

U.S. Open Championship 2025

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Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA

Oakmont Country Club

John Bodenhamer

Mike Whan

Fred Perpall

Press Conference



BETH MAJOR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 125th U.S. Open Championship at Oakmont Country Club. My name is Beth Major. I'm the managing director of communications and content at the USGA. We're thrilled to have you with us today to hear a little bit from our leadership.

Going to introduce, to my left, the USGA president, Fred Perpall; to his left, USGA CEO Mike Whan; and to his left, USGA chief championships officer, John Bodenhamer.

Fred, I'm going to let you kick us off.

FRED PERPALL: Good morning. It's so great to be back here Oakmont. At the USGA we like to say, when you fit, you can actually feel it, and U.S. Opens just fit here at Oakmont.

We're so excited to be back here for the 125th U.S. Open. We're thrilled to have you here at this very special place, and we hope you enjoy this very special week as much as we know we will.

To Oakmont president John Lynch and the entire team here, thank you. The USGA sends a heartfelt thank you for all you've done to partner with us to bring this very special championship back to this very special place. We're excited to be here for our tenth U.S. Open at Oakmont. 10 U.S. Opens, more than any other site, and we know you all are excited, too.

To our media friends and partners, we want to thank you for your coverage. It's been an incredible week already, and we haven't hit the first golf shot yet. So there's just something really special about being here.

Your storytelling elevates this championship, and it gives us the opportunity to inspire golfers everywhere through the media and through the storytelling, and we just want to thank you for your partnership.

While we're all excited for the championship that will be contested over the next few days, there's a lot more going on outside of the ropes to bring people together here in golf. Last night, we gathered to celebrate this year's Bob Jones Award winner, Mike Keiser. What a special evening to celebrate someone who has meant so much to American golf.

We have a wonderful series of community impact programs going on this week, and we hope you will take a moment to observe. With the Western Golf Association, Western Pennsylvania Golf Association, we're teaming up to invest in greater Pittsburgh golf community in four ways.

One, public golf. We're supporting projects at the North and South Park, Bob O'Connor Golf Courses. Public golf means so much to all of us who are responsible for administering golf. We know as golf explodes, it's important that people have access to play, and so we want to thank you for the partnership to invest in public golf so more Americans have a pathway into this wonderful game.

Local impact. We're supporting Oakmont and Plum boroughs and their community green space and parks program, and we're providing free tickets to local nonprofits this week so that more kids from all communities have an opportunity to come and visit this very special championship.

Allegheny County has been a terrific partner for us, both for the championship and all of our community impact programs, and we have with us today Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato. Thank you, Sara. We just want to say thank you to everyone in the county for making this such an enjoyable experience and for your partnership.

Sustainability. As you all know, the USGA has invested heavily to make sure that golf is not only thriving but it's sustainable. So through our Green Section program, we are reducing waste, and a lot of recycling going on this week so we reduce the amount of consumption and we divert as much from our landfills.

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Leadership development. We're funding hundreds of championship interns this week, including our USGA Pathways program, which will include 24 kids from non-traditional backgrounds to give them a leadership opportunity this week at the U.S. Open. That one is really personal to me. Many of you have heard the story of how I got into golf and how a group of golfers literally helped me go to college by investing in my education.

We think many Americans' lives can be improved through golf, and we want to give as many kids an opportunity and a pathway into golf. So our Pathway interns will be in the media center this week. Please take a moment to introduce yourselves and get to know them better. What an extraordinary group of kids.

As you can see, we have a lot of action going on this week outside the ropes. We know that once we hit the first shot, the action inside the ropes will be so exciting. I want to tell you again, thank you for being here. Thank you for all you do to keep golf healthy and strong, and to talk more about what we have going on this week, I want to turn it over to my friend and partner, Mike Whan.

MIKE WHAN: Thanks, Fred, and thank you for all you do to keep golf going strong. Thank you for having us. We know it can sound pretty exciting when we say: Guess what? 200,000 people are coming to Plum and Oakmont borough and just outside of Pittsburgh, and it's going to be awesome. Unless you live just down the road on Fulton where you probably think this is a little less awesome.

We know we can be disruptive, but the reception we receive here, all the way from Terry Teasdale from Western Pennsylvania Golf Association, to the club, to the boroughs, to western PA, just want to say thank you because we know we can be a bit disruptive. And more disruptive when we're living with the wettest May in the history of Allegheny County since we started tracking.

I don't usually do this, but I want to say a huge thank you to your local construction guy, Thomas Construction. He no longer has gravel -- true story -- and he's only had one customer in the last 60 days: Us.

Suffice it to say, he told us there's more gravel here than in the quarry right now. And I apologize to all you members. Good news is it's outside of the rope lines, J.B., so that we can park and our back group operations.

To Patrick O'Kane and Tim Lloyd, our local onsite operations manager and Tim, our senior director of championships, who lives here, thank you, because I know what you went through. We were here six weeks ago while it was continuing to rain, and we were wondering how we

were going to pull this off. So to walk in here, John, and see what this place looks like is really amazing. So want to say thanks to everybody.

A couple of weeks ago at the U.S. Women's Open, I made a comment that I want to make to this group as well, which is 10 years ago some people challenged maybe the robustness of this game and how strong golf was going into the future. And I think that was a fair challenge. We had lost about 5 million participants from the decade before. About a million of those 5 were women. And so if you were questioning 10 years ago the future of golf, maybe that was a fair question.

