

Round 1 – May 31, 2018 U.S. Women’s Open Course Setup Notes from Shannon Rouillard

		Weather	<p><i>Here is the 5 a.m. forecast from Thor Guard Chief Meteorologist Jake Swick and Alex Broom:</i></p> <p>We lucked out last night as the showers and storms approaching Shoal Creek fell apart on our doorstep with only a few sprinkles around Birmingham before midnight. Since the atmosphere did not completely stabilize overnight, it is anticipated to be very unstable by this afternoon. Temps will soar towards 90 midday and with dewpoints in the low 70s (heat index 95+), that will be enough instability to create some hit or miss shower and storm activity. Therefore, we’ll maintain a 40% chance of a shower or storm this afternoon, especially after 1 PM and before 7 PM, keying around 4 PM - despite most of the models showing us staying dry with Huntsville (well north) and Montgomery (well south) being the most likely wet weather locations. Winds today will be relatively light out of the south and west getting up to 5-10 mph at times this afternoon.</p> <p><i>12 p.m. forecast</i></p> <p>Look for a mix of sun and clouds this afternoon with highs in the upper 80s to near 90. Dewpoints will remain in the lower 70s with light southwest winds 5-10 mph at times. We really wanted to drop our threat this afternoon from 40% down to 20% because almost every model is keeping us dry today. However, there is already a shower or two popping up 25-50 miles to our south moving east, so we’ll briefly keep that 40% chance of a shower or storm going this afternoon around 4 PM as action to our north and west attempt to get going. Once again though, Montgomery (early this afternoon) and Huntsville (later this afternoon) are more likely to see activity today rather than Birmingham.</p>
		Setup Specifics	<p>We were fortunate to escape the expected rain last night. As such, we were able to get a single cut on the putting greens late yesterday afternoon. Morning maintenance included a double cut on greens and mowing tees. On average, we achieved Stimpmeter readings in the 11’-11’6” range. We anticipate speeds settling out around in the upper 10’ to low 11’ range. Even though fairways have been narrowed to 21-30 yards, due to the wet conditions, the fairways will play much wider. In addition, the greens will be more receptive with the softer conditions. Wind should not be much of a factor today.</p>
Hole	Par	Yardage	
1	4	377	<p>This straightaway par 4 should be a relatively easy hole to start the player’s round. However, the putting green clearly has 3 parts to it. Today’s hole location (15-5R) is tucked behind the right greenside bunker. The best angle of approach will be from the left-hand side. Players (playing safe) will most likely have a slightly downhill putt (left of the hole).</p>
2	4	397	<p>The players will need to hit their drive out toward the left fairway bunker, avoiding the tree at the corner (approx. 230 yards off the tee) and creek on the right side on this dogleg-right par 4. Today’s hole location (32-5R) is in the back portion of the green on the top tier and the best birdie putt will be from hole high left side. This hole location may be a little more challenging to access but putting should not be too difficult on the top tier.</p>
3	5	500	<p>This fairly straight par 5 will require a drive on the right center of the fairway. It will be important to avoid the fairway bunker in the drive zone on the left that is deep and measures approximately 36 yards long. A second shot</p>

