

U.S. Open Championship 2026

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Shinnecock Hills Golf Club

Mike Whan

John Bodenhamer

Kevin Hammer

Press Conference

BETH MAJOR: Good morning. Welcome to the 126th U.S. Open Championship at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. We are thrilled to welcome you all for what promises to be a really special week.

My name is Beth Major from the Communications and Content team here at the USGA. Thrilled to see so many familiar faces and really appreciative of you being here for the coverage and all the excitement around this championship.

I'd like to introduce my three teammates here. To my immediate left, USGA President Kevin Hammer. To his left, USGA CEO Mike Whan. And to his left USGA Chief Championships Officer John Bodenhamer. Kevin, I'd like to throw it to you for a few comments.

KEVIN HAMMER: Thank you very much. Well, there's a lot of excitement around this 126th United States Open Championship at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. There is such a significant history here. You can feel it.

As we honor and cherish the long history between Shinnecock Hills and the USGA, dates back to 1894, we're just so thankful that you all are here, and we're looking forward to a great week. We also want to thank the leadership of Shinnecock Hills for their invitation to return here, for their partnership and their friendship.

I'm proud to be sitting here, as mentioned, with my USGA teammates: CEO Mike Whan, our Chief Championships Officer John Bodenhamer, and we wish to thank our entire USGA team, many of whom are in the room, for making all of this possible.

Thank you to everyone in this room also, you the members of the media for being present for your interest and your coverage of what promises to be more history in the making. We will add to the special legacy of the U.S. Open this week, the oldest major championship in our country.



I know that I may be new to many of you in the room, but my being here is the culmination of a lifetime in and around the game of golf. My journey, my path has been a long and diverse one. I grew up working and playing in the game of golf. I'm the son of a PGA TOUR player and a long-time PGA of America professional.

I went from playing the AJGA to playing college golf, and then spent more than a dozen years on the board of the Florida State Golf Association, after which I was involved with a number of other state and regional golf associations, already now almost six years with the United States Golf Association on the executive committee and now as president.

Most importantly, I believe, I've just always loved this game, the game that we all share, this amazing game we all share. I come from a place of great respect for all of us who come together to make this game accessible for others.

Those, all of us together, that help us unify the game, showcase the game, govern the game, and advance this game. This game, the game that we've always been proud to introduce to our children and our grandchildren.

We all know how much the game of golf has grown in recent years too. So has the USGA. We've grown an awful lot. Today the USGA is a bigger, broader organization than ever before. We're positively impacting so many aspects of the ecosystem. Our executive committee, like I mentioned, many of whom are here in the audience today -- and I'm looking at Andy North, a member of our executive committee, two-time U.S. Open champion. Andy, thank you for being here.

We all work so diligently to be a valued partner and companion throughout one's journey in the game. We are creating pathways, opportunities for access for others like never before. We also care deeply about the players.

You, some of you watching this week, may not know some of the players in the field, but we are in the fortunate

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position, having been part of their journey throughout their life in golf. I think back to some U.S. Junior Amateur Championships, like J.J. Spaun, who was our great champion last year. Before we even presented him the trophy on the 18th green, he was quickly talking to us about how his mind was thrown back into playing in the U.S. Junior. That really felt good that we were part of his journey throughout the game.

There's so many other amateurs in the field that we've gotten to know through the years along their journey. I'm thinking of Walker Cup team members as well, players like Jordan Spieth and Scottie Scheffler. It's amazing when you think about this pathway throughout the game.

We have 12 former U.S. Open champions in the field this week. 12 former U.S. Open champions, but it's so much more than that. We have four U.S. Amateur champions, five U.S. Junior champions in the field, one U.S. Mid-Amateur champion. We even have a Senior Open champion in the field. In total, we have 23 former USGA champions in the field this week. We also have 31 USA Walker Cup team members in the field this week.

When you look at the entire field of this, the 126th U.S. Open Championship, to date over the course of their careers they've competed in over 1,000 USGA championships. That's something incredible. Talk about a journey, a pathway through the game.

There are also three current members of the U.S. National Development Program in the field, part of our National Junior team. Hamilton Coleman, Mason Howell, Giuseppe Puebla, and there's also one team alum in Miles Russell.

The USNDP is one of the ways the USGA is looking more broadly at the accessibility and the journey into and throughout the game. Through USNDP we are giving our nation's most promising talent more access, opportunity, coaching and expertise, and this is really America's golf initiative. It's called the U.S. National Development Program for a reason. It's not the USGA's program. This is the U.S. National Development Program.

We partner with a number of key organizations in the game to make this possible, and all of this really falls into the leadership of Heather Daly-Donofrio, who is right here with us as well. Thank you, Heather.

So while we are creating pathways for playing the game, the USGA is also creating pathways for young people working in the golf ecosystem. Many of you know that our traditional Boatwright Intern Program, which supports the AGA community, our state and regional golf association, this decades long program has been hugely successful.

Now we've also curated the Pathway Internship Program, which promotes jobs in the golf business from young people from diverse backgrounds all over our country.

We recently hosted the U.S. Women's Open at Riviera, our Pathways Launch Program, bringing together interns who are working this summer in leading organizations throughout the game as well as in other sports and the business world.

This week we have our Pathways Discover Program participants here. This is the fifth year of this program, which provides introduction to young people who are new to the golf industry.

One of the program's alumni is here with us this week working as a team lead for this year's intern class, Cristina Santiago, who is right here in the second row. She's likely our future boss, you're right. She's a multimedia journalist with a specialization in sports media.

So these are just some of the examples of how today's USGA is broadening its impact for the good of the game and the long-term positive health of the ecosystem. For players, for other organizations, for the young people we are impacting, this is really about the USGA being their lifelong partner and companion in the game and the positive effects are already being felt here at Shinnecock this week.

We have made and we will continue to make investments to ensure the future health of this big and beautiful game that we all share. Our partner throughout much of this progress has been, as you know, our CEO Mike Whan.

Mike, I'll turn it over to you.

MIKE WHAN: Thanks, Kevin. Kevin is a great example of the people who give their life to this game and just thank you for what you -- not only what you are doing in this role but what you have done before you got here.

Also, sorry for the train horns in the background, but about 38 percent of our fans are showing up by trains, and feel free to make that 58 percent in the future. The neighbors would be happy. Appreciate Long Island Railroad for helping us out.

I want to thank the Metropolitan Golf Association for having us in their territory once again. Brian Mahoney, their executive director, is recovering from a little surgery. Probably didn't know I was going to say that, Brian, but we're wishing you best of luck and hope you are back on your feet soon.



I've got to be honest with you, this is my first U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills. Like many, I've watched them, but I haven't been in this seat before. To be at the only club that's hosted one in every century is pretty cool, the first golf club incorporated in America in 1891, sitting across the gravel driveway of the first clubhouse in American golf. As most of you know, they incorporated in 1891, but a few short years later they got together in New York City with four other clubs and formed the USGA. So to say this place is kind of mecca for the USGA is not an understatement. We really feel the connection to this place and our history.

