

2015 US Open Championship

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Press Conference

Architecture Forum

An Interview With:

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.

MIKE DAVIS

SHANE O'DONOGHUE

FIONA DOLAN: Welcome. Welcome to Chambers Bay, the site of the 2015 U.S. Open, and also to our featured event today, An Exploration Inside Chambers Bay, with Mr. Robert Trent Jones, Jr., the architect; and also Mr. Mike Davis, our USGA executive director. I'm Fiona Dolan, and I'm the senior director of the membership program. First and foremost, I'd like to say thank you for being a USGA member in this our 40th anniversary year. We have a true insider event for you today. And what we'd like to do just to kind of do a little housekeeping item is that we're going to have some questions that were submitted from our USGA members across the country, and then we're going to open it up to our member audience. We also have some members of the media today, as well, joining us. I'd like to introduce our moderator, I want to make sure I pronounce this correctly, Mr. Shane O'Donoghue. How did I do?

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Perfect.

FIONA DOLAN: Fiona Dolan, have to make sure we pronounce that are correctly.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Very important.

FIONA DOLAN: You may recognize him from his monthly CNN show Living Golf, but more importantly he is a new member of the USGA's Fox broadcasting team. Welcome, Shane, and let's get started.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Thank you very much, Fiona. Good afternoon, welcome. This is a privilege, and it's just wonderful to be here in Chambers Bay. It's fantastic to be in Tacoma, to be in the Pacific Northwest for the first time ever. To be part of the FOX team is very special. We are super excited about what we're going to be putting out on the television from Thursday through Sunday, and before that with our preview programs. It's been a very, very, very exciting time for us. It's been a very interesting voyage since



the announcement was made in August of 2013. We're really, really looking forward to showcasing what is an amazing event, a historic event the United States Open Championship and to have it here on Chambers Bay, which is something that I've certainly become familiar with through my love of golf and links golf in Ireland. And to have the course, a links-like course like we have here at Chambers Bay, it's going to provide such an interesting examination. And it's a fantastic opportunity now to get the insights from, first of all, the architect, as Fiona mentioned, Robert Trent Jones, Jr., is part of a wonderful dynasty, and obviously was a key member of the team that came upon this land after the inspiration that was John Ladenburg back in the early part of the noughties, as they say, in 2003 when he figured that they needed to do something special here. And he called upon someone who could do something with that vision, and that's Robert Trent Jones, Jr. And obviously you need to get the backing and the support of the USGA. And I think one of the most amazing things that I gleaned from my interviews was that John Ladenburg, he started at the end. He said what do we want? We want something huge. We want the biggest thing to come to this particular part of the country, and we want to shine a light on our region, and we want something that will make people think and wonder and celebrate for many years to come. And with the images that Fox will be putting forward, I think it's going to be incredibly special. But the central figures were, of course, the USGA. So they talked to the USGA. And I think the story of Chambers Bay is a fascinating one. It's tremendous to have Mike Davis here, the executive director, who will, of course, be putting forward this course setup; and the architect, Robert Trent Jones, Jr. It's a unique occasion. It's fantastic to be able to celebrate it with so many people that are invested in the United States Golf Association through your membership. So this is for you. We want to begin with Robert Trent Jones, Jr., and what is it that you saw based on what John Ladenburg told you when you came here first, Robert?

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Well, Shane, thank you so much. Isn't it wonderful to listen to an Irish lilt (applause)? And this course has a bit of Ireland into it, which I'll get back to in a minute. But what John Ladenburg did was extraordinarily courageous. He was elected the county executive. Obviously he had to watch out for the firemen, the police, the public safety,

as well as the well-being of the citizens. And he came upon this piece of ground that was a mine for 100 years, the stone that came out to build the roads of Washington State. And he said it's a big mess. It was dusty and the people of University Place weren't happy. Maybe the kids were, because they could skateboard down it, but other than that, nobody was happy with the dust that was coming out. He said, I could sell this to a housing developer or I can create a regional park for the public. And you have to remember, it wasn't just about the golf course. And that we'll come back to in why he took the high road on the golf course. He wanted a park for the people, a walking park for the people who had their dogs and strollers, a children's park which we have at the north end, as well as away across the railroad tracks to the beach, and where we are right in this area right now, which is a park for concerts and so on, so it was a regional park. But then he said put out what they call an RFP, request for proposals, and 55 golf architectural firms, including ours, responded. And then he began to say we can have an ordinary municipal course, but we really want to have something great. We said we'll give you what you want because we're professionals, but we can tell you, you have the opportunity to do something unique in our career, and would you be willing to take it to the highest level of our game. And what that means is we had the natural wonder of sand. That's what I saw: sand, sand, sand. The miners had left us, the tailings are set. As anybody knows, we architects and golfers kill for sand. It's the links is on the sand. Anytime we can work the sand, you can craft the many, many fine points of the game, the ground game as well as the aerial game. And it will drain and grow great turf upon which to play. And that's what we saw.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: And when you saw it, did you immediately think something linky, as in was it immediately apparent that you could actually create something unique?

