

118th U.S. Open Championship

Golf Course Setup Notes – Round 1 (Thursday, June 14, 2018)

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General Golf Course Comments – The golf course is in excellent condition. We are extremely pleased with the agronomics and presentation. Today's setup reflects the challenging wind conditions that have been forecast.

Green Speeds – With the heavy wind forecast, putting greens have been appropriately prepared from a speed and firmness perspective. We expect putting green speeds to be in the area of 11 feet 6 inches by midday.

Firmness – Damp conditions Wednesday resulted in a more receptive golf course for Round 1. The day's weather forecast calls for excellent drying conditions. So, we expect to see the golf course get firmer as the day goes on.

Weather forecast:

GENERAL WEATHER

There was no additional rainfall in both gauges overnight (.08" and .09" yesterday) and yesterday's funky weather is now in the rear-view mirror. The main story today will be the wind in the 15-25 mph range with a peak wind gust around 30+ mph. Skies will be mostly sunny today with dewpoints dropping back through the 50s. And as you can tell it will also be much warmer today with highs trying to get into the upper 70s. Tonight, will start off mostly clear and turn partly cloudy late with lows in the mid-50s. A few pieces of upper level energy are still set to pass overhead on Friday giving us some extra clouds to mix with our sunshine. The models in the last 12-18 hours have been trending towards the idea that we could see a raindrop or two on Friday around lunchtime. Therefore, we'll mention the 40% chance of a sprinkle, but just a 20% chance of a measurable shower. It will also be cooler on Friday with highs struggling to reach 70 degrees. Friday night does not have much fanfare under partly cloudy to mostly clear skies and lows in the mid-50s. Saturday is setting up to be a nearly perfect day with highs warming back up into the high 70s. Then we'll see a few more increasing clouds on Sunday, especially in the afternoon as the next weather system aims more for New England than Long Island early next week. We've got an overly cautious 20% chance of a shower for Sunday afternoon into Sunday night, however overall Sunday's forecast remains pretty good with highs in the 70s.

WINDS

West winds today will be a little more from the northwest early this morning, then a bit more from the southwest midday before finally finishing the day directly out of the northwest. Our weather station down near the Trophy Club is blocked a little from the trees to its west, so look for the highest gusts to likely occur with our weather station up here around the clubhouse. There may be a couple peaks and valleys at times today, but overall the average of sustained speeds will be at 15-20 mph, gusts 20-25 mph and the day's highest gust up around 30+ mph. The wind will pull back some tonight out of the northwest, however it is still expected to be breezy Friday morning for a time from the north and a little northwest. We could see a high gust Friday morning up around 20 mph or so, then the wind shift that was expected around 2 p.m. may be slipping a little later to somewhere between 2 and 5 p.m. By 5 p.m. on, we should see lighter winds trying to push back onshore from the south. Saturday's wind forecast remains the same with lighter morning winds from the northwest and west becoming the more common southwest breeze in the afternoon in the 8-16 mph range. Sunday still looks to feature the same or slightly more wind out of that familiar southwest direction.

Setup Information

The following are the specific hole yardages (tee to hole location) for Round 1:

Hole 1 (par 4) – 407

Today's Wind: WNW (Against and from the left)

Fairway Widths: 28-58 yards depending on how aggressive a player is from the tee

Hole Location: 25-5R – back right

Notes: The opening hole will play straight back into today's strong west wind and will likely play its longest for the week with the back-right hole location. Look for most players to lay up into the widest portion of the fairway to get into proper position. Second shots played into the center of the green will result in uphill birdie putts.

Hole 2 (par 3) – 252

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right crosswind with some hurt as it comes more from the north)

Hole Location: 20-4R – middle right

Notes: The second hole will be playing its full length today based on the wind. Players can bounce the ball onto the green through the approach, but with the putting green sloping from left to right, the bunker located 5 paces right of this hole location will likely get some action today.

Hole 3 (par 4) – 510

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right cross wind)

Fairway Widths: 32-35 yards in the drive zone

Hole Location: 27-8L – back left

Notes: The third hole will be the longest par 4 on the front nine today. The hole location is back left up on a plateau. Many players have been able to drive it to the bottom of the hill with the prevailing breeze during practice. Look for that to change today as the tee shot against the breeze may result in some awkward downhill lies on second shots to a green that will be slightly uphill from the drive zone.

Hole 4 (par 4) - 478

Today's Wind: WNW (Down wind and off the right)

Fairway Widths: 34-36 yards in drive zone

Hole Location: 18-10L – middle right

Notes: With the wind helping, we might see some players take on the second fairway bunker on the right to get to the widest part of the fairway. However, tee shots positioned in the right side of the fairway will have the best angle to today's hole location.

Hole 5 (par 5) - 592

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right cross wind)

Fairway Widths: 33-44 yards in drive zone

Hole Location: 20-8L – middle left

Notes: The fifth hole will be playing nearly 600 yards today. Most players should be able to reach the green in two shots, however, missing this green anywhere other than short will leave a demanding recovery. The hole location is perilously close to a pronounced falloff to the left.