When we played the second ever U.S. Open here in 1896, this place quite literally defined the Open word in U.S. Open. We'll be playing our 10th USGA championship here, and I'm excited to play it.

When we talk about 1896, when we played the second only ever U.S. Open, there were 35 entrants in the field. We played 36 holes over one day. I know there was a lot of locals here that wish we still played in one day. We'll be with you through the week, and we'll all get through it, I promise. We played a golf course that was about 4,400 yards and the purse was \$335.

When you jump forward to 2026, there was 10,202 individuals that tried to make it into this championship and get one of these 156 tee times. What's really cool is they came from all 50 states, 50 different countries. The age, from age 13 to 71 trying to make it here. 390 of them came from the state of New York, so that's pretty cool.

We'll play a slightly different golf course than we played in 1896, but JB will tell you a lot of same philosophies. We'll play about 7,500 yards, and we'll play for a purse of \$22,500,000, which means the winner will receive \$4.5 million.

Last time we were here was 2018. The purse was \$12 million. We're back in 2026 with a purse of \$22.5 million. We're proud of keeping that pace as well.

As most of you know, but it's something I need to point out for the folks that are probably listening to us or watching us, it's an amazing time for our game. 44 percent of American adults are engaged in this game. When I started in this game and decided to build a career behind it 35 years ago, we called it a niche sport. It was a small niche in the game of sport. Can't do that anymore.

136 million American adults tell you that they're engaged in the game -- read about it, travel around it, vacation on it, live on it, play it. It's really an amazing time.

What I call the greatest swing in American golf history, 2019 till today, it's just some amazing stats. In the last six years, there's 5 million more people playing golf on a golf course. There's 41 percent more people participating in the game now than were participating in 2019. In the last five years, four of those years have set an American record for the most rounds of golf we've ever played. So each year we set a record, and then the next year we just break it.

When you talk about a number like 41 percent increase, the math guy in me wants to know what's driving 41 percent? What segments are up higher than 41 percent? The answer is three-fold: Women, 46 percent growth in the last six years; junior, 58 percent growth in junior golf; and people of color 61 percent increase.

Not only is it an amazing time for our game in terms of how much we're playing, where we're playing, 75 percent of our facilities being public access, what's really cool about it is that we're being driven by segments when in the past we tended to struggle to get to be part of the game, and now not only are they a part of the game, they're driving the game forward.

As a result, it's a great time to invest back in the game. As most of you know, in the last five or six years, we've been pretty focused on reinvesting in the communities that host us for U.S. Opens, and we're doing that again this year. Together with Shinnecock Hills and the Metropolitan Golf Association, we made three significant investments this year.

First in public golf here in Suffolk County. Four different golf facilities where we're going to invest in their practice facilities, both in terms of financial investment and agronomy investments. Secondly, we've partnered with the Shinnecock Indian nations in their Boys and Girls Clubs to create more access and opportunity for their young people that want to pursue both the game and sports in general.

And, third, and Kevin touched on it, we've been pretty committed over the last five or six years to pathways into the game. We're excited what's happening in participation of the game. We want to make sure the same thing is happening for people that are actually going to lead our game in the next 20, 30, and 50 years. People like Cristina.

For those of you who probably know the USGA, for 35 years we've had a program called Boatwright Interns. Over those 35 years, we've paid for 1,700 interns to go to work in state and regional associations.

You might say, well, that's great. That's \$40 million of investment over 35 years. But what's really cool is one-third of our state and regional golf associations are now run by former Boatwright interns. About 40 percent of the staff that works across the U.S. at all these associations are Boatwright interns. I have two Boatwright interns at work for me, and I have one Boatwright member on my board that I work for.

So we're really proud of the fact that what we envisioned or what somebody sat up here and envisioned 35 years ago has really changed the face of leadership of the game. That takes us to Pathways, Cristina, and Pathways Discover and Pathways Launch. We started a program six years ago called Pathways Discover, where we brought in a small group of folks. Generally from less represented backgrounds than we've typically seen leading the game. We showed them what was going on at a U.S. Open, all the business of a U.S. Open.

What we were amazed by is looking back six years later, 40 percent of those kids that really spent ten days with us are working in the sports industry today. Kids that probably weren't thinking about sports when they first met you for the very first time.

This year we've expanded that into what we call Pathways Launch. 1,300 kids applied for 24 spots for a long-term, immersive internship within the industry. What I mean by within the industry is some of those kids are at the PGA TOUR, PGA of America. They're at Pebble Beach or Pinehurst. They're at Golf Pride or the USGA. They're at PGA TOUR Superstores or Dick's Sporting Goods.

We're putting them in long-term immersive internship experiences so that they can really be -- when we're talking 35 years from now who is leading the game, I promise you we're going to be talking about Pathways Launch interns that are now running the game and sitting in seats like ours.

I'm starting to froth, so I'll move on.

Obviously this morning just recently before we walked in here, we released some news on distance. It wouldn't be a USGA update anymore if we didn't talk a little about distance. I want to provide an update. For those of you that have seen our release, I'll just try to paraphrase what we sent out.

Over the last eight years, the governing bodies, the United States Golf Association and the R&A, have worked together to make sure that we're sharing our concerns about distance increases, not just in the past, but the trends we see going forward and the potential long-term

consequences of doing nothing as a game.

Since the last time I think I've addressed a group of this size, there's two significant developments that I wanted to share. One is in March, for those of you who kind of follow this process, we launched what we call a notice and comment where we asked the industry to comment on a specific question, which is when we talk about changing the ODS, or the Overall Distance Standard testing approach, is it better if we did it in a phased approach and starting in '28 with the elite game and '30 across the board, or is it better for most if we did it one time and started in the beginning of 2030?

Like most formal feedback sessions, this certainly wasn't unanimous, but it was clear that the industry certainly preferred a single date implementation of January 2030. What we can say is there will be no change to the ODS distance approach on golf balls until January 2030. That was one thing we owed a feedback and response back to now that we've gathered the feedback from the industry.

The second maybe even more recent development was we've had a series of pretty constructive and collaborative discussions with the PGA TOUR leadership, DP World Tour leadership, and then more recently a couple of weeks ago with the PGA TOUR Player Advisory Council. I would summarize those discussions in three ways, and I tried to in the joint statement we did with the other entities.

That is, number one, a shared recognition distance continues to increase at the highest levels of the game and likely will continue.

Number two, a concern from those groups, meaning the PGA TOUR, DP World Tour, and PAC that maybe the ODS change that we're implementing won't be significant enough to have the kind of objectives that we've set out, and we heard that feedback.

Third, and maybe most important of all, is a real collective willingness -- and I choose those words by design. Collective willingness is I think what we felt in those meetings. A collective willingness to reconsider maybe some of the ideas we moved on with based on previous feedback we had received before and determine whether or not there could be other ideas that could be more impactful and maybe even less disruptive for the overall game.

