

# U.S. Women's Open Championship 2017

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

**Mike Davis**

**Diana Murphy**

**Shannon Rouillard**

**Eric Trump**

Media Day Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: On behalf of the United States Golf Association, we would like to welcome you to Preview Day for the 72nd U.S. Women's Open Championship. The USGA is excited to celebrate the best female golfers on July 13-16 as they compete for the game's ultimate prize here in Bedminster, New Jersey. Trump National served as a wonderful host in 2009 as we conducted the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship and the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship concurrently. Just 50 days from now, the best female golfers in the world will compete to add their name to this Women's Open trophy. It has been won by some of the most accomplished players in the women's game.

(Video shown.)

It is my pleasure to introduce the USGA executive director and CEO, Mike Davis.

MIKE DAVIS: Thanks, and welcome, everybody, to Preview Day for the 72nd playing of the U.S. Women's Open Championship. The U.S. Open is widely regarded as the ultimate test in golf. That means that what these players, the best players in the world will be facing, is a test that's going to look at their shotmaking skills – their ability to be accurate, to control the distance, to recover when they get in trouble around the greens and on the greens – but it goes beyond their shotmaking. It's about their mental and physical resolve. It's about their course management, and if you think about it, when you wrap it all up, that really does produce great champions, and you look at this event, and without being boastful, this is, ladies and gentlemen, the biggest event worldwide in women's golf, simply put, by almost every name you look at.

Look at this trophy here, at the names that are etched on it. Think about Patty Berg, Babe Zaharias, four-time champions like Betsy Rawls, like the great Mickey Wright, and we have a Mickey Wright Room just down



the road at our USGA Golf Museum. It goes beyond that. Think about three-time champion Hollis Stacy. Juli Inkster has won it twice. By the way, Juli will be here the week of the Open as part of FOX's team as an analyst. You've got the great Annika Sorenstam, who won three of these in arguably, if not the greatest, certainly one of the greatest careers of all time. Karrie Webb, Se Ri Pak.

But also joining us today we've got a couple champs that also have their names on it. Cristie Kerr is here. Cristie, it seems like yesterday at Pine Needles in '07. We obviously have our reigning champion, Brittany, who has just been a wonderful champion for us, so it's great, you're going to hear from them.

And then in addition we have world No. 1, Lydia Ko, who does not yet have her name on this, but I wouldn't bet against it. Lydia was also world No. 1 as an amateur and won the Mark H. McCormack Medal. In addition, the oldest women's championship in the United States is the U.S. Women's Amateur, starting in 1895, and Lydia has her name etched on that particular trophy.

So when you look at this ultimate test, one of the things that makes it this way is to play at some of this country's greatest venues, and certainly the Old Course here at Trump Bedminster fits that mold. It will absolutely test these 156 players in every aspect, and you know it's going to provide us a great champion.

In this club's relatively young history, it's already made some history. In 2009, which frankly, ladies and gentlemen, is a big part of the reason we're here this July, because we had a joint junior championship in '09, so the U.S. Junior Amateur and the U.S. Girls Junior, and in the history of the United States Golf Association, we have done this less than a handful of times where we've had both the men's and women's championships at the same place, and when you look back at that, LPGA player Amy Anderson won on the girls' side, and Jordan Spieth won on the boys' side.

This club did a fantastic job hosting those championships. The members, the community were engaging. The Trump organization was outstanding, and these golf courses – and I say the courses, plural, because we happen to be playing on the Old Course

here for the Women's Open, but I can tell you that we could be playing on the New Course just as easily. That's the quality of this facility, and I think – I was thinking about this this morning, when you go around the United States, there are only a handful of places, the Winged Foots, the Baltusrols, the Saucon Valleys of the world, that truly have more than one great golf course on it, and Trump National Golf Club here in Bedminster certainly is one of those that just has quality golf.

