing the closely mown area left into play for those who choose to attack and fail. The back left portion of this green slopes back toward the middle of this green creating a little bowl for the ball to funnel upon its approach.
18	4	459	The closing hole will play straight downwind with the westerly breeze and may allow some players to use the contours of this fairway to shorten up their approach into this very diabolical putting surface. This putting green is tilted heavily from back to front and today's hole location (7-6R) is in a spot that will require deft touch from the back of the green. The question will be will more players opt for the putt from the middle or back of the green or will they choose to stay below the hole and take their chances with an uphill putt or chip.

Front 9 – 3,377

Back 9 – 3,392

Total - 6,769