That's the basic message in our joint statement that we sent out earlier today and have now sent out to the media and to our partners around the world.

I'm not sure, if I'm being honest with you and being very

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personal, whether or not we'll create or re-create an even better approach, but I will tell you on a personal level I'm both willing and excited to pursue them with some of the best players in the world.

By the way, even though the joint statement came from those discussions, the LPGA, the PGA of America, the PGAs worldwide, Masters, all the folks that have been with us through this process, will continue to be with us in this process, but this joint statement came out of specific meetings with those groups.

I don't normally quote Kevin, but I'm going to today because I would say that Kevin has said -- probably said today, I'm sure at some point, but Kevin always says, we're better as an industry when we're focused on the 90 percent that we all have in common in this room, in any meeting, on any golf course. Golfers have this inherent fiber of connection that is just powerful. We all know it, and I know you know it because you're spending your life here and not with your loved ones because this fiber really pulls us all together.

Kevin says we spend way too much of our time talking about the 10 percent and not the 90 percent. I think what we're excited about is we found some 90 percent in the last couple of months, and hopefully that can drive us to some other suggestions.

We understand and we are realistic to know that given that we really want to keep the 2030 ball on the table, that we have to work with some prudence and some urgency, and we will.

As I wrap up my comments, I was driving in this morning, and I realized I've been doing this probably for six years in front of you. I have never done what I should have done the first time, and I'm going to do it now, which is to my 400-plus teammates that work at the USGA every day, come to work every day and work on things that for the most part what we work on won't -- we won't see the benefits on while we're working at the USGA. Somebody thought of Boatwright way before we did.

But we're introducing Pathways and USNDP, and we're endowing the Walker and Curtis Cup and launched the U.S. Adaptive, and all of those things will be great in 30 years. We're just getting started now for the next generation.

I have a group of individuals, including 55 allied golf associations, that spent a lot of their life working on making sure this game is better in 30 years, not just three months or three years from now. So I just want to say to my teammates, who are probably watching this more than

most people, whether you work with GHIN, World Handicap System, course ratings, 15 national championships, global team events, Olympics, rules, equipment standards, United States National Development Team, museums, foundation, ticketing, TV, marketing, or comms, or Beth, in your case, all of the above, I just want to say thank you for what you do, what you do for the game.

I get to sit up here and act like all of your work was done by me, and you guys know that's not true, and luckily for you I know that's not true. But on behalf of somebody who is pretty proud to walk in the building with you every day, thank you for what you do.

On a list of people I'm proud to call a teammate is the guy sitting to my left and to your right. When I joined the USGA, John and I had a meeting at my kitchen table in Orlando, Florida.

JOHN BODENHAMER: We did.

MIKE WHAN: We a couple of principles we agreed on, and one of them was don't leave me, John because I really trust him. I trusted him with my life when I was at the LPGA, and I trust him now.

What's really going to be interesting for both of us is we're going to hear John say today words I don't think he's ever said out loud: Slower, wetter, safer. Safer, I can promise, when he says that, he'll stutter his way through it.

What makes John great is he has a plan. He has a plan in everything he does. He's the most noteworthy guy I've ever met in my life, but he's adaptable, and I think that's what makes him and us great.

He's had to change based on one word that we've been saying a lot for the last five days, wind, and I know we'll be saying it a lot for the last four days. It would have been an amazing U.S. Open if we'd have teed off on this last Sunday and finished today, but Mother Nature decided to throw us a little bit more to deal with. Thank goodness we have our chief Championships Officer John Bodenhamer to be the guy to get us through it. JB?

JOHN BODENHAMER: Thank you, Mike. I have to say I'm proud to be your teammate, but I'm even more proud to be your friend. Thank you.

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Shinnecock Hills and all of its glory this week. I'm proud to be here.

Let me offer this: The Shinnecock links are almost perfect as they present nearly every kind of natural obstacle the



most exacting and fanatical golfer could ever desire. I did not say that. That comes from the New York Herald on August 30th, 1891, when this place was founded. I don't think a whole lot has changed.

It offers everything, and it's just a magnificent playing field for our great game.

MIKE WHAN: Traffic has changed.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Well, traffic has changed (laughing).

I think many of you know and have heard me talk about our four pillars, strategies that we think about every day when we conduct any of our 15 national championships. Just briefly, we believe very strongly that we go to America's greatest venues to conduct all of our championships, and especially the U.S. Open. The cathedrals of the game, what a great term. Just kind of sums everything up in one word because we really believe that it's important where players win their U.S. Open, men or women.

When you think about our line-up for the U.S. Open, obviously we're here this year at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club; next year Pebble Beach. In 2028 we'll be at Winged Foot Golf Club. 2029 Pinehurst, we'll do the back-to-back experiment again. In 2030 at Merion Golf Club we'll celebrate a grand year, the Grand Slam year that Bob Jones won and where he won his final leg of the Grand Slam.

Then 2031, what a magnificent week it was at Riviera just a few short days ago, what a celebration of the game it was to watch Nelly Korda lift that trophy, what a great leaderboard, what a great accomplishment for the women to play for the first time where the men have played for 100 years.

You think about our journey for all of our championships, it includes all of that, and 25 more years into the future we're building on those strategies, and we're proud of it.

Second is openness. As Mike mentioned, this year 10,202 entries just in the U.S. Open. We'll have almost 50,000 players that will pursue their dream to play in a national championship overall. But going back to 10,202 entries, that's one short of a record. Heck, if Mike and I would have realized we were just one short of a record, we would have both entered and set that record, but we didn't do it.

MIKE WHAN: I asked for an exemption.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Yeah, and we didn't give that either.

Tough but fair, that's our third one. We talk about it, it's not about par is a winning score. Maybe it used to be years ago. It is not anymore. What do we endeavor to do? It's about, yes, getting every club in the bag dirty. We want the players, we want to examine every part of their game. We want them to get all 15 clubs in their bag dirty.

That's right. A former rules guy, recovering rules guy, I said 15 clubs. The 14 that they'll make a stroke with, and the one right here between their ears, the 15th club. I think Shinnecock Hills Golf Club will do that in many ways that other places can't.

What you'll see here this year that is a bit unique but really not much more than staying with the intent of the architect, when I say a bit unique, William Flynn was the architect of this golf course when he designed it in 1931. We will play his golf course, really the original golf course, for the first time in any U.S. Open that we've played here. It's really the true design. I'll come back to that.

Finally, the fourth pillar of our strategy is player focus. We really do engage the players in ways that we never used to just a few years ago. Heck, look at that player facility that's right out here to my right. I think now really the players have to adapt to a different Shinnecock Hills Golf Club because this player facility, I think every putt on this course now breaks towards this player facility it's so big.

It is really an investment in that relationship, and really Mike mentioned our increase in the purse this year, but it's much more than that. You look at what we've done and how we've thought about the future at our venues going forward, places like Pinehurst, where now we have Golf House Pinehurst. Oakmont, what we did last year, and more to come at Pebble Beach and Merion.