Today those questions are off the table. Over 47 million people playing the game, 20 million playing the game off courses. And participation that's up in the last five years, 38 percent. And maybe most importantly, rounds of golf up 55 percent in just the last five years.

With all that growth, and we've seen a ton of it, 24 million Americans say they're extremely interested in starting to play the game right now. Among those 24 million, 40 percent are Black and Hispanic.

What's really amazing about our game right now, we've gone through what I call the great swing, the greatest swing upward in our game in a long time. But it's been driven by juniors, women, and people of color. And what a great time it is for the game. It's a great time for us to double down and invest in championships and the future of the game.

Now, all of you know that if you come to this thing you have to put up with at least 10 minutes of Mike Whan, going what's he talking about? So here's that section where if you want to zone out.

I find that I've heard too many people just walking around saying where were they last week, where are they going to be next week, this is another major, we're at the third major. And can't help myself. I've got to break that down for you.

If you see that logo in front of me, it says 125 U.S. Open Oakmont. Let's take that in three pieces.

125. We're 130 years old. We look pretty good for 130. But the USGA is 130 years old. We have had taken a few years off for World War I and World War II. But this championship is being played for the 125th time. That's the longest-running professional golf championship in America, men's or women's.

We're very proud of that. That doesn't make us like any



other event or any other major. We've been here a long time. There's one person said to me, How did you guys get Father's Day as your Sunday? I'm like, you just start 130 years ago, and you get a really good date.

So we're very proud of that history. The Tour is 57 years old, the DP World Tour is 53 years old, NBC is 99 years old. So we feel like we're the OG of that group in terms of this championship.

Open, U.S. Open. We're very proud of it. I'm sure my buddy will talk about the pillar of openness, but this championship is truly open and has been since day one. On day one, there was 11 entrants trying to make it in 1895. That jumped to 1,400 entrants in 1950. We had 8,500 entrants in 2000 when Tiger showed us how it's done at Pebble. And then this year, 10,200 golfers tried to get a tee time in one of these 156 tee times.

The second year we played the U.S. Open, there was an African-American playing and a Native American playing. And so when we talk about openness, and it doesn't matter where you came from, that's a pretty powerful statement about the longest-running championship in America.

And Golf's Longest Day, thank you, Golf Channel and NBC, for showing some of those incredible stories of both passion and persistence to make it here. When the first tee is hit by the former caddie and dentist, it just tells you what this championship can and is all about.

That's 125 in U.S. Open. How about Oakmont? Well, we're in Pennsylvania for the 94th time in USGA history, more than any other state. We're at Oakmont for the 10th time for the U.S. Open, more than any other venue for the U.S. Open. We believe in the words "golf's toughest test." And if you believe in that, you're going to be coming back to Oakmont pretty regularly, and we do.

I was thinking the other day, I asked one of our historians, when we talk about toughness and Oakmont, give me some perspective. People can walk out there and say, Oh, my gosh, but give me another "Oh, my gosh." Here's one for you. 1,385 players have played a major championship on this venue, and 27 of them finished their four days under par, 2 percent. So that's quite a test out there.

So that's it. Next time when you guys walk around and you see this logo, I hope you don't think it's another week, another major, another place. It's 125, it's U.S. Open, and it's golf's toughest test right here at Oakmont.

As I said, with what's going on in the game, we're excited to invest back in this championship and the game overall. As it relates to this championship, I'm sure you'll talk about

cathedrals because I have cathedrals in the upper left corner of my J.B. bingo card, so I know it's coming, but Oakmont, Shinnecock, Pebble, Winged Foot, Pinehurst, Riviera, Merion, that's what's next.

Admittedly, not all of them are the most lucrative for the USGA and the game. Some of those cases are pretty small footprints, and we will definitely right-size the amount of fans, just like we did this week, in terms of what the place can handle to make sure it's a good onsite experience. But we do believe those are the kind of places we should play our nation's national championship.

Coverage. 47 hours of live coverage here, just on linear coverage. There's over 300 hours of all different ways in which you can consume this. Another 36 hours of Live From thanks to The Golf Channel. And if you haven't seen the U.S. Open 125 documentary -- I think it's got one or two more airings. It was on again last night. And I wish you'd stop airing it because I need to go to sleep at night, but when it's on, I watch it for the 14th time. But it's quite good.

In terms of what the western PA folks and this whole region have done, to be sold out of virtually everything is quite a statement. We don't have hospitality, we don't have tables, we don't have ground passes, and we don't have weekly passes. Please, all my friends from college, cut it out. Stop texting me. You're not coming. But it's been quite a week.

Then investing back in the game. You know me, I've got my long list of things I'd like to tell you, but I'm pretty sure if I look to my right, Mary is already giving me the stink-eye for how long I talk to you. But GHIN app, over 80 million people posted a score last year on the GHIN app, keeping the game unified. 15 national championships, which now includes the U.S. Adaptive Championship, what we do for rules and rules education and literally over a million measurements on equipment every year.

Our agronomy now includes not only consulting visits but products we're providing superintendents to make sure they can set up golf courses the way we set up golf courses.

Pathways that you talked about, and we're really proud of United States National Development Program, which is only two years old but already making a difference and for the next 100 years is really going to be the pathway for America's elite.