To close it off, let me offer a heartfelt thanks to the Trump organization. Don, thank you. Eric, I know we're going to hear from you. Folks, they have been wonderful partners in this, truly wonderful, and the staff is as good as any you'll find, so we're excited about what's coming in July. And those of you in the media, thank you for being here because it really does mean a lot. You tell the story about these great players who are playing for this trophy and the gold champion's medal and really chasing their dreams, so with that, let me turn it over to Shannon Rouillard. She is our USGA Women's Open Championship director, and really the person who sets the golf course up and handles the conduct inside the ropes. Shannon?

SHANNON ROUILLARD: Thank you, Mike. Good morning, everyone. The USGA is looking forward to contesting the 72nd U.S. Women's Open Championship at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster in July. It's truly been a pleasure to work with the entire staff here at Trump, but especially David Schutzenhofer, general manager; director of grounds, Rob Wagner; and Mickie Gallagher III, director of golf, who have welcomed my many visits to the club. Rob and his team have worked tirelessly on the golf course preparations and will be well-positioned for a successful championship.

Brittany, Cristie, and Lydia, we are truly honored to have all three of you here with us today, three of the best players in the game. Brittany, we look forward to watching you defend your title in a couple months.

The U.S. Women's Open is certainly the most democratic championship in all of women's golf. This championship inspires the best female golfers, amateur and professionals, to continue to chase the dream of becoming a USGA champion.

One's ability is the only determining factor for participating in the championship, which means each player's journey, the 156 who will be here on-site in July, will likely be very different, which speaks to the openness of this championship.

So what did the numbers turn out to be? Last Wednesday we closed entries with 1,709 players filing

entries for the championship, coming from 47 states and 51 countries. Sectional qualifying started this past Monday, in Japan, Pennsylvania, and Arizona, and today qualifying is taking place in Colorado, and we can't wait to see what stories may unfold.

I need to give a special thanks to Kevin Purcell, who I believe is in the room, the executive director of the New Jersey State Golf Association and his talented staff for conducting sectional qualifying in New Jersey this year. Suffice it to say we could not conduct any of our championships without the support and staff and volunteers of our state and regional golf associations and associations from around the world.

The global and open nature of this championship not only enhances our field but empowers women worldwide to compete at the highest level, yet inspires future generation of women golfers.

The names etched into the U.S. Women's Open trophy confirm both its significance and its greatness. The Women's Open is considered, as Mike mentioned, golf's ultimate test. It gives players the opportunity to demonstrate all aspects of their game, shotmaking, mental and physical resolve, and strategic course management. It's on display from the first tee on Thursday to the final putt on Sunday, 72 holes and four long days.

There's no grander stage in golf, and in stating that, the championship is annually conducted on what we look to as some of the greatest venues in the game. The players who throughout the championship's history have raised the coveted Women's Open trophy in celebration consistently demonstrated exceptional shotmaking throughout their bag, made smart, thoughtful decisions in managing their game, and had the physical resolve to endure, which inevitably goes along with championship golf for 72 holes. Brittany did this best last year, and Cristie did it best in 2007.

The preparation and the presentation of the game's iconic venues has through the years consistently identified women's golf's greatest, many of whom are regarded as the game's most complete champions, players like Zaharias, Wright, Carner, Inkster and Sorenstam. Each has exemplified shotmaking at the highest level, made sound decisions in managing their games across a host of venues with varying design philosophies, course features, turf and weather conditions, and has shown the mental toughness and physical stamina to earn and deserve their title.

We intend this to be the ultimate test of golf, not necessarily the hardest test of golf, a total examination of not only a player's playing ability but their mental stability, as well. It is our intention to get every club in

their bag dirty.

If Mother Nature cooperates, we should be able to achieve firm and fast conditions, requiring players to contemplate what will happen when the ball gets on the ground. When the golf course is firm, it places an increased value on shotmaking and course management. We constantly evaluate each hole on its own merits without regard to the 18-hole yardage, asking ourselves, is each hole a fair test of golf.