Really instead of thinking two or three years out, we're thinking 15 and 20 years out, and we can just do great things. It's really exciting. We're doing that largely for the benefit of the players and the fans and their experiences.

So think about Shinnecock Hills the way we do as a cathedral. True William Flynn design, the way he set it up in 1931, the club restored that in 2013. It is a links course. Years ago when you watched previous U.S. Opens, this was more like a parkland course with trees and shrubs all around it. It is a breezy links course. We will experience that this year.

Yes, it is wider at 48-yard-wide average fairways, but think about this. It's not about really when your ball goes into the fairway. That anxiety level goes up as you approach those putting greens. As you get closer to the hole, it just



becomes more difficult. That was William Flynn. That's what he intended to do, and we will play that out.

The sandy soils, the perched up putting greens are magnificent. You'll see around these perched up putting greens closely mown surrounds. We treated those specially so players can putt, pitch and run it, pitch it up to the green or bump and run it. They have choices. Sometimes players don't like choices, but we're giving them a multiple choice examination this week.

I do believe, as you think about Shinnecock Hills, there are a few unique considerations. The wind, and I'll come back to that too, generally southwest prevailing. Remember that. When the wind comes out of the east, the members stay in the clubhouse and play cards. They don't even go out and play because it's usually wet and that difficult.

But this year I believe the wind will impact our championship unlike many others, and it's because of William Flynn. Think about Shinnecock Hills in three triangles: 4, 5, and 6. As you watch the Open unfold, think about how this unfolds. Holes 4, 5, and 6 are a triangle. Holes 10, 11, 12, and 13, another triangular routing, and holes 14, 15, and 16.

What makes that special? It was intentional. When you think about a southwest prevailing wind, when you go around that routing in each of those three multi-dimensional holes, you're playing a different wind. It's brilliant. It really leads to some amazing outcomes.

I believe that holes 9, 10, and 11 will define and be pivotal in this U.S. Open. I really believe that Brooks Koepka won here in 2018, not because of birdies and pars that he made, but because he got it up-and-down from the bunker for a bogey on No. 11. I believe that's where his march to victory started.

Look at 16. You go back and look at previous U.S. Opens here, Raymond Floyd, both Retief Goosen and Phil Mickelson, as well as Brooks Koepka, all birdied No. 16 on their way in. The way we've thought about things coming into this year is letting Shinnecock be Shinnecock. It's good enough. If it isn't, we shouldn't come here, and we are.

If there's a little bit more wind, it will be a little bit more resistant to scoring. Less wind, less resistant. I don't think we're going to have to worry about the wind this week.

As we came into this year, we thought a lot about our plan. We reflected on 2018, and we learned a great deal from 2018 and the experience there. We had intended to come into this week really unlike 2018 in ways that instead of

preparing the golf course for seven or eight days straight for a U.S. Open experience for the players, it was really more easing in.

We see the firmness and the speeds come to us by Wednesday and Thursday, and by the weekend we would crescendo into what a U.S. Open has always been. We think that because that's what the players have told us. That's their expectation.

Putting green speeds, you've heard me say it before, we came into this week maybe 6 or 8 inches, a little bit slower because we wanted to use really good hole locations here at Shinnecock Hills.

Finally, something weather-dependent that we had in our back pocket was a plan to syringe the putting greens, and I'll come back to that. When I say that was a long-term plan, look at our starting times. Our starting times are 10 minutes earlier than they normally are this week, and that was to leave in between waves Thursday and Friday a little bit more time, if we needed to, to go out in between waves and syringe those greens for turf health.

What is the same? There's a little bit that's the same. We'll play 7,440 yards at a par-70 this year. That is exactly the same yardage that we played in 2018. So that has not changed.

But what has changed is the forecast. We arrived here last week; it was pretty docile. We were a little worried about not getting any wind. Well, as of last Thursday night or Friday, that changed significantly. As we come into every U.S. Open, we have multiple scenarios, multiple game plans that we can impart depending on the weather. Even daily, our decisions are real-time: Hole locations, teeing areas, all of those things.

We began to pivot last Friday night when we began to see the wind forecast. Really when you think about it, this is what we think we're looking at. We think we're looking at a U.S. Open, who knows, with the potential to be much like 1992 was at Pebble Beach when Tom Kite won in that wind-swept final round. We think Thursday could look a little bit like that with what we're seeing in the forecast. We've given that some thought.

Thursday, sustained winds throughout the day of 12 to 24. More on the upper end of that with gusts from 24 to 36 miles an hour. When we start to talk about numbers in the mid-30s, that becomes problematic in a number of ways. Golf balls just staying still on the putting green.

Some of the models that we're working -- our meteorologist at Thor Guard is working with, Jake Swick, show winds

reaching as high as over 40 miles per hour. We hope that doesn't happen. We're preparing for all that we can, and that duration on Thursday will be from, we think and what we're being told, anywhere from 10:30 in the morning, 11:00 a.m. all the way through most of the day until 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. It is a long duration that we'll have to prepare the golf course for.

On Friday it drops a little bit. Sustained winds of 8 to 16, gusts in the mid to upper 20s. Still quite a bit of wind.

But Thursday isn't just Thursday. We're thinking about Saturday too because on Thursday the winds will come out of the prevailing south/southwest. What changes on Saturday, the winds aren't quite as strong, but they still reach gusts over 30 miles an hour, but the forecast calls for winds to come out of the west/northwest.

When they're south/southwest, they blow up from front to back many of these greens, particularly the problematic greens -- or the more severe greens, not problematic. On Saturday they're going to blow -- I know. Problematic, they are sometimes with wind.

But some of them with a north and northwest wind blow from back to front, and we are concerned about that. We're doing everything we can for a duration on Saturday that looks like 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., a little bit shorter thankfully, but gusts up to 33 miles per hour and sustained in the low to mid 20s. That's significant.

Sunday calms down a little bit, back out of the west/southwest.

I offer all of that because our plan needs to -- our setup plan needs to account for all of those conditions. Not just to get through a Thursday, but it's what do we think about on Friday to get to a Saturday and get through that to Sunday? We want to play golf. We don't want to be sitting on our hands.

The choices we've made -- and I'll finish with this -- it really -- they're intentional. Turf health. We feel very good that we are not going to have a turf health issue. We have worked very hard, players will tell you, we've kept this golf course hydrated both putting greens and fairways.

You know, you think about Shinnecock Hills. My experience, I've been doing this for almost 40 years with the USGA the last 16, I have never seen a place like Shinnecock Hills when you get those drying conditions. This place just dries down like nowhere else I've ever experienced, and we need to watch it and be very careful.

Green speeds, our target green speeds that we intend to

play is mostly in the mid 10s throughout the day. Again, our goal was 11 1/2 to 12, but --

MIKE WHAN: We know that hurt for him to say, but that was a good move.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Then I think the other couple of things that we've done, we've actually modified our setup plan. We have really taken the wind direction into account and where we can position those hole locations in places that will account for the wind but will also give us our best chance so we can just play in those types of winds.

