

Round 4 – June 18, 2017 U.S. Open Course Setup Notes from Mike Davis and Jeff Hall

		Weather	<p><i>Here is the 5 a.m. forecast from Thor Guard Chief Meteorologist Jake Swick:</i></p> <p><i>Good morning everyone and Happy Father's Day!</i></p> <p><i>We lucked out once again last night as on-and-off showers overnight only dropped .01" of rain at Erin Hills with the heavier activity 20+ miles to our north and south. Still have a few nearby showers and radar at this moment, hence the 20% chance of a shower before 7 AM. Fortunately nothing is aiming for us right now and it appears as though it'll stay that way. Mostly cloudy skies at dawn will clear out briefly and give way to mostly sunny skies around breakfast, then we'll see the clouds mix back in periodically by mid to late morning and continue through this afternoon. Temps in the mid 60s right now will struggle to top out in the mid 70s this afternoon as dewpoints drop from the lower 60s toward the middle 50s. West winds gusted to 23 mph about an hour ago when the front pushed through, but have dropped back some temporarily. Expect winds to be sustained 10 mph and gusting as high as 20 mph again as we head through the 7 AM hour. Then by 10 AM through 4 PM we'll see west/northwest winds at 15 mph with gusts around 25 mph. There is a 20% chance of a measurable shower this afternoon after 1 PM and before 7 PM, but a passing sprinkle is more likely what we would see if anything (40% chance). There may even be 1 or 2 rumbles with the showers that are more likely to develop across the northern half of the state, but we should be pretty far away from that action (just a brief 20% chance of thunder around 4 PM or so).</i></p> <p><i>Tonight will feature clearing skies and lows in the 50s. Monday will become windy, but not quite as windy as today more in the 10-20 mph or 12-24 mph midday. There is also a slightly better chance for a shower in the afternoon on Monday (40%) as southeast WI is a little closer to the bullseye of instability showers.</i></p>
		Setup Specifics	<p>We were fortunate to not receive any measurable rainfall last night, but the golf course remains relatively soft and receptive. With today being forecasted as the windiest day of the championship (winds out of the west and west-northwest), we prepared the putting greens to be a bit slower than yesterday, and on average, Stimpmeter readings are 6" slower in the high 12's immediately after the preparation. We anticipate speeds settling out in the mid to upper 12's by the afternoon.</p>
Hole	Par	Yardage	
1	5	605	<p>Play will be from the 608 tee. Today's predominantly west/northwest breeze will be slightly against and from the right on the tee shot. The second shot will primarily be played with a right-to-left crosswind. Today's middle-right hole location (16-3R) is behind a large shoulder that runs from the closely mown area short and right of this green and extends into the putting surface. Most putts will come from left and beyond the hole leaving an uphill birdie (maybe eagle) opportunity. Any ball that misses the green short or hole-high right will be faced with a challenging recovery.</p>
2	4	329	<p>The second hole will play back into today's west/northwest breeze, making the hole play a bit longer. Tees are located on the most forward 316 tee, resulting in an approximate carry of 240 yards to carry the fairway bunker complex and drive it up around, or maybe onto the putting green. Today's hole location (26-4R) is back right and the green runs away beyond this hole location. Recovery from beyond or right of this hole location will present a challenge, although the softer conditions will assist the player in his execution.</p>