We, of course, will use alternate teeing grounds based on weather, firmness, and strategic setup decisions, and many holes will provide several setup options.

Trump National Golf Club Bedminster first opened in 2004 and was designed by Tom Fazio. The course will play to a par 72 and just over 6,700 yards for the championship. Tom Fazio is known for designing courses that reflect their natural topography. The Old Course is no different. As Fazio incorporated the natural rolling hills of what used to be farmland in and around a bunch of lakes and orchards and trees, a student of Fazio designs will discover that he believed in giving players options. In other words, the player will be presented with a variety of ways to attack the flag while also having a number of ways to recover, whether that's pitching, putting, or hitting a bump-and-run when a ball goes astray.

It's unlikely that we'll play the golf course at its full yardage given the combination of available tees and hole locations.

As for rough and green speeds, we are targeting green speeds at 12 to 12 and a half on the USGA Stimpmeter, and given the bluegrass rough, we will be utilizing graduated height of cut, intermediate at 1¼ inches, primary rough at 2½ to 3 inches, secondary rough at 4 to 6 inches, but keep in mind these heights are just starting points, and we will adjust accordingly when we approach the championship. It's a lot easier to cut back the rough than it is to get it to grow.

So how does the Old Course fulfill the ultimate test? Here's a few points to keep in mind. The fairways on the Old Course are fairly generous; however, a hole location may dictate a more strategic play from a particular side of the fairway. The natural rolling hills of this property lend to many uneven lies that will impact shot selection into relatively large, undulating greens, and to that point, more than half the greens here on the Old Course are over 40 yards deep, therefore a premium will be placed on distance control and approach shots in order to have a realistic birdie opportunity. And even though all the par 5s may stretch out over 500 yards, birdies will be attainable.

So what about the fans? Where will there be good places for the fans to watch some golf? There are a few loops of holes where the fan doesn't need to travel too far to see a lot of great shots, holes 5, 6 and 7, holes 5, 12 and 13, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention the 11th green. It is elevated like a bunch of other greens here on the Old Course, but it is unique in that it is surrounded by all closely-mown areas. It's a shallow green, and I'm sure it will provide a lot of excitement.

I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention the excellent loop of finishing holes, 16, 17, 18, right out here to my left. It should provide many thrilling outcomes based on our setup options. We look forward to seeing all of you in July, and it is now my pleasure to introduce Eric Trump, executive vice president of the Trump organization.

ERIC TRUMP: Thank you so much, Shannon. Mike and Diane, thank you so much for everything. Thank you for your friendship, your love, your warmth over the years. We have had such an unbelievable relationship with the USGA, and it's not just a partnership, it's not just another business relationship, it's truly a friendship, and you are the best of what golf has. You are all amazing people, and we could not be more thrilled as an organization to have all of you here. Welcome.

In terms of the best of what people have, I'm looking down at three amazing champions, many of whom we have known so well, and I can tell you over the years, I've played a lot of golf with a lot of people on the circuit, and the athletes that are out there are simply second to none. I played with Lexi a few weeks ago and just the athleticism is incredible, and Cristie and Brittany and Lydia, you are amazing. In fact, if you saw the putt that Lydia made outside on Jesse Watters' show about two seconds ago from about 50 feet away and she sank it, they are truly unbelievable athletes, and we welcome them. It is the best of golf, and we are truly, truly honored to have you here.

Speaking about the best of golf, look at these beautiful kids over here. I mean, this is what it's all about. I mean, this is the future of the country, this is the future of our great game. This is what it's all about. This is the next generation, and that is the most important thing in the world.

Guys, will you stand up for everybody? (Applause.)

I can tell you the next champion, one of you will have your name on that incredible trophy one of these days, and they're beautiful and adorable, and keep it going. But again, this is the next generation and something we care about.