The last thing that we'll do, and I want to talk about this just briefly, is we will syringe the greens on Thursday and Friday. Just to be very clear what syringing is, it involves a very light application of water to hydrate the grass leaf blade to prevent wilt, most importantly, to preserve turf health, and to reduce stress on these poa annua greens. Poa annua reacts differently and more quickly than most other grasses in these types of conditions, so we think syringing is very important.

Again, syringing on both Thursday and Friday, and we've communicated this to the players, is really important. We believe that it will present a more consistent playing presentation to both the morning and afternoon waves both days. It will be consistent across both days, which we think enhances competitive fairness.

This is also a practice that is used on a regular basis right here at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. In fact, if you ask the club, they'll tell you they do it daily. It is just the nature of this club and the nature of this property to preserve turf health and so on.

In fact, I didn't see it directly, but Rory mentioned this in his familiarity of this the other day. Think about it as when you go into the grocery store and you go into the produce department and reach for that head of lettuce and that little mist comes on above and hits your hand. That's all we're doing to the putting greens. It doesn't impact playability. It hydrates the leaf blade. When it evaporates, it keeps it cool enough so we don't lose the friction on the putting greens.

MIKE WHAN: If you had a head of lettuce on your card from JB, you can cross that off.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Let me finish by saying this. Our third strategy in our four is tough but fair. We could brutalize this place the next few days if we wanted to. That's not what we're about. We really want it to be fair, and we want it to be what Shinnecock Hills has always been. It will be tough enough.

We have pulled every lever that we can to make it fair, and I think that's a message we really want to get out there. Ultimately, we believe the forecast will be accurate. If it isn't, then it will be what it will be, but we've done everything we can not only to provide a tough, but especially a fair test, but to ensure that we've given it every opportunity, no guarantees, that we can play golf on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

It is kind of interesting, as Mike has kind of alluded. For a USGA guy my whole life, my dream was always to play in and win the U.S. Open. To sit back here and talk about hydrating greens, slowing green speeds, and modifying hole locations, that's hard to do, but I'll tell you what, I have great respect for this cathedral of the game and about these great players.

Really when you think about it, it should be about this magnificent cathedral and these great players, and that's what we want the story to be. Thank you.

BETH MAJOR: Thanks, JB. We'll have some security available for you on the way out.

MIKE WHAN: Give JB a hug on your way out, would you?

BETH MAJOR: We appreciate the respect you have for this game and this championship and are excited to watch the test ahead this weekend. Mike and Kevin, thanks to you both. We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Mike, what gives you any faith that the various stakeholders will accept any governance in terms of regulating distance in the future since we're now moving again back the line in the sand to 2030?

MIKE WHAN: You know, maybe I'm a glass half full guy. I mean, it wouldn't be the first time I've been accused of that. I'll be honest with you, my most recent conversations with the PGA TOUR leadership and DP World Tour leadership, we're starting with distance is increasing. We don't want the game to become even further one-dimensional.

Then leading to ideas, I got to tell you, in my five years of this job, I haven't had those meetings until recently. You could take the angle of, well, it's been five years, and nobody is helping, and so Heisman, no, thank you. Or you can say if we could get to something better together, wouldn't that be great for the game? To use Kevin's point, and all of us focusing on what we all love about it. I think it would be crazy to not take the time to see if we could come up with something together.

Q. Mike, you say, or at least the USGA says in the

release that the ODS may have to be addressed, that it may not be working for the desired result that you're looking for. Could you tell me what that desired result is, first of all? And second of all, when you make changes like you did with grooves, like you did with anchoring, do you go ahead and look back and see if they actually have met the desired result you were looking for?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, Alex, on the first part of your question, when I was summarizing the feedback from these meetings, the second piece of feedback was a concern, if I was being honest with you, a concern from some of the best elite male golfers and their organizations about whether or not the ODS ball change would be enough to make real change in distance. We all go through a change, and is there going to be enough change there?

I didn't spend a lot of time arguing over that. Do I know that the ODS ball change will have less distance in ten years from now than it would have without it? I do, but did I also know that when we faced a crossroads a couple of years ago that MLRs weren't something that was going to be implemented? At the time, we were under the impression that MLRs were not something to be implemented in the TOUR, so we had to do something as an across-the-board change.

We knew when we were crossed that road, that if we were going to do an across-the-board change, it could only be as far as it could be to have no impact on the recreational game. I've used this term with Kevin a lot. I view the ODS ball change as a small, digestible bite that the industry can handle. It would be small. It's not horrific.

As I've said this many times in many interviews, it's fair to critique whether or not it's enough. It probably isn't enough, and we'd have to do other small, digestible bites in time, too, but I think as an industry, we want to be able to get through those.

So when we talk about the concern of is it going to be enough, are we really getting -- I think there was concern coming back to us of we're going to go through this change, and are we really going to get enough real distance difference to affect the game in a meaningful way?

I said that quickly led to how about, and we started talking about things. I think we realized pretty quickly, let's not kill the how-abouts because maybe there are some ideas here that are getting reopened that we looked at in the past and probably closed the door on because of some of the TOUR's feedback that feel to be more open today.

I think that's why we can say that it would be -- I think it would be the wrong way to govern if we don't listen to that when we're starting to now talk about similar objectives.

Q. Shifting gears a little bit, the topic of reinstated amateurism has become kind of a fierce debate online. A lot of life-long amateurs say it's become unfair on them because it's too easy to become a reinstated amateur. I guess I was just curious about the USGA's thinking on this philosophy towards this and what they would say to people who think that? To whoever is inspired to talk.

KEVIN HAMMER: I'm happy to take it. I have many friends that are reinstated amateurs that have come through the mid-amateur game. I think at the end of the day, do we want to welcome them back into the game? Every single individual's case is so different, so we've got a whole team of people that look at that.

As you know, some of the qualification criteria that is changed over time, and it will probably continue to be tweaked over time as well. At the end of the day, is the game better with those reinstated professionals back in the amateur game, in a reinstated way? I think the answer is, yes.

JOHN BODENHAMER: I would add to that one thing as a consideration. That used to be my world a few years ago more so. I think you have to look at the picture holistically. As Kevin said, we want to welcome people back that maybe spent a few months instructing or playing or whatever it did contrary to the rules of amateur status.

I think what we also look at is that context. Should that person be welcomed back in the game pretty quickly? Yeah, we think so. But the player that maybe had a longer tour career or a little bit more success, maybe they should wait a little bit longer, and we do do that. We do have that process. Happy to speak with you about that afterwards.

It is a balance. It's not just the one-size-fits-all is my point.

Q. John, you talk about consistency on Thursday, Friday, but we've seen in the past the weekend rounds and what Daniel Berger and Finau did back in 2018. And then you mentioned the pocket of winds 3:00 to 5:00 on Saturday this year. What does it look like finding consistency for the weekend rounds when you don't have that gap between waves to go out and syringe the greens?