3	4	484	This very solid par 4 will play back into the west/northwest wind, likely making the hole play its longest for the week. Due to the weather forecast calling for the breeziest day of the championship, we moved the tee markers to the penultimate (476-yard) tee. The slope of the fairway results in tee shots funneling to the left however, softer conditions have minimized that feature. Today's back-center hole location (19-16center) is on the upper shelf. Putts from nearly every direction will be influenced by either the ridge that runs through the middle of the green or the pronounced shoulder that flows into the back center of this green. This hole has played as the most difficult for the first three days.
4	4	399	This relatively short par 4 has held its own through the first two rounds, playing as the third-most difficult hole. The drive zone is one of the tighter ones here at Erin Hills and the shorter (398) tee could bring the large, central fairway bunker into play. Today's west/northwest breeze will be against and from the left. Today's middle-left hole location (14-13L) looks fairly innocent, but it is well protected by the center greenside bunker and there is subtle movement in almost every putt around this hole.
5	4	500	The par-4 fifth hole will play down-breeze today. Tee shots must finish in the left half of the fairway in order to have the best view of the flagstick. Balls in the right portion of the fairway will potentially leave players with a blind second shot. Today's hole location (10-7R) is very accessible but putts from beyond this hole location can get quite fast.
6	3	199	We will play the sixth hole today from the 208 tee to a front-center hole location (12-13 center) that is just beyond the false front. This false front runs on a diagonal so a tee shot that is right of the hole has a longer carry to clear the false front. The deepest green on the golf course is surrounded by an expansive closely mown area which should offer players choices in recovery shots should they miss the green.
7	5	632	This hole will play back into the west/northwest breeze. The tees are again located on the back, 619 tee, likely making it a three-shot par 5 for everyone. The fairway is one of the narrower on the course from drive zone all the way through to the putting green. It is also one of the more strategically bunkered holes on the course. Today's back hole location (34-8L) will be heavily influenced by the ridge that runs short and left of the hole. This ridge can be used to feed balls down to the hole, but a ball that finishes on top and left of the hole will yield a very challenging putt.
8	4	486	One of only a few doglegs on the golf course, the tee shot at hole 8 will play primarily with a left-to-right, helping breeze. The second shot will be more of a left-to-right crosswind. Today's front left hole location (9-12L) is well protected by the front left greenside bunker. However, a pronounced slope at the back of this putting green can be used as a backstop which will feed balls to this hole.
9	3	172	We will be using the back left tee today with a back-right hole location (34-4R). The hole will play with a right-to-left, slightly helping crosswind. The green slopes from back to front and feeds to this back-right hole location, but a tee shot that wanders a bit right may funnel off the green as a result of the low area in the middle right of the putting green. Precise shot-making will be required to secure a good birdie chance. Balls that finish in the back left bunker will leave a very challenging recovery.
10	4	492	The west/northwest breeze will be a left-to-right cross breeze and slightly against the players. We are using the 504 tee today as a result of the wind forecast and the challenging front right (5-5R) hole location. This fairway is

			the widest at Erin Hills. Putts from beyond or right of this hole will be relatively fast. The sloping nature of the closely mown area right and behind this hole will feed balls onto the putting green.
11	4	452	The blind tee shot at the 11th hole will be played with a slightly hurting, right-to-left cross breeze. The second shot will feature more of a right-to-left crosswind. Today's front-left hole location (6-6L) should be played from beyond and right of the hole for the best chances at birdies. Any shot that misses the green left will result in a challenging recovery.
12	4	433	With the wind forecast for the final round, we cautiously have placed the tee markers on the penultimate (434 yard) tee today. Today's front-left hole location (9-5L) is accessible, but putts from beyond this hole will be quite fast. Players who position their ball short and right of this hole will have the best opportunity to convert a birdie. This is one hole where we could see greenside recovery shots from the mown rough and maybe even the fescue.
13	3	216	The west/northwest breeze will primarily be from left to right. Today's hole location (21-9L) is in the player-friendly portion of the center trough of the green.
14	5	588	The tees are located on the 594 tee, which is the tee farthest to the golfer's right. The west/northwest breeze will be a slightly hurting, right-to-left breeze. Those who play the hole as a three-shotter will be faced with one of the more challenging layup shots on all the par-5s here at Erin Hills. The layup area offers one of the more narrow fairways and precision with distance is critical in order to have a better view of the flagstick on the third shot. Today's hole location (12-7L) is on the upper, left portion of the putting green. The 14th hole has played as the most difficult of the four par 5s in the first three rounds.
15	4	356	Tee markers are placed on the shortest of the upper tees at the 346 tee today and are paired up with a back-right hole location (25-4R). This combination will yield a demanding wedge shot to a narrow portion of this small green. The best angle to this hole will be from the left side of the fairway. We may see some players challenge the left cross bunker to achieve that angle of play. This could be a birdie opportunity late in the final round, but only if all shots are executed properly.
16	3	184	We are using the back right tee here today with a front-left hole location (9-5L). This hole is well guarded by the sloping closely mown area in front of the green as well as the left greenside bunker complex. A precise iron shot will be required to have a good birdie chance. If a ball comes to rest on the upper tier of this green, the player will have a very challenging putt to the lower portion of the green where the hole is located.
17	4	513	The 17th hole played as the second-most difficult par 4 through three rounds. The hole will play with today's breeze. Today's hole location (12-4L) is on the front left of the green, making the proper positioning of the tee shot important in order to have a good view of the hole.
18	5	681	The closing hole will play downwind but with a left-to-right bias. It has been the easiest hole through 54 holes. Today tees are located on the back tee (675 yards). Today's hole location (21-9R) is very accessible, even for players who try to get to the green with their second shot. However, if the distance control is not precise, the very large and steep closely mown area behind this putting green awaits!

Front 9 – 3,806

Back 9 – 3,915

Total - 7,721