As to Trump, I couldn't be more proud of our teams, and as I sit here and look at Mickie and David and Rob

and Larry and obviously my partner Don and Amanda and everybody else on our team, Ann and Brittany, you guys do such an incredible job each and every day. The standard of the course is second to none. I just flew in a couple minutes ago, and I flew over the course. There is nothing more immaculate, there is nothing more perfect. It's truly an unbelievable canvas out there. That's what we expect. I think I told Mike not too long ago, but I told him, Mike, I promise you this will be the best tournament you've ever had. We take perfection incredibly seriously, and we take this tournament incredibly seriously. We are going to deliver something that's amazing for you, and I know you're going to deliver something that's amazing for us. They're the real stars, so they're going to deliver for all of us. But we couldn't be more proud.

But again, on behalf of myself, Don, the entire family, welcome. Welcome to Trump National. We could not be more proud to have this tournament. It's something that we've been longing for for many years, and it's here, and we've been huge advocates of women's golf for a very long time, really starting in Florida with the ADT Championship that we hosted for many years, and we'll do many others, but we can't wait to host each and all of you.

Thank you guys very much for being here. Really look forward to a fun couple days in 50 days. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: It's my pleasure to introduce the USGA president, Diana Murphy.

DIANA MURPHY: Good morning. Thank you, Eric, for those kind words. My goodness, the support that we have had from the Trump organization and the entire team, and Don, we certainly welcome you here today, has been extremely important for us to be very successful with this championship. It is a true partnership. The course is in wonderful condition as you've heard, and we couldn't be more excited to get to the championship itself.

We're also absolutely thrilled to have Brittany, Cristie and Lydia with us. You are incredible athletes, but equally as important, you're very important role models for not just our juniors who are here today but for all women golfers, and golfers in general. You're inspiring that next generation of golfers, so thank you for your leadership and doing that. You do it absolutely beautifully.

The U.S. Women's Open was first staged in 1946 and is the oldest championship for both professional and amateur women by more than 30 years. That legacy of providing opportunities for women to compete at the highest level of the game continues through our six championships for girls and women, and soon to be

seven, with our U.S. Senior Women's Open Championship next year at Chicago Golf Club.

We also conducted, as you heard earlier, the women's first championship in this country, the U.S. Women's Amateur, in 1895, the same year as our U.S. Open and our U.S. Amateur. Through this time, we've witnessed some incredible moments made by some very talented and incredible athletes who are celebrated in our USGA Museum not very far away.

Their impact is perhaps most apparent in many of the programs that we have now that support the opportunities for girls and women to enjoy the game and to compete at the highest level of our sport. So to that end, I'm really proud to announce a few activities for juniors during our championship week. Throughout championship week, Monday through Sunday, we welcome all children 17 years or younger with an adult or with a parent free of charge.

Monday through Wednesday we'll also welcome 24 junior participants in the first USGA STEM Academy, learning science through golf. This three-day event will uniquely connect children with the USGA golf experts on science, technology, engineering and math, from equipment testing to agronomy, turf grass research to course setup. These 24 participants from First Tee chapters all across the country, including the Raritan Valley chapter here in New Jersey, have earned their way to this event based on their interest in STEM education and of course golf.

Their activities will start at our Test Center at the USGA campus, before continuing to Rutgers University and then here at the championship.

A second major junior opportunity that will start on Monday for championship week will be 40 girls from the LPGA-USGA Girls Golf chapters in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. They will have a way to participate in a really special share-my-passion, all-day event with three-time U.S. Women's Open champion Annika Sorenstam, reinforcing the key skills of character traits for young golfers, this will be an exceptional once in a lifetime opportunity for these young girls who will be chosen actually by Annika herself during a written essay of why they think they should be chosen to share this day with Annika. So more to come on that, but boy, that's going to be a wonderful opportunity for them.

On Wednesday of championship week, we'll also offer a variety of experiences for all the juniors attending the Open, including autograph and photo opportunities with players, and of course with this beautiful U.S. Women's Open trophy.