JOHN BODENHAMER: That's a great question. We've considered it. The way we think about it going into each

day, not just on the weekend where we don't have a break in between waves, keeping this golf course hydrated. As I said, it dries down like nowhere else I've ever been.

The way we'll do that is that we've given a lot of consideration into hydrating it closer to play. So where that first group is, we will hydrate closer to that first group than we have in the past. So we can get through the day a little bit longer.

I also think the syringing that we'll do Thursday and Friday will keep the leaf blade healthier longer going into the weekend on Saturday for those high winds.

Q. This is for both Mike and Kevin. On the subject of collaboration with the TOUR, in March Brian Rolapp was asked about the TOUR not having an ownership stake in any of the men's majors. He responded that collaboration might be warranted because organizations like yours are entirely financed by professional golf and pro golfers. I'm wondering if you share that viewpoint and if you see a future where there is some sort of increased financial collaboration?

MIKE WHAN: I'm not exactly sure where the collaboration goes, but I don't think I'm breaking news to say we've had those conversations with the TOUR and will continue to.

I think when Brian talks about those collaborations, at least when he's talked to me about it, he's talked about how can we come together to make both your events bigger, better, more successful, and at the same time help the same with the TOUR?

I think we've been pretty consistent to say if somebody has ideas on how we can be even better together, our door is open. So those conversations are happening.

Are they specific to exactly how that works? They're not, and at least in my interactions with Brian and current TOUR leadership, it hasn't been a financial -- how do we financially give back and forth, it's how can we come together to create better opportunities for everyone?

KEVIN HAMMER: I'll just add to that. We have great respect and love the PGA TOUR and the aspirational nature and the way they inspire other players, but as we highlighted earlier today, not only does the USGA, but so many other organizations in golf, provide the pathway and the journey throughout the game that really do encourage those talent pathways to reach up to the PGA TOUR level.

We're very proud of the fact that we're their partner in the game giving them opportunity and access and the desire to

further their careers with one day making it to the PGA TOUR.

Q. Mike, a couple of things on your comments and the statement today. The statement mentions taking an appropriate amount of time. We're 24 years removed from the Joint Statement of Principles, multi-year process. Can you give us an idea what this appropriate amount of time that you and the R&A will be taking to take in this information?

MIKE WHAN: What we meant by that, Jeff, is we've taken 2028 off the table. We're leaving 2030 on the table. So when we talk about other approaches, we want to be doing that with the speed of saying, you know, if we were going to do something other than 2030 or in addition to 2030, we need to know that sooner than later.

So it creates a sense of urgency for all parties. This isn't another eight-year effort. We need to get at it and do it with a sense of urgency.

Q. Then you mentioned a couple of times today being excited to work with elite players. It sounds like they're going to have a bigger seat at the table in these discussions. Yet many have corporate affiliations or biases in their own games that they're going to bring to the table. How do you work through that in a way that is not targeting almost certain constituencies too much?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, we've dealt with that before. I mean, we understand that. They understand that at the end we're going to have to make a decision that may or may not be right for individual agreements. That's why the governing bodies are where they are, so they're free to make those decisions.

I would tell you that I probably undersell it. There's been a lot of TOUR involvement from the very beginning, but probably less individual players and a lot more TOUR leadership and the folks that are representing players.

What really kind of changed with us more recently is the number of individual players that kind of stepped forward, both in that meeting and since, with a real sense of kind of wanting to help and share and asking for more information. That's exciting.

I would tell you that longer-term one of the things we've started talking about, myself, Mark Darbon, Brian Rolapp, Craig Kessler, and the rest, is if players want to be more actively involved long-term in terms of how we govern the game, we've always welcomed that. There's always been a lot of the leadership in it, but if players have interest in

that, we've always had interest in that, as well.

Yeah, I think I find it maybe exciting is the wrong word, but it's probably true. I find it exciting that so many of the players even that I've talked to walking the range the last couple of days are interested in the topic in a way that we're talking about approaches, where if I was being honest with you, the last few years I've never felt the interest in talking about the topic more than, no, thank you.

Q. Mike, the purse 22.5 is the same as what the Masters bumped to this year. Did you feel like you needed to equal Augusta? Moving forward, we know LIV is pitching a model with significantly lower purses. How do you think that will impact prize money at the four majors?

MIKE WHAN: I didn't really know the second part of that. I didn't know what LIV was pitching, so I can promise you that wasn't part of our thinking.

I think at the end of the day, we want to make sure -- we believe, and it's fair if you want to disagree with it, we believe we're the best championship in the game, and we want a lot of aspects to be the best championship in the game. Where we go, how we treat the players, how we pay out, how we're televised, and we're proud of the fact there's more network hours on the U.S. Open than any other major championship.

Yeah, some of that's just personal pride. We want to be big. We want to be the best. We want to make sure it's life-changing in multiple ways.

We also are not in a race. We're not chasing. I don't know if that answers your question, but we're proud of where we are. I couldn't tell you and until I get some truth serum in here how much farther we go in the years to come, but we think it's a measure of how we feel about our championship. It needs to be significant and stand out. We think 22.5 does.

Q. John, can you explain a little bit more specifically syringing in terms of the timing of what you do? You said closer to play, but do you mean in the middle of the round? How frequently are you talking about it for Thursday and Friday?

JOHN BODENHAMER: I think there were -- let me just put it this way. We will syringe, as I've described it, on both Thursday and Friday in between the morning and the afternoon wave.

As I said, we adjusted our starting times earlier to give us, again, about a half hour in between the waves for our team

to get out and do that. It's a very quick process, but we need that. We need that on both days.

Then what I was addressing in the subsequent question was the weekend when we don't have a break in between waves, how do we keep things hydrated? That was my comment about hydrating closer to that first group.

You know, look, you might see a little bit softer conditions, but this place dries down quickly. We think we just have the right plan to get through the day. High winds, we're just going to be very careful.

Q. I know it's ten years away, but can you talk about the importance of having the U.S. Women's Open here in 2036, what that means for women's golf and the USGA?

MIKE WHAN: I'm hoping that two weeks ago answered that question for every fan, more than I'll answer it, if you watched the women play Riviera and what happened there over the weekend and the Sunday finish.

I made this comment to JB. For 15 or 16 years of my life I've been standing on the 18th green waiting to give somebody a trophy, and if we were being honest, by the time you get to Sunday afternoon late in the day, you are thinking, somebody win, we have planes to catch, we got the next -- I was standing there saying, please be a playoff, please be a playoff.

It's mostly because it's 5:00. We're on NBC. We're going to play 10 and 18 as a playoff win. Then Nelly did what she did, and I was the first person to run up and hug Jason, her caddie. You become a fan in those moments.

I just think Riviera created this glorious stage. I can't tell you how many players -- and I know a lot of players on that tour -- came up to me and told me about other TOUR players, men, shots they'd seen on different holes. I didn't realize the shot into No. 2 was this long. I didn't realize the shot up 18 was so blind. Things that we may all sort of take for granted, but young, best female athletes in the world telling us that I get a chance to do something I've seen on TV and how different some of it was versus what they experienced on just being televised.