Then last, if we're going to sit up here in this role that we take, we have to have the courage to be able to kind of govern the game, think about long-term issues that can



affect the game, and to make decisions without bias or conflicts. I'm really proud of the three of us, and I'm proud of the team we're around that we take on those challenges.

Just on behalf of the 300 USGA folks you don't see sitting up here, know that when we put on 125 U.S. Open at Oakmont, it stands for a lot. And I hope when you buy it, and please do, have it stand for more than just another week or another place you visited along probably what's a busy summer of travel.

J.B., I'll turn it to you.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Thank you, Mike. Good morning, everyone. In my world it is a good morning because what's right outside? Sunshine, which has been a rarity. We'll take all we can get today. Really grateful for that.

Before I make a few remarks, I did want to call out someone, I hope he's in the room, I'm not sure that he is, but Nathan Smith, our Walker Cup captain. If he's not in the room, he's close by. I think most of you know Nathan is a western Pennsylvania native. He's a five-time USGA champion, and we are so proud to have him as our captain this year. And I mention that because we will select the first members of our Walker Cup team next Wednesday. I believe that's June 18. We're so excited to be going to Cypress Point Club September 6 and 7.

It will come full circle in just a few years right back here at Oakmont in 2032, and you think about Nathan and the Walker Cup and come back to Oakmont, it really is quite special. The stars are aligning even for the Walker Cup and western Pennsylvania.

Well, if you know me, you know what I'm about to say, and Mike is right; I would like to just recite what you've all heard me say in the past. It is our strategies, things that are our guiding stars, we live by them. And really they're pretty simple. They're four things that we hang our hat on.

We believe that we take all of our championships, but certainly the U.S. Open this week, to America's greatest venues. It's important where players win their U.S. Open, men or women, and the ghosts of the past matter. We believe we go to these great cathedrals, and there are reasons for that and what makes a cathedral. I'll come back to that.

Openness. Mike is right. We're the most democratic and open championships in all of golf. Over 10,000 entrants for the U.S. Open, over 50,000 that will enter all of our championships this year.

And I think what we're most proud of, and we like to say it,

it really doesn't matter where you come from, the clubs in your bag, the clothes on your back or even the color of your skin: If you can get your golf ball in the hole, you can play in the U.S. Open or any of our national championships. And we are proud of that.

Tough but fair. A lot of discussion about Oakmont being tough. It certainly is, but our mantra is tough but fair. And what does that mean? It's pretty simple. It's not about the score, it's about getting every club in a player's bag dirty, all 15 of them. The 14 in their bag and the one between their ears. And we work hard on that, and that's how we've gone about our business here at Oakmont.

We also stay true to the intent of the architect. And the Fownes family is critically important here at Oakmont. We researched what they intended here. We looked at what Gil Hanse did in restoring this wonderful cathedral, and we're excited to see what's about to unfold.

Finally, players. Player focus. We have a team now that we didn't have six or seven years ago that focuses entirely on the players. They're at the top of our pyramid. They inform our decisions. We're not out to be everybody's best friend. We're out to earn respect, and we want to know what they think. And we build those relationships. We ask them what they think, where do they want to win their U.S. Open, what do they think about what we're doing.

We also start that journey when they're young, at our junior championships, up through our amateurs; and by the time they get to the Opens, we know them, we know their families, we know their agents. And we think that builds for a better relationship with the players.

There's a couple of things that I'll just mention, and I'll be brief, but the first is welcome to our tenth U.S. Open at our second anchor site. It's pretty fun to say that. And really all we really endeavor to do with our anchor site strategy is continuously improve. Just try to make it better every time we come back.

Really familiarity with these sites, for players, fans, what we do inside the ropes, outside the ropes, really build relationships with the members of this great club and all of our great venues as well as the community. We want to be an important and vital part of the communities we come to. So the investments that Fred referenced are critically important. We want to leave something very positive behind, not just the U.S. Open champion.

It also allows us to look 10, 15, 20 years into advance and do things we never contemplated before. In the past we'd look two or three years in advance. We'd have a team here, and we'd make decisions based on that short time

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frame. Now we're doing things well out into the future.

And you all know that, but just as a couple of examples, the practice range here, that's something that we and the club put our heads together and our investment together, and we changed it. The previous practice range, it just was really not up to U.S. Open standards or, frankly, Oakmont standards. And we combined efforts, and now we have something that is world class. It's allowed us to expand the footprint here, to have a few more fans, and we hope to build on that.

What it also does, it improves the player experience. And when we think about all of these investments, there are three things. What does it do for the player experience, to improve that? Secondly, what's the return on investment? I don't mean just monetary. How do we build something once instead of build it, tear it down, build it, tear it down, build it, tear it down every time we come for an Open -- U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open, U.S. Amateur. So we're being responsible in that manner, and it makes financial sense.

Then third, viability. If certain properties disappear at a U.S. Open venue with all that we have to do, we can't conduct these great championships at these great cathedrals. We made an investment last year in some property, 22 acres across the street from the second hole at Oakmont. It's not going to do a lot of glamorous things, bus loops and vendor compounds and some parking, but it sure makes it possible for us to make sure that we know we can come back to Oakmont, this great cathedral of the game.

Those are the things we think about with our anchor site strategy. It's not about going out to 2051, but it's about thinking about going out with all of our sites and what can we do and what can we imagine that we never thought of before.