Registration for junior day actually begins today at

USGA.com/USwomensopen.com, and we encourage everyone to sign up to participate.

We'll also have on Wednesday representatives from the LPGA-USGA Girls Golf local chapter, who will actually be our hole ambassadors. Our players are really excited, on their Wednesday of practice round when they come to the tee, they'll be seeing some of our LPGA-USGA Girls Golf participants, and then they'll also be seeing them inside the ropes at the green, and it's just such a wonderful experience for those young ladies to see firsthand our competitors compete during their practice round.

All of these activities really underscore the USGA's mission, to welcome the next generation of golfers, provide opportunities to learn and compete, and to build memories which will keep them in the game for a lifetime. Our championships and our champions are very important to us, and we really believe that not just everything that's going on in the week with the championship but all year long, we believe that our champions and our championship season hopefully will inspire the next generation of golfers.

I'd also like to give, again, a very special thank you to the community in general for its support of this championship, certainly the LPGA, the club, and most importantly, our championship director, Matt Sawicki, who's been living and breathing this championship now for a year, and is, I know, more anxious than anybody, let's get started in 50 days.

We look forward to watching who will advance in the next few weeks through qualifying to create the final field, knowing that the best stories of women and their quest to play in the U.S. Women's Open does inspire all of us, and we appreciate all of you for telling those wonderful stories. So with that, I'll turn it back over to Beth. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Diana, and thank you to all of our speakers here with us today. We really appreciate your comments. Again, we appreciate all of you being here.

Before we head outside, I see that Mother Nature is blessing us with some sunshine just as we're due to go outside, which is perfect. But before we do, we do have a few minutes for questions, so I would like to ask everyone if you have a question, please raise your hand.

**Q. This question is for Mr. Trump. Eric, how fulfilling is this with these major championships, of course this one coming up? How fulfilling is it for you? I know it's a passion that you've talked about in the past, but how fulfilling is it as we look ahead**

**here?**

ERIC TRUMP: Yeah, I think we had one goal as a company. My father was in the company with Don, with Ivanka, we had one goal, and that was to develop the best portfolio of courses anywhere in the world, and we started with a great course in LA and one in West Palm, Trump International. You probably know that we came to Bedminster, and over the years we've really developed an unbelievable portfolio. We bought Turnberry last year; we're building courses in Indonesia; we're building courses all over the Middle East and so many other places, but we've developed a portfolio that's really special.

But aside from the physical assets, we've also kind of developed unbelievable teams. If I look down my front row right here, these men and women, they're not just employees, they're family members of ours. They really -- we're that close, so I think when you put those two aspects together, this becomes the ultimate validation. It becomes validation that not only are the assets spectacular and that they're the absolute kind of tip of the spear and they're the best, but also that we have the real kind of substance behind something that's just a beautiful canvas, and listen, the USGA is truly one of the great organizations anywhere in the world, and you don't choose what tournaments you want, they choose what tournaments you get, and so I think this is very validating, and I think it's very special. I'm humbled, and I can tell you as I speak for the entire team at the Trump organization, we are incredibly honored.

**Q. I'm curious given Donald Trump's comments on the Access Hollywood tape this last fall if you're at all concerned that the message that having the championship here sends to young women or girls who want to become golf fans or golfers?**

MIKE DAVIS: I certainly appreciate the nature of the question, but let me make it very clear that we came here, this was all about coming to a great golf course to play the greatest championship in women's golf. You know, the USGA since its founding in 1894 has never been involved with politics. Our focus is solely on the game of golf, and we appreciate that there's some out there that want to make this a political event, but we're not. This is a golf event for the United States Golf Association. We're real excited about this July.

**Q. What about those comments (indiscernible)?**

MIKE DAVIS: Well, as I said, we're a golf organization. We're simply not going to cross that line into politics. We can appreciate that some people do, and that's what's great about this country, that everybody has their own political views, but we are a golf association, and we're sticking to golf.