I mean, those are glorious moments. If you don't think walking up 18 in this place with your hat blowing sideways probably -- sorry, JB -- and getting to the finish line here in 36 at Shinnecock is special, I mean --

JB rattled off the line-up of the U.S. Open. I would give the U.S. Women's Open certainly just as strong. Whether we're playing at LACC or Chicago or Merion or Oakmont or

here, these are places that the best women in the game deserve to play, and I think when we play them, it's not just good for them. It's great for -- as I said in a press conference in L.A., it's great for the millions of little girls around the world that have that moment of, that's what I want to be, because they're just bigger stages.

Riviera was a huge stage for the women's game, and we were super proud of it. Whether you watched it or didn't watch it, didn't matter. It was an amazing experience. If you believe what you saw at Riv make sense, I can only imagine what the next ten years is going to be.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Can I please -- I can't let that get away, because I have such a passion for this topic. I have a daughter, Megan. If you are watching, I love you, and I love my wife, Pam. I think there's --

MIKE WHAN: You have Megan, Pam, and --

JOHN BODENHAMER: And our son, John. Let me say it this way. I really believe this, too. I think we will not know the impact of Riviera for another decade. I've just got to believe, like I as a little boy watched Jack Nicklaus win at Baltusrol in 1980. I can tell you so many friends that I have that watched that moment, and it inspired us. Tom Watson winning at Pebble Beach in 1982. We were little boys that wanted to win the U.S. Open.

There were thousands, if not tens of thousands of little girls who watched Nelly Korda lift that trophy, and ten years from now we're going to see them playing and winning, and we're going to see more Nelly Kordas. Isn't that cool? Not just in the United States, but all around the world.

You know what, we're going to the places that the women have told us. The men aren't the only ones that tell us where they want to win their U.S. Open. The women do, too, and we're taking them there. I'm proud of that. The women deserve to win at Riviera, at Shinnecock. They just do. I am proud that the USGA has allowed us to go down that journey, and we're going to make it great.

I will say this, though, you look back to our history, a lot of history here. This is a place, I believe you cannot buy history. You can only earn it. This place has it, and so does the USGA, and I mean it this way.

From day one we have been about the game. We played our first championship in 1895, the Amateur Championship at Newport Country Club. As an afterthought the next day, afterthought with 13 players, we played the National Open, but what I'm most proud of is several weeks later we played the U.S. Women's Amateur. Day one, year one, first championships. The U.S. Women's Open is the oldest

professional women's major. Proud of that, too. You think about those four.

I believe from day one that's what the USGA does. We are about the game, men, women, professionals, amateurs, everybody. That's what we do. That's our obligation. That's why we're doing this, to inspire the game at every level.

MIKE WHAN: If you look at the last 15 years, TV ratings for the U.S. Women's Open, the biggest three: Pinehurst, number two, Pebble Beach, Riviera. No shock there. That's why he's leading us to those places over the next 20 years.

BETH MAJOR: And you're not here to listen to me, when you listen to the three of them, but when we were at Riviera for Women's Open Media Day, someone asked Maja Stark, our defending champion, if she had ever dreamed about competing for a Women's Open at a place like Riv, and she said, never. She said, I never thought that was something that was realistic for us. So she said this really changes what our dreams look like. I think for all of us, that was super powerful. Just wanted to add that.

Q. When you said in the release or the statement about a collective willingness to reconsider alternative approaches, can you talk about what some of those approaches are? Assuming they were considered in the first place, what prompted you to reconsider them now?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, at the risk of answering your question, which usually gets me in trouble, but I'll do it anyway, because I think we've got work to do if I'm being honest. We've got to look into it.

I'll give you a for example. Three years ago we were told pretty point-blank that MLRs would not be implemented that are distance-related at the PGA TOUR level. Given that, we had a crossroads. Do we keep going down that path if they're not going to be implemented? That's a paper exercise then. So we moved on from some of those.

Clearly that mindset has shifted. Don't know if that's where we'll end up. To me, to think that some of those ideas we can reconsider because we didn't stop considering them because they weren't meaningful, impactful, and maybe less disruptive overall, we stopped because we weren't sure they would actually be implemented.

So there's a good example of a change that I think gives us a willingness to reconsider some things that maybe we didn't in the past.

Was that a long answer? Sorry. That's as short as I got, buddy (laughing).

Q. For John and for Mike, this may be a cathedral, but the congregants are using it differently. If you take your triangle, I watched Ben Griffin yesterday from the back tee on 14 hit pitching wedge in. You used to play 15 by having a choice of laying it up top of the hill. Now they're all driving it down the bottom of the hill. When Ray Floyd won here in '86, his third shot on 16 was a 7-iron. That's changed a lot. For those of us who studied the distance report in 2020, there was a massive gap between the analysis and the prescription, because it was very profound and really serious study of how distance had deteriorated the shot-making flexibility of a golf course and then the recommendation was kind of tepid. I was wondering how -- when you go and look at this golf course and know how it's being played, how does that make you feel? Then for Mike, was the collective wisdom that was beginning to aggregate there, did it ever include the words competition ball?

JOHN BODENHAMER: Brad, thank you for the thoughtful question. It has impacted our thinking. Players are 6.7 yards longer. We thought about how that would impact our setup.

I said it before, we stayed wide because that's what Mr. Flynn intended, because -- I love this line -- the anxiety level as you approach the green increases. So we felt and we did not lengthen and we did not narrow. That was intentional.

We do believe -- I'll put it this way. We believe -- and I know what you are really getting to is score. It's just not the way we think anymore. It's not about even par or 5-under. We look at score, it's a metric. It's something we do consider, but the way we thought about it in not lengthening and not narrowing, let Shinnecock be what it's supposed to be. And if it's not good enough, we shouldn't come here. Those shot values are good enough.

Could we lengthen? Yeah, we could, 300-plus yards. We chose not to because we think it's good enough.

I would also say the game has evolved since it began. You look at the first U.S. Open here, 4,423 yards, the shortest in history. The game is going to continue to evolve. I think it's our job with golf course setup to go with that evolution. That's the way I think about it.

I think we need to not put a USGA cookie cutter approach on all these great venues. Let them be what they are. We'll get the narrow fairways and the long rough at

Oakmont and Winged Foot and Pebble Beach, and Shinnecock and Pinehurst and others will be what they are.

MIKE WHAN: I think to your second question, we knew when we moved away from something, we couldn't just implement at the highest levels and have to do something across the board, that we had to do something more -- I forget what term you used, but lesser in overall impact.

One of our principles from the beginning is whatever we do, we don't want to take any of the momentum away from what's happening at the recreational game. So when we knew we were doing something across the board, we did have to make that to a level of which, and we did.

If we're talking about changes that wouldn't have to impact the recreational game, yeah, we have an opportunity to think bigger, but we didn't a few years ago. That's how we got here.