It's not just about that. Think about at Oakmont. Yes, it's four U.S. Opens, but it's two U.S. Women's Opens, it's a Walker Cup match, and it's a U.S. Women's Amateur championship in 2046. We're thinking all the way out the next 25 years, and it's not just about the Open. This partnership with this great club is about men and women, Opens and amateurs, and we're sure proud of that, as well.

Secondly, what does it take to be a cathedral? Well, I think if you opened the book of golf terminology and you turned to the page that defined cathedral, you might see a picture of Oakmont Country Club next to that definition. I believe that, and it's really truly one of the great places of the game.

But Oakmont is special for a couple of reasons. First, toughness. It's not just the toughness of the golf course. It's the culture of this club. They want it to be tough. They want it to be, not only tough, over-the-top tough, because they play it that way in the squad every Friday. It's amazing, I've never seen a culture like that. It's wonderful to be around.

But it's what Henry and W.C. Fownes envisioned back in 1903. And think about this. This place was a monster when it opened in 1903 at 6,408 yards and a par of 80. My, how things have changed. Gil Hanse's restoration, we think it's magnificent -- the putting green expansions, the bunkers, a little bit of length.

But really what has really been restored here more than anything, this will be the first U.S. Open -- think about this -- first U.S. Open since 1935 that will have been played under the Fownes' architecture. Because post-'35 there were a lot of things that were done. Trees were planted, different things were done on the golf course. The property changed.

But we're going back to that era that Gil took from 1903 into the 1940s and took the best elements of what the Fownes' architecture was. We're excited to showcase that.

We love all of our U.S. Open venues, and most of them have three or four things that are quite unique, levers that we can pull and the way that we can set up the golf course and present it to the world's greatest players. We like to think Oakmont has six of those, and here they are.

One thing that really isn't about Oakmont is distance. It has plenty of it, but it's not a factor that we really manipulate a lot. Will be 153 yards longer on the scorecard this year than 2016. And when you think about it, when you look at PGA TOUR driving distance, in 2016, the average driving distance was 288.5 yards. This year it's 300.5. So they're 12 yards longer. You extrapolate that out over 18 holes, that added 153 yards. We're actually behind the curve. Never been about distance at Oakmont. It's been about a whole lot of other things.

Think about this, though. When Johnny Miller won in 1973, he hit a driver and a 4-iron into a 460-yard par-4. We'll play it at 488 yards. And if we get things a little bouncier, you could have players driving it up just in front of that green. Again, my, how things have changed.

But the six levers that we think about, architecture, the routing. Other than a little bit of a move to No. 8 because of the turnpike construction, 1903 this golf course was built on this routing, and it's stayed exactly the same. Maybe a little longer, but that is magnificent, the cambers, the

elevations, the doglegs, the approaches, the tees, the putting greens just melt into the landscape.

It's magnificent. When you go and stand out there and look at this property and what Fownes did, his only golf course, it's brilliant.

And the thing that is here at Oakmont more than anything else that impacts golf and the test is simply gravity. That's the property. The rough. It'll be about the rough. It's thick and consistent. I don't believe that anybody that's playing consistently from the rough this week will have success. We'll see. These players are the best in the world.

Bunkers, lots of risk and reward. Where have you gone where you've seen a U.S. Open, let alone a major championship, where they have ditches, strategic ditches? I never have been, but Oakmont has them, and it's magnificent.

Then, of course, to me, Oakmont is about magnificent putting greens. They've always been the fastest in the game. They've always been the most treacherous, and they're spectacularly special.

Finally, the sixth lever I believe here at Oakmont that maybe shines brighter than most other venues is psychological. Oakmont is relentless. There's no letup. It's a grind. That's the U.S. Open. There are limited opportunities to catch up once you get behind. So that element of "I've got to hit the perfect shot and make birdie" really gets you behind the curve ball more and more. It's a relentless grind.

I think the scale with no trees, and that was intentional, what Fownes intended, to be Scottish-type golf course here. Even the clubhouse was intended, after he visited all those great golf courses before he built Oakmont, a Scottish farmhouse clubhouse. It's all intentional.

But the scale, when the players look out over this great property and they can see 17 of the 18 flagsticks, there's an intimidation factor there when you look and you see play going on all across this property. We think that's the sixth lever.

The second part of being a special cathedral to us is about the ghosts of the past, and boy, does this place have them. You stand on the first tee and there are just places that the U.S. Open is meant to be played. This is one of them. You can cut it with a knife when you think about where players want to win their U.S. Open.

You think about Jones winning the U.S. Amateur in 1925, Hogan in 1953, the second of his three majors, Nicklaus

outdueling Palmer in 1962 in his backyard, Miller maybe the most impactful and best round in U.S. Open history, and then Larry Nelson, Ernie Els, Angel Cabrera and DJ in 2016 and don't forget about Arnold's farewell in 1994 and how magical that was.

For those of you that haven't been in the locker room here, maybe it's not this week, but in the future, I'll leave you with something. It's an indelible image on my mind and always will be. Not only the lockers but the benches. The benches in that locker room are the same benches that were here when Jones played and Hogan played and Nicklaus and Palmer played. When you go in and you look at those benches, those spike marks are from those players, Hagen, Sarazen, all those great players. Those are the ghosts that make this place special.

When you think about the cream rising to the top, think about this: Of the nine men to win the U.S. Open at Oakmont, eight have won at least two majors. And of the nine men that win the U.S. Open at Oakmont, six are in the World Golf Hall of Fame. I'd venture to think that Angel Cabrera and DJ have a pretty good chance of getting in there and making it eight of nine again, so the ghosts matter.