Hole 6 (par 4) – 452

Today's Wind: WNW (Into the breeze)

Fairway Widths: 37-71 yards in the drive zone

Hole Location: 17-14R – middle right

Notes: We are playing the sixth hole from the penultimate tee (approximately 36 yards forward of the 491 tee sign) due to the strong west wind. Players will have no trouble carrying a natural sandy area; however, the farther they drive it the narrower the fairway becomes. The hole location is pretty accessible but putts from beyond and left of the hole location will be challenging given today's conditions.

Hole 7 (par 3) – 184

Today's Wind: WNW (right to left cross and slightly helping)

Hole Location: 11-12 – front center

Notes: A precise tee shot is required to offer a good birdie chance. Balls that get past the hole location with any pace will feed left and long off this putting green. A miss over the back of the green will result in an extremely difficult recovery.

Hole 8 (par 4) – 439

Today's Wind: WNW (Helping and off the right)

Fairway Widths: 53-61 in the drive zone

Hole Location: 15-9L – middle left

Notes: This hole offers the widest fairway on the golf course, so look for players to advance the ball a good ways down the fairway given the helping breeze. The front-left hole location is well protected by the putting green's false front and the front left bunker. The front-right portion of the putting green will feed balls toward today's hole location.

Hole 9 (par 4) – 487

Today's Wind: WNW (Downwind and from the right)

Fairway Widths: 41-44 yards in drive zone

Hole Location: 18-14R – middle right

Notes: Today's wind will assist players to get the ball farther down the drive zone so look for many balls to gather in the bowl in the middle of the fairway, leaving a 170-yard second shot. The second shot is uphill to a bowl-like green. Balls beyond the hole location will result in a downhill chance at birdie.

Hole 10 (par 4) – 418

Today's Wind: WNW (Down wind and from the left)

Fairway Widths: 47 yards at the top of the hill; 37-44 yards at the bottom of the hill.

Hole Location: 25-12 Center

Notes: The back-center hole location and today's wind add great difficulty to this relatively short par 4. The players are faced with a choice off the tee – lay up to the top of the hill to ensure a second shot that is played to the putting green at the same level or take the tee shot to the bottom of the hill and have a very short second shot to an extremely elevated putting green. The hole location is accessible, but a miss long results in an extremely difficult recovery as the closely mown area will move the ball some 8-10 yards away from the green.

Hole 11 (par 3) – 157

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right cross wind)

Hole Location: 16-6L – middle left

Notes: The shortest hole on the course, but one of Shinnecock's most challenging. The angle at which the putting green sits places a premium on distance control. A miss long and left will result in a very difficult recovery especially as it will be playing down breeze from that position.

Hole 12 (par 4) – 462

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right cross wind)

Fairway Widths: 29-30

Hole Location: 8-4R – front right

Notes: A good driving hole with today's wind as the drive-zone bunkers will be more in play. The front-right hole location is on a slight plateau. Players can bounce the ball on the approach to get to this hole location.

Hole 13 (par 4) – 374

Today's Wind: WNW (Against and from the right)

Fairway Widths: 24-48 in drive zone depending on how aggressive the player is off the tee

Hole Location: 17-10R – middle right

Notes: This short par 4 features an elevated tee shot which will be significantly impacted by the wind. The hole location is well protected by the front-right bunker. Precise distance control will be required to have a good birdie chance.

Hole 14 (par 4) – 536

Today's Wind: WNW (Left to right cross wind)

Fairway Widths: 34-42 in drive zone

Hole Location: 26-12L – back left

Notes: The longest par 4 in today's first round. The hole begins with a demanding, elevated tee shot. The second shot is uphill to a bowl-like green featuring a back hole location that is pretty accessible. Balls that trickle over this green will feed into a closely mown area that offers a challenging recovery.

Hole 15 (par 4) – 404

Today's Wind: WNW (Against)

Fairway Widths: 33-41 in drive zone

Hole Location: 7-9R – front right

Notes: The elevated tee shot will be much more difficult today given it is back into the breeze. The front-right hole location should be easier to get to give the second shot is back into the breeze but it is well protected by the front-right bunker.

Hole 16 (par 5) – 620

Today's Wind: WNW (Right to left cross wind)

Fairway Widths: 40-45 in the drive zone

Hole Location: 19-10L – middle right

Notes: This par 5 will be a three-shot hole for almost everyone in the field. The tee shot offers options; a conservative line to the right to avoid the cross bunkers or a more aggressive line which requires the player to carry the bunkers. There is great strategy in the second shot with the bunker complex on the left, the solo bunker on the right and the serpentine nature of the fairway. The green feeds balls from left to right.

Hole 17 (par 3) – 185

Today's Wind: WNW (Against)

Hole Location: 30-5R – back right

Notes: Very challenging shot back into the breeze. Shots that miss the green right into the greenside bunker will leave an extremely challenging recovery. A miss long and left should yield a fairly straightforward up-and-down.

Hole 18 (par 4) – 491

Prevailing Wind: WNW (Downwind)

Fairway Widths: 41-51 yards

Hole Location: 25-11R – middle left

Notes: Although playing downwind, tee shots will land into a hill that is moving the ball to the right while the hole turns to the left. A complete view of the putting green on the second shot is not the norm. Look for most second shots to be played short and right of the hole location. Any shots that come to rest beyond this hole location will offer challenging recoveries.

Total yardage
Front 9 – 3,801 (par 35)
Back 9 – 3,647 (par 35)
Total – 7,448 (par 70)