

2018 U.S. Senior Open Championship
Golf Course Setup Notes – Round 4 (Sunday, July 1)
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Green Speeds – approximately 11 feet 8 inches on the Stimpmeter. We achieved this speed with a double cut on all greens with the exception of Hole 8.

Firmness – We continue to see a marginal reduction of firmness day over day. Moisture inputs were reduced strategically last night and this morning on all greens and fairways to increase firmness. Moisture levels were managed higher on Hole 8 and 12 to improve receptiveness.

Weather forecast:

Here is today's weather forecast from Jake Swick of Thor Guard:

Some clouds have lingered around the area overnight keeping our temps up in the middle 50s to start this morning. Look for skies to gradually transition toward a mostly sunny sky as the morning progresses, especially 9 a.m. to noon. Temps will be slow to warm up this morning, rising through the 60s and 70s to top out close to 80 degrees this afternoon. Dewpoints remain high this morning, hanging around 50 degrees meaning the atmosphere has enough moisture to start building clouds from lunchtime on. The computer models that did well with yesterday's action and were forecasting a quieter day today have now changed and the short range models concur that we will probably need to be on our toes again by 3 p.m. this afternoon. Breaking down the details in the models from yesterday that showed our best chance of rain at 6 p.m. (which technically was the only time I saw raindrops on site at 6:10 p.m.), reveals that they think 6 to 9 p.m. is our best window of opportunity today. The only problem for me is that the activity at 3 p.m. yesterday, which was anticipated a little farther north toward the Palmer Divide and a little later, ended up some 5-15 miles closer than the models showed and a little earlier. That is why I'm having to bump us back up to a 40 percent chance of showers and storms this afternoon in that familiar 3 to 9 p.m. section. The only good news I can share in the models is that the activity expected this afternoon is still not supposed to be as numerous as yesterday with the worst of the weather south of Colorado Springs. It just so happens that the spec the previous models showed around us for today (was a 20% chance) is starting to look more like the radar from 3 to 6 p.m. yesterday (hence the 40% chance) with showers and storms potentially close by to our north again. For those concerned with the weather for tomorrow, at this point it looks like a warmer day with highs well into the 80s with a 20 percent chance of a late day shower or storm.

Light and variable winds to start this morning may come from the south or west once or twice at 5-10 mph. Expect the wind to become more consistent by late morning from the south and southeast at 5-15 mph with periods of 10-20 mph this afternoon. Every computer model has the same thing through at least mid-afternoon, with maybe the most consistent 10-20 mph I've seen this week in the models. Therefore forecast confidence is high in this wind, but of course once the radar starts showing activity from 3 p.m. on, the wind may decide to have a mind of its own again. Winds will let up again tonight and the wind forecast on Monday is not all that different from today.

Setup Information

The following are the specific hole yardages (tee to hole location) for Round 4:

Hole 1 (par 4) – 428

Hole Location: 20-5R – back right

Notes: The opening hole will feature a back-right hole location today that is guarded by the right greenside bunker. Approach shots left hole high should give players an opportunity to have a flat putt toward the hole for an opening birdie.

Hole 2 (par 4) – 340

Hole Location: 15-5L– middle/front left

Notes: The only hole on the course that doesn't have an intermediate rough cut which will give the fairway the appearance of being even narrower. We did bevel-cut the edge of the fairway rough again yesterday to try to provide the player a slightly better lie if their ball comes to rest against the rough edge. The hole location is neatly tucked just behind the front greenside bunker and will present a similar look to what they saw on this hole on Friday. A center-of-the-green approach shot should leave a down-mountain uphill putt. One of very few that you will see anywhere on the golf course.

Hole 3 (par 5) – 608

Hole Location: 23-4R – middle/back right

Notes: The third hole has played as the second-easiest hole all week. Birdies and eagles may be easier to come by today given the forecasted winds. Today's hole location sits 5 paces over a ridge line that runs East/West across this putting green. Like any Donald Ross putting green, staying below the hole and putting uphill will likely be the preferable option for players. Hole-high approach shots will leave a nice left-to-right breaking putt.

Hole 4 (par 3) – 173

Hole Location: 27-12C– back center

Notes: Donald Ross' most daunting green on the golf course proved to be a little easier yesterday as it played as the 11th-most difficult hole on the course. The healthy rough that surrounds this green will continue to give players quite a challenge and today's hole location is in the back center of the green and will likely appear much more challenging today; however the shelf around the hole is relatively flat. The safe play, however, is a tee shot to the center of the green leaving an uphill putt to the hole location. Players should avoid going long on this hole at all cost.

Hole 5 (par 4) – 428

Hole Location: 11-5L– front left

Notes: A straightaway hole that begins your climb back toward the finishing holes of the front nine. Players will likely be gasping for a little air as they head up this fairway though it tends to give the appearance of being relatively flat. The front-left hole location is quite accessible but putts from above the hole will be quite speedy and those from hole high will feature a hard breaking right-to-left rollout.