I'll stop there. I could go on about Oakmont. It's just a magnificent place, and we're honored to be here at the 125th U.S. Open.

BETH MAJOR: J.B. thanks so much. J.B., Mike and Fred, thank you all.

I don't know about you, I could listen to J.B. forever and ever. His passion for this place, for many of you that enjoy listening to podcasts, we listen to "Fried Egg" and "No Laying Up" and we hear people wax poetic about the game and the courses that we play. J.B. is coming for your jobs at some point. J.B., thanks as always.

We're going to open it up to questions.

Q. John, with the weather the last day and a half, how has it changed the golf course, and is it close or at where you would desire it to be for the start?

JOHN BODENHAMER: Well, there's been a lot of talk about the weather. I don't need to belabor that. But we're very hopeful. We understand that the golf course from everybody here, that the golf course can turn around very quickly.

We'll see this afternoon. I can't answer that because I don't know. We've seen some of it come to us with a little bit of firmness and a little bit of green speed. Candidly,

we'd like to see more.

As we like to say, Mother Nature has a seat at the table, and we can only make water evaporate only so quickly. But we're hoping for a good afternoon with a little bit more breeze and a little bit more drying.

Q. For Mike, curious if you could give us an update on the media rights negotiations and also speak to the possibility or the appetite of splitting up that package.

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, so it wouldn't be strange of me to do this, but I'll be smart enough not to negotiate my media rights in a media center.

Yeah, so for those who don't know, our media rights starting in '27 have become available, so we're in the marketplace right now, early in the process.

I guess all I'd say is the level of interest, including our current partners, which are phenomenal, has been great. Not just the -- we're not to the point yet where we're close. We're months away, not weeks away from figuring out what the future is, but I would say that the breadth of interest, which is really a great statement for the game, not just a great statement for USGA championships, but the breadth of statements and the amount of people that have come to the table is really the exciting part.

Q. John, a little bit more about the rough. Is this unprecedented rough in terms of thickness and depth? And then also, are there any extra lengths that are being done in terms of spotters and things like that to ensure that golf balls aren't lost and get ground?

JOHN BODENHAMER: The rough will be a little over five inches and it is dense. Oakmont, day in and day out, has dense rough.

But we have plenty of spotters, but no guarantees we won't lose a golf ball or two, but we're going to do everything we possibly can not to do so. But we feel good about that.

As I said, I think the rough, players that drive the ball in the fairway will have an advantage, no question about it.

But I think thinking about the rough, I'll be honest, we gave that a lot of thought, and looking back and doing research at Oakmont, it's interesting, you go back and most every U.S. Open here, all nine of them, had at least one day or at least a day or so in advance of it that we got some rain.

So when we thought about that and we thought about the restoration, and the restoration made the fairways two to four yards longer, some more, some a little bit less, we just

felt we needed the rough that we have. We think it's appropriate for the driving corridors, and we're looking forward to seeing how it unfolds.

Q. Mike, speaking to the rules and the way that we're talking about distance and the way drivers are tested, has there been any discussion about more transparency of anytime something happens it gets published, similar to how F1, there's a rules violation, it goes out into the press, that way you don't have players talking about leaks to the media and things like that. Has there been discussion with the PGA TOUR as well as the other bodies?

MIKE WHAN: Just to rephrase a couple of things. For the rest of the world, we test what we call CT creep, characteristic time creep, which is I'm assuming what you're talking about. That's essentially how long the ball stays on the face.

Think about a kid jumping on a trampoline, and the longer they're on the trampoline, the farther they bounce off. So we set a limit with manufacturers in terms of how long that ball can stay on -- it's tested in terms of microseconds. There's a test, there's a tolerance, but at the end of the day, if it's on there for more than 258 microseconds, we consider that club out of tolerance.

So as a service to the players, to the tours, and we do it here, as well, we do random testing pretty regularly. I think sometimes when we say "random testing," people think -- if you're playing on Tour, you're going to get tested a couple, three times a year, and we think the testing that we're doing is commensurate with both the degree of failure that we see, which is pretty minimal -- and quite frankly, when we see failure, at least currently, we're seeing clubs just literally creep over the line. It's a line we draw -- we aren't seeing when we're taking drivers off, drivers that are, oh, my gosh, look where that one went.

So I think sometimes in the media and the fan space, you think, we just took 20 yards off that player. We're literally talking about an extra microsecond, and if you get within I think it's 18 microseconds of the line and we test you, we give you what we call a yellow warning, which is, hey, be careful, that club is starting to -- because at the velocities and at the frequency at which they hit these clubs, they will just relax over time.

So as a service to manufacturers, to the players and to the tours, we provide that. If I'm being honest with you, I think in terms of what happened at the PGA Championship, it made us more committed to not wanting to have this be the topic of the town because I think when you talked about a rules violation or somebody who's playing with a hot driver,

that gets so much more sensational than the reality.

I can tell you as a rules body, if we had concern about this incredible advantage, we would change the degree in which we test. But we think the testing that we're doing now is commensurate with the size of both the issue and the size of the reality of the issue.

And probably shouldn't admit this, but I'm not even in the -- I know we tested this week. I couldn't tell you if we had failures, and if so, what those failures were at the time. I could probably go ask, but I stay out of that mix.