I don't know if that answers your question, but that is the fact that got us there.

Q. (No microphone.)

MIKE WHAN: It does.

Q. Is this your normal level of caffeination by midday or is this exceptional?

MIKE WHAN: Does it feel like a lot? I feel pretty relaxed.

Q. No, I'm kidding. Really to follow up on Brad's question and really Doug's as well, but just more broadly, if you hear Fred Ridley talk about Augusta National or Jack Nicklaus talk about Muirfield Village, they've spent decades and decades looking at the courses and the impact on the ball. Is it possible that the whole view of this golf ball discussion is way too complicated? And to Brad's point, he used the phrase competition ball. That's really a very narrow problem. We would all love to be coming back here, Pebble Beach, Merion, these other places, but when the ball goes 360, as Brad just pointed out, the course plays totally differently. I'm just wondering, when you think in the future, maybe should you be blowing up all this hard work that you've done and think of a much simpler, more narrow solution?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, I think maybe not said well in the joint statement, but I think a simpler, more narrow solution is exactly what we're going to spend time looking at. I think the alternative to what's on the table for 2030, things that we're going to look at together as a group are simpler, more narrow solutions, yes.

Q. John, the other distance war that we don't talk as much about that you addressed with rolling back green speeds to about 10 1/2, as you well know, in 1977 the USGA did a national survey of Stimp meter readings and places that they hold U.S. Opens on were 7s and 8s.

JOHN BODENHAMER: That's right.

Q. You're speaking more broadly to the world in terms of giving advice beyond the U.S. Open. Would you argue with people to roll back green speeds? Do you think we've gone too far? What would your advice be to superintendents and greens chairs across the country?

JOHN BODENHAMER: It's an interesting question, Jerry. I guess I would say, yes, I would make that argument. But I think every venue has its own culture. It's different.

I've never seen poa annua putting greens like you see at Oakmont. They've naturally 15. They just are. It feels -- it might feel something much different somewhere else. So every place is different, but I do think that when you go to America's greatest venues, when we're so fast, you can't use some of the hole locations that maybe Bob Jones made a putt or Walter Hagen or some of those great champions. That's really what we were endeavoring to do here.

For us it's a comprehensive test. It's not what happens just on the putting greens with uber-slick greens and some of those things. We want to stay with what the architect intended. I think in some places -- yes, I would make the argument, not just at a U.S. Open, but across the country to be able to do that, dialing back the green speed is part of that.

I would say this, too, I really believe this, I don't think speed is the number one consideration for a player, an amateur player, at any level. I think smoothness is. You just want a smooth putt. Doesn't necessarily have to be the fastest, and this race to green speed is probably something that the game would benefit, pace would benefit, the experience would benefit if we curb back a little bit. I would agree with that.

Q. When is the last time the green speed was in the 10 range at a U.S. Open?

JOHN BODENHAMER: To my knowledge, let me think about that for a minute. Well, 1995, because I read the course prep memo from 1995. I read them all. I know it's crazy. I've watched all the coverage in every U.S. Open

here. It's just something I do every year.

I can tell you exactly what fairway widths were, green speeds, 1995 when Corey Pavin won. He was here at our amateur dinner Monday night. He talked about it. It was magnificent. That's the last time I can remember.

Q. Mike, was there something in the materials that were submitted that you hadn't seen before that made you stop and think, we need to take a step back and pause this?

MIKE WHAN: No.

Q. Then what was it that --

MIKE WHAN: You said, was there something in the materials? No, it was dialogue with some of the best players in the world.

Q. What was in the dialogue that made you say? Anything you hadn't heard before?

MIKE WHAN: Yeah, I think the three things I told you were fairly at least new to me in my five years, which was a shared recognition that distance continues to go at the high level, making sure the game is not too one-dimensional. That was a shared commonality, to Kevin's point. That's something we had in common.

A concern that it maybe wasn't enough. I've said many times, if you want to argue about the ODS change, don't talk to me about roll-back, don't talk to me about technology. The only thing that's a fair argument is that's not that much.

The answer is it's not that much because we were trying to make sure that we don't affect the recreational game and the success we're having there. That's fair.

I mean, there was some other comments made about did it treat different players differently? None of our testing, including the testing with the PGA TOUR and the PGA of America and the LPGA suggested that to be true, but that wasn't the issue.

Then more to the third point is how can we come together on some of the ideas? When I said, well, if we came together, what would we work on? Some of those ideas were different than the ideas we had sort of taken off the table just a few years ago. That's where the collective willingness came in.

Q. (Off microphone.)

MIKE WHAN: We're going to look at anything and everything, but we realize that we don't have five years to do that. We're going to have to do that fairly quickly.

JOHN BODENHAMER: Let me clarify, if I could just clarify to make sure you heard what I said. 10.5 was not what we intended to be here coming in here. It was 11 1/2 to 12. That was a product of the wind and to give us our best chance to play, just to be clear.

Q. For Mike, do you have any specific examples from testing that have led to the concerns that the updated ODS would not be enough, because that was mentioned in the statement.

MIKE WHAN: No, no. I mean, listen, what I can tell you about the ODS change is would we be less long in ten years than we would be without it? We would. That's -- on average, we'll be less long. As I said from the beginning, will guys hit long drives? Will we see amazing things? It's just like today, no matter where we move that test to, people can generate greater ball speeds and greater launch conditions in certain situations.

There's nothing we've seen technically or in prototype testing involvement that was different than what we envisioned. As I said, if your argument is, well, that's not a whole lot, that's a fair pushback, because the level of it was based on making sure we didn't go farther. When we were talking about across the board change, what we didn't want is to pull 99 percent of the recreational game.

BETH MAJOR: Thanks, Mike, Kevin, JB, and thanks to all of you for the coverage, for the support, for the excitement around this championship.

I want to let Kevin close out with a few thoughts, just related quick thoughts. I wanted to let him wrap up for us and send everyone on their way today.

KEVIN HAMMER: Thank you, Beth. As you heard Mike say, we're going to continue to be good stewards of this game and the land upon which we play it. We're going to continue to make investments in access initiatives for young people. We are really excited about the future of this game together.

As you heard John Bodenhamer say, this week is going to be quite a test. These players are the best in the world, and they adapt. They adapt to the conditions like no one else. It's going to be fantastic to watch them be tested.

We cannot wait to see who wins our National Open this weekend.

To reiterate, I just want you all to know we thank you for being here. There's so much great work being done by so many organizations, all of the USGA teams. This starts years in advance bringing this Father's Day weekend culminating in our nation's Open Championship.

Mike referenced it earlier, but this game at its core brings people together. If we do take a step back, you quickly realize we're all like-minded about it. We have such a passion for it, and that's what's beautiful about a room like this. We might have different opinions once in a while, but we are all passionate, and we love this game.

To all of our friends here in the media and the press, we do, and we mean this, we thank you for being here. We thank you for spreading the message. We thank you for what you do in this game. Let's go make some history this week. Thank you.

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