			favoring the right side of the fairway will be the best angle of attack into a hole location at 13-3L on the second tier of this green. A third shot hit a little strong will be a tough recovery from the greenside bunker adjacent to the hole.
4	4	412	Today's tee location is pushed all the way up on this strong par 4. This hole is absent of any bunkers and with today's hole location at 16-15R, the player will be able to choose which side of the fairway will best suit their angle of attack into this hole. With a false front measuring 12 yards and the hole 4 paces back from that, players will want to ensure they hit enough club into the green. A putt from beyond the hole will be more challenging than hole high on the right. A putt from the left side of the green will require great touch.
5	3	165	There is not much room for error in club selection on this downhill par 3. Today's hole location is just over the knob on the front middle portion of this green at 17-5R. A tough recovery will be from short or right of this hole and the easiest putt will be from hole-high left.
6	5	479	Today's tees were set all the way back (+10) on this teeing ground. The best play off this tee is toward the bunker, not flirting with the right corner of the hole. With today's hole location in the front left side of the green at 14-3L, the best angle of attack will be on the left side of the split fairway, hitting into the face of the green. With the wet conditions, I do not envision many players being able to reach this green in two shots.
7	4	409	Today's teeing ground was pushed up a tee from the post. Still a long hole, the fairway bunker should still come into play off the tee. The fairway at its narrowest spot is 20 yards wide, putting a premium on a straight tee shot. If a player's ball ends up in the fairway bunker, she will be hard-pressed to hit the green. A slightly uphill approach, coupled with a back hole location at 30-5L tucked behind the left greenside bunker, will require a solid shot to get the ball back to the hole on top of the ridge. If the player plays more to the middle-back portion of the green the ball should funnel a little bit toward the hole.
8	3	155	The shortest par 3 for the day will also play downhill to a very accessible hole location at 22-6L on the middle left tier. Anywhere short and right should be a fairly easy putt to the hole. However, a shot missed over this hole in the bunker will be an extremely difficult shot downhill to the hole.
9	4	366	The tee was pushed slightly forward of the post today on this dogleg left par 4. The play off the tee is left side of the bunker with a draw (right-handed). Longer hitters will need to aim further left to avoid catching the bunker. Today's hole location is in the very front at 6-5R. Proper club selection will be required to avoid the water hazard front right of the green. An approach shot above the hole will be downhill, but not too challenging with today's green speeds.
10	4	395	For half the field, this will be a strong par 4 to start their round. The ideal tee shot will be positioned on the right side of the fairway to have the best angle of attack into this hole location at 19-6L on the middle tier. A shot missed long over the hole will be a challenging recovery downhill back to the hole. The easiest putt will be from short or hole-high middle right.
11	5	519	This is the second longest par 5 for the day. A well-placed tee shot will be on the left side of the fairway (with no bunkers in the drive zone) to set up a second shot on the right side. With today's hole location nestled on the bottom tier just right of the knob at 22-6R, the best place to putt from will be short right of the hole (avoiding the water hazard). A shot missed hole-high left or short left will be presented with a more challenging birdie opportunity.

12	4	415	Today's teeing ground was pushed up to the alternate tee. Still one of the more demanding par 4's for the championship, the player will be presented their first blind shot on the course. With a redan-like green, the approach will be uphill, but with today's hole location at 27-5L, the player just needs to hit to the middle of the green and let the ball feed back to the hole.
13	4	175	The second-longest par 3 for the day will present a hole-in-one opportunity with a hole location in the "bowl" of the green at 9-6L. A shot missed in any of the greenside bunkers will be hard-pressed to get up and down. A shot missed right or long will also make lag putting a bit of a challenge.
14	4	372	This picturesque shorter par 4 has a dramatic downhill tee shot. However, with an aiming bunker at approximately 250 yards off the tee, longer hitters may opt to hit a fairway metal or take their chances aiming right of that bunker to the narrower portion of the fairway that is approximately 20 yards wide. Regardless, the player will have a shorter club in their hand to a well-bunkered green. Today's hole location at 15-4R is probably one of the toughest on this green. Since the recent redesign, members say that this hole has become one of the harder holes on the course to make a good score.
15	4	382	I would expect to see a number of fairway metals hit off this shorter par 4 to ensure an approach from the crest of the hill. This green is one of the deepest on the course and today's hole location at 28-3L just beyond the ridge will be a tough one to access. A shot missed short left on the green will have a demanding putt that will slide left to right quite hard. The best angle to putt will be from slightly beyond the hole on the right side. A shot missed over the hole location will be a tough up and down.
16	3	191	The longest par 3 for the championship and for the day will play downhill. With today's hole location at 11-5L, avoiding the left greenside bunker will be key to making par or better as the green slopes left to right on that portion of the green. The best birdie opportunity will be from hole-high right of the hole.
17	5	538	The longest par 5 for the day will demand an accurate tee shot to a fairway only 23 yards wide. Avoiding the fairway bunker on the right will be key in setting up for their second shot. Most likely, the player will be presented a slight sidehill, downhill lie to a shallow green with a knob feature in the middle of the green. Today's hole location at 15-4R should be quite accessible with a short club.
18	4	406	The finishing hole will play downhill to a narrow fairway of 22 yards. The best angle into this hole location will be from the right side of the fairway, closer to the bunker. The best approach shot will be positioned slightly long of today's hole location at 22-7L to ensure an uphill putt. A putt from short of the hole will be much more demanding of the player since it is nestled just beyond the ridge in the middle of this wave-like putting green.

Front 9 – 3,260

Back 9 – 3,393

Total – 6,653