I know that if we saw a trend that was alarming in terms of either how many or how far they were moving beyond, we would change the way we approach it. But with what we're seeing today, it would be a greater interruption -- the juice wouldn't be worth the squeeze.

Q. Just a follow-up about the media rights. I'm wondering what are the USGA's priorities as far as the next media rights deal as it surveys the landscape?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, listen, we love our current partnerships. So let's start there. For a lot of reasons, but one is we're talking about truly committed people that want to not just cover the event but want to tell the stories. Longest days, how they handle the U.S. Women's Open, how we handle the Amateur, and obviously this week.

I said this one time a couple years ago, but imagine a football game -- when we were out in LA, we came on air at 11:00 in New York and went off air at 11:00 p.m. Imagine a football game being on for 12 hours. The same thing is going to happen here on Thursday and then again Friday, Saturday, Sunday. So we really appreciate how they let these stories play out and let people be a part of it.

Obviously we're committed to pretty significant investments back into the game, and one of the benefits of that investment is a good TV partner. But we're going to look for somebody that can deliver at the levels or better than we're delivering now, and through that partnership enables us not just to tell the U.S. Open story or the U.S. Women's Open story, but some of these incredible amateur stories as well. We think that's been part of our partnerships for a long time, that we get to put a limelight on some championships that maybe otherwise people wouldn't get to see.

Like I said, I don't really want to share communication strategy in a group of people that have the job to go then tell everybody else. Wouldn't be the first time I've made that mistake. But we've got a ways to go. When we get to a point where we think we can really share with you

outcomes, whether that's current partner or different partner, I promise we'll sit down and do that, including the strategies that drove us there.

Q. Mike, you mentioned right-sizing attendance here. Can you speak specifically to how attendance might look different than it was? Championship tickets are sold out, so how the capacity might look different than it was in 2016 or previous Opens and what went into that decision.

MIKE WHAN: Well, to J.B.'s point, with the anchor site agreement and with us working together with the clubs, we've created a lot of fan space here that may not have been here always before. And that's great, not just in terms of corporate opportunities but fan space, as well.

I would tell you that this weekend when we're all in here, there's -- as Fred knows, there's a ticker in our office that every time somebody comes through, we see the number change. We've got to move it because it just keeps going all day and you get looking at it. But I'll bet all in we'll have about 40,000 people on-site here on Saturday, 40,000 people on Sunday, and probably similar tomorrow and Friday.

Q. What's the latest on rolling back the ball issue, particularly with the resistance from the PGA and the PGA TOUR?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, we've had good meetings. I would say stakeholder meetings at Augusta -- sorry, started at THE PLAYERS, then met again at Augusta, had a meeting again yesterday with the majority of the stakeholders of the game. It's been -- I have to say, I'm encouraged by the collaborative nature of the discussions.

Listen, I get this isn't easy and everybody has got their own constituents. I'll just say what I said yesterday again, is as an industry we have to be able to make small adjustments that are in the best interest of the game long-term, that we all know would be better 40 years from now if we were smart enough to make them today.

We'll make those. Not everybody will like it. It'll be high anxiety until we get there. But nobody is going to die. The game is going to be great. We're going to prove that we can be better for future generations rather than to simply look the other way and know that in 40 or 50 years we'd be handing them something we could have made small adjustments on.

Yeah, if I'm being honest with you, we're full-speed ahead on what we've announced. Those decisions have been made. I'm really excited that the different stakeholders are

in the room talking about the how to and what further things we need to know to do that better. But I won't lie to you; there's anxiety there, and I'm right there on the anxiety list, too.

But this is why we're put in this position. We don't have the same conflicts and contracts and biases. This is our job as governance, and it's not a fun one. If you look over the 130-year history, we're not new to this and we've had to do these things before that feel like "oh, my gosh" when they happen, and you look back 10 years later and go, Whatever happened to the...

But I think as an industry we've got to be able to do this both for ourselves and for the future generations that want to inherit this game, and we will.

Q. Is there a plan B?

MIKE WHAN: We've announced our plan.

Q. I don't think the purse for this week has been announced, but just in general, with purses at tournaments, at the biggest tournaments around the world continuing to go up very quickly, what are the challenges, if any, for keeping the U.S. Open prize money at elite status?

MIKE WHAN: That was a good prompt because when I walked in here, Beth said to me, Hey, can you do me favor and just mention the purse? And I totally failed on that, so sorry.

Our purse is \$21½ million. Winner's check is 4.3. We didn't raise our purse this year. When I started at the USGA just four years ago, our purse was 12.5, so I feel comfortable that we've been a leader in moving fast and bigger.

We're not really a fan of small, but when we go, go a little bit bigger.

Same, by the way, has happened on the women's side where we've gone from 5½ to 12 in a similar period of time.

Listen, does that make it hard when you talk about, to Fred's point, all the investments we make in the game. But at the same time, we understand; we want to be relevant. We understand the competitive set. We know that this probably isn't really about the money for the person who puts it there, but at the same time, we want the money to be commensurate with the achievement.

So yeah, we feel comfortable. I don't really know the other four majors, but I think if we're not the top, we're close to

the top. We'll continue to evaluate that both on the men's and women's side because it's part of creating what we want to be the greatest championship in the game.

Q. For Mike or John, there's been some talk this week this might be Mickelson's last U.S. Open. As a non-champion, would he be considered for another exemption? And would Shinnecock and the hockey he played that day be held against him?