**Q. Why is it important for the USGA to let juniors**

**come to the tournament for free?**

DIANA MURPHY: Let me take that. For all of our championships, we feel passionately that our juniors, are, in fact, the future of golf, so we want you to come and have a great time, observe what's going on, how the players practice, how they interact with each other, the mutual respect that they have for each other before they hit that first ball and then become fiercely competitive. So it should be a fun day for all juniors, and we expect to see you here all week.

**Q. This is for either Mike or Shannon. Certainly at Oakmont and other men's Open venues you've had drivable par 4s and reachable par 5s. I think No. 12 is maybe the shortest of the par 4s. Could we see a drivable par 4 for the ladies and maybe No. 18 as reachable in two on the final day?**

SHANNON ROUILLARD: Sure, thanks for the question. You know, in terms of a drivable par 4, there just wasn't a hole out there that fit as a possible drivable par 4. However, on the flip side, the 18th hole is a par 5. There may be the possibility that we may push that tee up to tempt the players at a specific hole location coming down the stretch.

**Q. Mr. Trump, who is the best golfer in your family?**

ERIC TRUMP: This is going to be an interesting answer here. It's not Don. My father is an unbelievable golfer. He loves the game. I think everybody in this room knows that. This really came out of a labor of love from him, and I think it's why we are where we are today.

I know Mickie can tell you -- Mickie, stand up. Mickie has been so amazing. He's -- I think Mickie can tell you how good and consistent of a golfer he is, and once he gets on that green, he's dangerous. I mean, he is really -- he's a great putter. Mike can attest to that and a lot of other people in this room can attest to that, but he's a phenomenal golfer, and beyond that he loves the game, and I love the game. I really love the game. But I'll give him the credit. I'll give him the credit today, all right?

**Q. Mike, not to belabor the political aspect, but in this day and age, there are demonstrations, there are protests; do you have any contingency plans if there is such a thing that happens here?**

MIKE DAVIS: Yeah, you know, we would actually for any championship we're running, whether it's the U.S. Open that's going to happen in Wisconsin this year at Erin Hills, we go through all types of security measures, and I'm certainly not going to get into specifics today about that, but listen, if we have protestors, that's their right in this country to protest. What we're focused on is making sure that those 156 players who are here can play on a golf course and

really in an uninterrupted way. So we'll focus on making sure that the players can play on a fair and equitable basis, but also the golf fans that come have a safe and enjoyable experience, too. Beyond that, really with the protestors, that goes beyond a golf association. That really is the local authorities that would deal with that. But thanks for the question.

**Q. I'm not sure exactly who would answer this, but in general, how are you planning to get people in and out of here with access being kind of narrow here?**

MIKE DAVIS: Well, the person who should answer this is Matt Sawicki in the first row, so Matt, it's all yours.

MATT SAWICKI: We're very excited about this property. We think it sets up extremely well for fans. As Shannon mentioned the loop at the end, 16, 17, 18 with the grandstands, but we've also worked with our public safety team as Mike mentioned before. We'll use an adjacent property for parking. All of those details are available on our website. We'd ask fans to use Exit 26 off Interstate 78, where they'll be directed by law enforcement into our parking area.

**Q. My question is for Mike Davis. If you had 25 girls of this age lined up and 25 boys lined up, who would win?**

MIKE DAVIS: Next question, please. (Laughter.)

Listen, let me make a comment on the juniors here. This is what -- I mean, this is one of the things all of us who love this game should love seeing this. This is our next generation of golfers. We are seeing growth numbers in junior golfers really at an all-time high, and specifically girl's golfers. If you look over really the past half century when we've got data on junior golfers, it used to be for every junior golfer it was one out of five, one out of six were females, now it's one out of three, and that is a great thing. So girls, it's great to have you here today. You're going to see three great champions shortly, and we'll look forward to having you the week of.

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to thank everyone again for being here, Mike, Shannon, Eric, Diana, Lydia, Brittany and Cristie, thanks so much for being a part of this special day.