Hole 6 (par 4) – 399

Hole Location: 12-10L – front left

Notes: The first of many dogleg-left holes on the golf course. Players can gamble and try to take a harder line over the fairway bunkers that will leave them with a wider landing area (29-30 yards) as opposed to laying back and having to be more precise. This hole location is located about midway up in the bowl/hollow that occupies the center left portion of the green. Approach shots that land within the bowl/hollow should filter down to the hole location and give players a nice opportunity for birdie.

Hole 7 (par 4) – 432

Hole Location: 25-9L– back left

Notes: Similar to Hole 6 this dogleg left will give players a chance again to choose how aggressive they want to be off the tee. Players will want to make sure that their approach shot finds the appropriate tier where the hole is located, or the center swale will collect their ball and leave them with a lengthy uphill putt. The area around today's hole location is pretty

benign, so if distance control is managed properly then a good look at birdie may be an option here.

Hole 8 (par 3) – 148

Hole Location: 8-11R – front right

Notes: Tee markers have been pushed up 20 yards today on this par 3 to give players significantly less club into this front-right hole. Distance control will be at a high premium today because any approach shots left or long and left of this hole location will leave a very treacherous downhill, down-mountain putt. Approach shots placed on the proper level of this green will still force players to respect the speed of this very fast down-mountain putt.

Hole 9 (par 5) – 546

Hole Location: 25-11R – back right

Notes: The shortest par 5 on the golf course will likely play much more difficult today than the previous 2 rounds, given the location of today's hole. Longer hitters should be able to get to this green in two if they use the severely canting left-to-right fairway to their advantage. The hole location is on the back-right shelf of this green and will probably be more receptive to a wedge shot than a ball coming in from 200 yards out. Missing this green long will certainly be a mistake as players will face a downhill, down-mountain pitch shot back to the green that is running away. A score of 5 on this hole today will go a long way.

Hole 10 (par 4) – 487

Hole Location: 8-8L – front left

Notes: Another hole that favors a big right-to-left tee shot to a fairway that gets larger the more you challenge the dogleg. A downhill, down-mountain approach to a green that pitches more front to back will be a different look than what players see anywhere else on the golf course. The approach shot into this green is where players likely feel the yardage adjustment to altitude the most. The hole location is in the front left quadrant so it is likely that most players will play to the middle of the green, leaving themselves with a fairly lengthy but flat putt to the hole.

Hole 11 (par 4) – 463

Hole Location: 21-19R – middle center

Notes: Tee markers have been pushed up 18 yards here today, which should give players a little less club to today's hole location that is 3-4 yards over the front collection area of this green. Players who execute and reach the upper level of this green should have a straightforward putt left to the hole but the collection area behind the hole from above the green will likely always be on their minds.

Hole 12 (par 3) – 229

Hole Location: 20-6L – back left

Notes: Tee markers are set again at the 223-yard location like in Round 2. Distance control on this downhill shot will be at premium today and players should use the center ridge line to feed their ball down to the back-left portion of this green. This hole has played as the third-toughest all week and a score of 3 today will likely make up a shot on the field.

Hole 13 (par 4) – 490

Hole Location: 10-8R – front right

Notes: The first of two available dogleg rights on the golf course should be playing downwind for most of the day today. Approach shots to the front or middle portion of this green should give players a good look to make birdie, given that putts toward the hole are genuinely uphill.

Hole 14 (par 4) – 438

Hole Location: 27-6L – back left

Notes: Another dogleg left to an uphill approach that will likely continue to have players fluctuating on yardage. Players can be aggressive to today's back-left hole location but distance control will be a must. The area where the hole is located is pretty flat but players will need to be mindful of any mountain effect that could influence the speed of their putt.

Hole 15 (par 4) – 462

Hole Location: 17-11L – middle left

Notes: The turn for home begins with another dogleg left with a fairway that peaks and then dives from left to right slightly, which could cause the ball to chase out a little. The middle-left hole location is very accessible so I would expect to see players try and attack. Putts from the center of the green to the hole will be uphill but relatively straight.

Hole 16 (par 3) – 162

Hole Location: 13-5L – front left

Notes: Tee markers are 14 yards forward today and have been made very wide to allow players to attack a hole location on a small shelf on the left-hand side of this green. Any approach shots that don't remain on this small shelf will likely tumble down to the right and leave a lengthy uphill putt back to the hole. Missing this green left today is not an option and it could potentially lead to bogey or worse.

Hole 17 (par 4) – 532

Hole Location: 8-5R – front right

Notes: Tee markers are back at the 545-yard location given the forecasted winds. I continue to expect this hole to be very demanding, but players should be able to use the open/flat approach to chase balls onto this green. Today's front-right hole location is relatively benign so if players can get their approach shots cleanly on to the front half of this green, a late birdie opportunity could exist here.

Hole 18 (par 4) – 420

Hole Location: 12-13R – middle right

Notes: We are using the player's extreme right tee again today which will introduce the second of only two dogleg rights on the golf course. Challenging the right fairway bunkers should leave players 145-160 yards to a middle-center hole location. Today's hole location should yield plenty of birdies, given that it is located at the base of the bowl/hollow of this putting green. Players needing to birdie to win or tie will certainly have their chance on this closing hole.

Total yardage

Front 9 (par 36) 3,502

Back 9 (par 34) 3,683

Total (par 70) 7,185