JOHN BODENHAMER: I'm happy to take it. Listen, the answer to that is Phil did receive one in 2021, and I'm a little sleep deprived, but counting my years backwards -- it's like anything; we would review things for Shinnecock ahead of next year and look at all of those possibilities and evaluate it from there.

I think the way that we would also think of Phil is we hope he earns his way in, and I think he'd tell you the same thing. That's what he did last time. We gave him one and then he went out and won the PGA Championship. So wouldn't put it past him.

Q. Mike, just wanted to make sure I understand the position of the USGA on the rollback. Two weeks ago Jack Nicklaus said that right now he'd be willing to just freeze it as is where he's been a major proponent of rolling the ball back. Understanding what's going on with the different groups involved with it.

Are you saying that if, in fact, you can't get the tours to support you or the manufacturers to support you, you will still implement starting on your date and it would be whatever U.S. Open that would be?

MIKE WHAN: I would say to you, I was at Jack's event on that Wednesday. Didn't have that conversation with him, but I will now that I heard your comment, because when I first told Jack about it, his comment was, Well, that's a nice start, Mike, but you and I both know that's not enough. He's been pretty consistent with that from the beginning.

What I would say to Jack and what I would say to you is, and I've said this to a lot of people on a lot of ranges, I don't have a problem with the position that let's keep it where it is today. If you want to keep the distance where it is today, this action that we're talking about is essentially that. We'll be in 15 or 20 years, and maybe less based on strength and swing training and everything else, we'll be right back at the distance we are today, 12 to 17 years after this change.

The only other way to say keep it the same is I don't want balls flying out of the sky at a certain number. People say keep it the same, and then you say, how do you want me

to do that? One of the ways we'll do that is to make small adjustments so that distance over the long-term, 40 and 50 years, is similar.

We know that distance will continue to increase. We know people will chase it, and quite frankly, it's a game advantage that you should chase if you can accomplish it.

But what we have to do is stop the pace, the slope of that curve that it's been on the last 20 to 40 years for the next 20 to 40. And that's what this does. Anybody who thinks this is more than that, including Jack, who's smart enough because we've had numerous conversations about this, he knows that this change is moderate and it won't have a significant impact, but maybe in 10 or 15 years will feel like the growth of that curve is pretty slow as opposed to the pace we're dealing with today.

Q. Mike, I realize that you're only one part of this whole process, but after the Masters there was some chatter that the LIV Golf leadership was going to re-address their OWGR thoughts and maybe look at that again, perhaps resubmit. Can you update us on where that is? Has there been anything formal from them, or have you had any discussions with them about trying to maybe comply?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, I'll be honest with you, my last two weeks have been sort of in a cave. So if they have submitted something new in the last two weeks, it'd be in the last two weeks. As a board member, I'm not aware of a resubmit.

I know there's been dialogue with LIV about the concept of resubmitting. As a board member, I'll review it just like we did the last time. But I don't think that's happened. And if you know something more than that, that's just because I'm a few weeks behind in my emails right now.

But I'm pretty sure at this point there hasn't been. But I know there's been active dialogue. That dialogue, at least at this point, I don't believe has turned into a submission.

Q. One question for Mike and one for John. Mike, you mentioned anxiety about the implementation of the new regulations. Can you expand on what you're anxious about? And, John, can you give us a sense, we know there's netting out on the golf course for tees that you're likely to use, but just kind of an outline of what you tell players to anticipate in terms of specific setup elements this week to look for and expect?

JOHN BODENHAMER: Sure. I would say the netting you see is really to save certain areas. At Oakmont there's a lot of runoff, closely mown areas where we'd like to, during

practice rounds, save some of those. That's really what most of it is.

But we do save teeing areas, so the players kind of know exactly what we're thinking.

As you know, we like to move things around. We like to show different angles. We like to show different yardages. We work very hard on the par-3s especially, and each of them will play a different yardage. And we'd like to see the players play different clubs into each of them every day and different angles. And we look at the weather very closely. That's just one example.

We don't always show them everything because we think they've got a yardage book and they've got a lot of tools and they've got great caddies that do the homework, so it's an exercise in math. Well, something might just show up that we didn't put a net over and they might not be thinking about.

That's what I meant by 15 clubs in the bag dirty, the 14 that they hit and the one between their ears. For us, we take great pride in really thinking about what the players think and how we can tempt them to do things that they might not otherwise contemplate doing or normally do and shouldn't at a U.S. Open. That's how we think about it. That's one of those.

We'll give them -- if it's going to be a dramatic change to how the golf course would play on a par-4 that we might make drivable and it would be a totally different look, then we'll show them.

Frankly, we give the players all of -- we're pretty transparent. We show them what our plans are for green speeds, rough height, everything, our cutting document. We think that's the right thing to do, and the same thing on the tees.

MIKE WHAN: It's funny, you asked me a question about my anxiety. You know better than that. It starts with 27 Diet Pepsis. The reality of it is governance is hard. I knew it when I got here, but it is hard. These other stakeholders are my friends and they're passionate about the future of the game just like us, and I get that.

What the anxiety comes from is every time I open my computer and read 100 emails, 50 people say "I can't believe you're changing the ball" and 50 people say "Is that all you're doing on the ball?" Nobody says "I think it's exactly right."

