

Round 3 – July 1, 2017 U.S. Senior Open Course Setup Notes from Ben Kimball

		Weather	<p>Showers and storms last evening gave us between .25" and .50" across Salem/Peabody. Thankfully that activity is gone off to our east and we didn't get much in the way of fog to form despite the muggy start with both temps and dew points around 70. Look for dew points to climb even more into the low 70s today as highs push well into the mid and upper 80s. This will make it feel like it's in the 90s today, so drink lots of water and stay in the shade when possible. Skies will be mostly sunny to partly sunny this morning as I'll be watching an area of clouds and showers in N.J. that will track across Long Island towards southern New England. Most of the models miss this feature, but the ones that pick it up require us to be mindful of the possibility of a shower or storm by 11 a.m. Otherwise most of the late morning and afternoon hours we'll have just a 20% chance of a shower or storm. I threw out a 40% chance of a shower or storm periodically this afternoon because there will be plenty of action on radar across NH/VT, western MA, CT and NY. But the good news is that the models try to keep us mainly dry before 8 p.m. with our best chance (60%) waiting until the 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. time frame this evening. And even the moisture in the models for tonight is more scattered and not as impressive as last night.</p> <p>A shower (40% chance) or a storm (20% chance) is not completely out of the question to start Sunday morning, but once again the picture I'm seeing for Sunday is that we have a pretty quiet weather day. Dew points start Sunday in the upper 60s and gradually trend back towards the lower 60s (even a few models show upper 50s being possible, but that seems like a stretch for me). Temps Sunday look to have a better shot at 90 degrees due to the slightly drier air. A lot of the models have Sunday being mostly sunny all day, but given how much moisture may still be left in the lower atmosphere, I won't be surprised if we get some clouds to develop and mix with our sunshine midday. That is why I've still got one or two hours with a 20% chance of a shower/storm even though no real noticeable weather is likely. Winds will become gusty again this afternoon more out of the south than southwest, then the wind will be more from the west on Sunday spending less time above 10 mph than today.</p>
		Set Up Specifics	<p>Putting green maintenance was performed last night (single cut) on only a few greens prior to the storm that came in. Greens that did not get the single cut prior to the storm last night were double cut and rolled this morning to keep us at our average Stimpmeter reading of 11. We anticipate speeds settling out in the high-10s by the afternoon. With the golf course receiving about .40" of rain last night we should see a very receptive golf course again today.</p>
Hole	Par	Yardage	

1	4	396	Play is slightly forward of the post here today. Today's front-left hole location (7-6L) is just over the false front on this green so players will need to gauge their spin precisely into this receptive green. A slippery downhill putt awaits those who leave it above the hole.
2	4	484	This hole continues to play as the hardest on the course. It will play again right into any predominantly west wind, which should be steady for parts of the day. Keeping that in mind, the tee markers are set 5 yards forward of where the tee sign is located. Today's middle-right hole location (23-4R) is snugged up towards the right greenside bunker forcing players again to just aim for the center of the green and hope to make a putt. Putts from the middle of the green should be pretty benign.
3	3	146	This green can lend itself to some exciting moments given the two-tier back to front pitch. The tee markers have been shifted to the back-left side of the 149-yard teeing ground to bring the left/front greenside bunkers into play. The hole location is in the left corner of the lower tier of this green so it is likely we will see players use the middle half and maybe the back half of this green to get their ball to spin back down to the hole. Hole-high putts should have a good amount of break in them.
4	4	353	Today's back-left hole location (26-4L), which didn't exist in 2001, will be a unique look for players. With wedges or the like in hand getting the ball to stay on this back plateau that falls off on three sides will be quite the challenge. Up and downs around this hole will be fun to watch today.
5	3	214	We are using the player's right teeing ground on this par 3 today with the tee markers right at the post providing a very straight on view of this hole that played slightly better to par yesterday. The hole location sits in the back right quadrant of this green so players will have more room to get at this hole location especially since the green is slightly pitched from back to front. Putts from hole high should have movement to them.
6	5	523	The dogleg sixth hole will again play back into the prevailing wind for both the tee shot and approach. Birdies will be easier to come by with a front-left hole location (8-8L) but players will need to respect this hole location and the speed and break that comes with putts from the middle of the green.
7	4	431	This hole will play at its longest for two reasons today: First, the deepest hole location on this green (25-7R) is jammed in the back-right portion of this green and is well protected by a pronounced ridge that fronts it. Secondly, fairway speeds are down due to the excessive rain that hit us last night, making some of these par fours longer than players have seen all week. The play to this hole again today will be center of the green, which will leave a relatively flat birdie chance.
8	4	414	The tee shot and approach at Hole No. 8 continues to benefit from the WSW winds, but the softer fairways may mean that players will have a longer approach into today's hole location (9-6L), which will be tough to attack no matter where you leave your golf ball. Players will need to be cautious with putts back down towards the front of the green.