That's the hard part about governance, you're trying to find the right -- even to Alex's point, I sat in Jack's table last

Wednesday with other governance, with other stakeholders of the game and listened to a lot of really talented leaders of our game say to me "That's not enough," and with people sitting next to me that have said "That's too much." So I think they probably got to see the world of governance.

Yeah, if you don't think that's hard, a little anxious, you've just got to come hang with us for a couple days. We know that's hard. But the worst thing would be to bail and do nothing just because it's hard.

Q. To Mike and John, first to Mike, the dates that are set, they're in stone now, it's 2028 and 2030; is that fair to say?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, we've given manufacturers dates that we know they're working on. They're submitting prototypes and have R&D efforts. I guess would you say set in stone? Could we come across something that would make us feel like our decision needs to be altered? Could. We're definitely going to stay open-minded to that. But we have yet to see anything that would suggest that.

But we're not not open to new data, something that we would be provided. But it was eight years to that decision point. So I love it when people say, Why the rush? I'm like, Why the are rush? I mean, how many more years do you think we should have taken?

Q. John, when you said about players being alerted, past Opens here have had -- 2nd hole, 17th hole, the 8th hole, the 12th hole -- they've had various tee positions. Would they be some of the ones that you've already communicated to the players?

JOHN BODENHAMER: I think it's all weather dependent. We'll look at what the weather is going to do, and we'll make those decisions literally either the night before or the morning of. But I will share with you that we will move things around. You'll see some different looks from different tees.

But I think you will see more of the golf course at Oakmont than maybe you did in 2016, even with the added length, predominantly because, as I said, the players are 12 yards longer. We have a little less to work with. The shot values that we want to present I think will be using more of the golf course, the full length of it, than maybe would have been the case in '16.

Q. To you, John, what role does players' opinions and thoughts as the championship is happening impact how you set things up?

JOHN BODENHAMER: Well, I think we don't really go to the players. We let them come to us during the week. They're conducting business. But we do seek out -- there are certain players who we know really have an eye for architecture, maybe have played here in the past, and we really respect their opinions. We'll seek those out, and we have done so. And we listen.

It's ultimately our decision, but we think we're better by listening, and of course, when players come to us, we'll listen to everything.

I think some of you know Scott Langley. He's our senior director of player relations. He's deeply involved, and he has a team of five. So we're constantly in communication with the players, and the golf course we pay special attention to.

Yeah, it informs what we do, but we make the decisions.

BETH MAJOR: J.B. Mike, thanks very much. I want to just, before we break, talk a minute about Fred. This is the last time that you'll see Fred at a USGA press conference. It's also the last time as a result that I'll feel like a petite woman. At 5'10" I usually don't. When I'm next to Fred, I always do, which is wonderful.

But really Fred has been an incredible leader for us, an incredible friend and partner. And he's also really appreciated everything you've done in terms of coverage and things that are important to the USGA, the game. And I just wanted to give Fred the opportunity to make a few remarks before we break.

FRED PERPALL: Thank you, Beth, and thank you all again for being here. Getting a little choked up thinking this is my last U.S. Open as USGA president. It's been an honor and a privilege because I think back to what the 15-year-old Fred would say about all of this.

The volunteer leadership at the USGA, we're just regular golf guys and golf gals that love this game enough to serve it in a very full way. Spend countless hours on the road and many nights out of our bed because we love what golf does for us.

But we love the opportunity to give back through this game of golf. We have this disposition at the USGA, and I hope you've heard that today, that we believe this game really can change the lives, and we want to include more Americans in this game.

I want to thank Mike and John and the entire leadership of the USGA for your partnership and your friendship. It's been a privilege to serve alongside you. I've learned a lot.



Thank you all for being here. Let's have a wonderful week.

(Applause.)

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

I got all of J.B.'s old speeches so when I go back to my home course, I sound a lot more intelligent these days. But it's been a real pleasure.

I'm proud that the USGA is on really firm footing relative to leadership, and I hope you all can see that. Not only our management team but our entire team. I want to take a point of privilege to thank Stu Francis, my predecessor, and Tom O'Toole, another past USGA president, without whom I would not be sitting here. I also want to congratulate Kevin Hammer, who's in the back of the room. He'll do a fine job as your next USGA president.

I want to say when you are given the opportunity to serve, what makes life more full is that you do something for others, and I want to thank all of you who care enough about this game to actually give back to the game and to be engaged in the future of the game.

Governance is hard. Like no one likes to be governed until we have to imagine a world without governance. These issues around distance, these issues around equipment regulation, they're also issues around the sustainability of our sport. Bigger golf courses mean more expense. It means longer rounds. It literally excludes more people because we cannot afford more time and more dollars in the game.

So if you believe, like I do, that this game is a game that truly gives us the opportunity as Americans to come together, to demonstrate to the world that everyone's life gets better when we live life together, that's what golf offers us the opportunity to do, and that's why we're so passionate to get it right.

Then finally to our friends at Oakmont, thank you. This championship strategy, J.B., when you hear us talk about the anchor sites, you may think we're only thinking about U.S. Opens. But truly this championship strategy has elevated all of our championships, and this has been a tide that has lifted all boats.

So our women are playing on much greater stages. Our juniors are playing on much greater stages because of the partnerships of our anchor sites. It's also put a little urgency on other golf courses and partners to raise their hand to take a little more on. So thank you for demonstrating.

So finally, I want to say, let's enjoy this week. But let's all reflect about the goodness that this game has brought into our lives, and let's go out this week and spread some of that goodness to others.