9	4	439	Tee markers are slightly forward of the post (439 yards) today on Hole No. 9, and overall from a wind standpoint the hole will play similar to previous days. Today's hole location, however, (14-11L/12R) is very vanilla as it sits in the middle of the green. Likely to see a few more birdies here today which will be a nice change of pace for players since this hole has been averaging as the fifth-hardest all week.
10	4	396	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 on the right. Longer hitters can certainly challenge this mound and find a relatively flat lie as the fairway pinches towards the green. The hole location (9-5L) is certainly accessible but players could easily spin their ball off of the front of this green into a slight depression fronting the green. A deceptively speedy putt from above the hole.
11	4	393	This par four played slightly easier for Round 2 with a stroke average of 4.21 versus the 4.34 it played in Round 1. This sharp dogleg forces 3 wood or hybrid for players in order to keep their ball in short grass. Since the dogleg keeps them honest off the tee, it will leave them with a much longer club into the green. Today's hole location (19-7R) is again on the back level of this green which could bring into play a variety of things. Uphill putts from below the hole (prudent play) and scrambling to hold chip shots from over the back are just a few things that you might see here today. I would expect No. 11 to continue to give them fits.
12	3	171	The tee markers favor the left side of this teeing ground today, bringing the greenside bunker into play as players try to attack our back-left hole location. The hole location (21-6L) is only 7 paces from the back off the green. Over this green spells trouble so I would expect to see players playing to the center of the green and putting towards this left corner of the green.
13	4	389	The westerly breeze is hurting off the tee which will likely make this hole play much longer than expected again. The tee markers have been pushed up 7 yards to accommodate. The back-right hole location is just a few paces behind a middle ridge that runs through this green. A miss to the right of this hole would be a bad mistake.
14	5	496	Easiest hole of the championship thus far, and I certainly expect that trend to continue as we saw previously with the front-right hole location on Thursday. We are using the front-left hole location today, which couldn't have been used in 2001. Recent green expansions have enabled us to use this sneaky good location that is guarded by a false front. Putts from above the hole or hole high are speedier than one would think. Aggressive players don't want to short-side themselves left into the tall rough that borders the green.
15	3	212	Tee markers are centered and 3 paces back from the tee sign. Tee shots from this elevated tee will be significantly impacted by any westerly breeze. The hole location (8-4R) is in the front right portion of this green and to the player's eye from the tee it will appear to be well guarded but there is plenty of room to be aggressive over the framing bunker on the right.

16	4	399	The turn for home continues to be wind-aided which will be helpful for those needing to attack the back center hole location (24-9L/10R), which is only 5 paces from the back of the green and will make distance control extremely important. I would imagine it will be difficult for players to even see the flagstick from the drive zone. The hole location is guarded on the player's right by a back-to-front slope that could repel the ball to the right, leaving a severely breaking, right-to-left putt. Center of the green is the prudent play.
17	4	491	The 17th will be the longest par four on the scorecard again today, yet it continues to play straight down wind with the westerly breeze. The hole location today (18-7R) is in the middle right portion of the green just hugging a small center mound which could test the player's patience a little when putting. This hole again played as the third-hardest yesterday.
18	4	459	The closing hole will play straight down wind as the westerly breezes kick up later in the day. This putting green is tilted heavily from back to front and today's hole location (6-12C) in a spot that will require deft touch from the back of the green if balls hold up there. Given the receptive nature of the greens due to weather, I expect to see players take a more aggressive approach to this hole location than we may have seen with a similar location we used on Thursday.

Front 9 – 3,400

Back 9 – 3,406

Total – 6,806