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Bruce Charles, my partner, and I looked at Google Earth and said where are we? We're in a maritime climate. A maritime climate is as Irish as they come, which allowed the indigenous grass to be fescue and to grow naturally. This is self-seeding rough. We have no irrigation out there. The rough took four or five years to establish and those sand dunes, which were man-made, but it self seeds itself. So nature was our friend and we knew we could do it. Yes, I did want a links. We had tried once before with Tom Watson and Sandy Tatum, great USGA president and friend of ours, at Spanish Bay, and we put fescue grasses there, but that's more of a Mediterranean climate and it didn't last. And it's now a soft links, we call it, meaning it's poa annua and rye grass. So the answer to your question is I knew we could do it, and we were able to do it because the climate is

correct.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: I just want to continue the point, because everything that I've read and obviously we were so excited with the announcement of Chambers Bay and the fact that we would be the first TV organization to actually do this U.S. Open at Chambers Bay and the irony, of course, is looking onto Fox Island, I thought it was poetic, I thought, myself. But here we are, and the more research you do, the name Ladenburg keeps popping up. And what's important to remember is that he was this figure. And there was a guy in Ireland, actually, man by the name of Padraic O'Higgins, which in English is Patrick Higgins, it's a Gaelic name -- he was awarded the vice-presidency of the European Tour, an honorary title, for what he did for Irish golf. And one of the central things that he did was he brought the Ryder Cup to Ireland. And one of his most famous quotes is -- he told me this personally a couple of weeks ago, you know, I got the big job in the Irish government as a civil servant, I became the government secretary to the prime minister. And I think it was in 1986. And he said, then I had power. And there was a pause. And he said, what use is power if you don't abuse it (laughter)? And I thought, well, that's a very Irish way of saying it. But then I met John Ladenburg yesterday for the first time. And I told him, I said you remind me of this character, you're a very clean cut American figure, but you have given back to your society through your involvement in local government. But you had power.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: And he used it.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: And he used it. And divided opinion, but he made something happen. And it's like the field of dreams, like Kevin Costner, if they build it, they will come. They are going to come and we're going to show the pictures.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: I think, Shane, they're here.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: They are here. And it's going to be breathtaking to see this whole thing unfold on television. And it is a privilege, and I don't mean to overplay that. But what kind of a strong guy was he to guide this and push this and then corral all of you influential people? Before we start talking to the main man at the USGA, our leader and executive director, Mike Davis, but what did you see in this Ladenburg character?

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: I do remember when we were interviewed, Bruce Charles carried the interview mostly, we were a little cheeky, which I'll come back to. But Ladenburg is a poker player, he gave no hint as to whether we had done well or not.

We got no reaction. But I think when we handed them the bag tag that said Chambers Creek, which was its working name at that time, U.S. Open 2030, I think it was a little cheeky, but it got his attention. Now we were a little cheeky by then too.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: But you've got to think big, don't you? You have to dream the big dream.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: And I want to say something, too, that Ladenburg was the leader. He pushed in all his political chips. This was not an inexpensive thing to do, it was above \$20 million to build the golf course. We moved 1,500,000 cubic yards of sand. One thing a lot of people don't know, but those of you who follow the USGA Greens section, they have a greens mix that these architect architects use, if you don't mind me being a little technical here. And the actual USGA greens mix was the sand of this mine. So the entire golf course is USGA greens mix, I mean, tees, greens, fairways. But he was a great leader, and he was very clear. He said we will aim at the top. A lot of people have this dream, don't they, Mike? They want a U.S. Open, and very few -- well, they get close, but it happens very rarely that they can succeed in that vision and dream. He said we cannot compromise. We can't be 99 percent right, we have to be 100 percent right. He sought your guidance and my guidance.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: He started at the end, we want the national open. We want the biggest championship of all to come to the Pacific Northwest. This is a huge dream. It's an outrageous dream. But he believed it could be so. So there was a point when he then decided to very cleverly find out from the USGA, what is it that they need. He's not going to go present a solution. He actually wants to know what their solution is. How did that link with the USGA happen, Mike?

MIKE DAVIS: Well, we originally had the first USGA representative to visit here to what's known as the Chambers Creek property was a fellow by the name of Ron Read, who was our long-time USGA regional director, who lives in the Monterey area. And I remember being in my office back in Far Hills one day and Ron called up and says, hey, there is this site in the Pacific Northwest that one day will be good enough for a U.S. Open. Ron had actually called before on one of these things, and we certainly had gotten other calls. I'm like, okay, here we go again. Tell me a little bit about it. He starts out and says, it's right on Puget Sound. Beautiful, overlooking the water. Well, that's good. It's got almost 1,000 acres. Really? Now all of a sudden I'm thinking, well, operationally, we don't need anywhere near 1,000 acres, but most of the time we're trying to stage one of these events, as you think

see all the things that need to be done. Many golf courses simply do not have enough land to stage it. And then he said it's going to be county owned, so it's going to be a public access golf course, which is a great thing for the daily golfer to be able to play a U.S. Open golf course. Pacific Northwest. We've been conducting U.S. Open for over 120 years and have never been to this part of the country. So really appealing. And then I think the thing that really got me was when he said it's all sand. And as Bob rightly said, and I believe it, I've heard Bob say it, every golf course -- any golf course would be better if it's built on sand because it drains better. The ball bounces. It's that aspect of the game that's just so much fun, and we're certainly going to see it this week, what happens when your ball lands. We came out and looked at it. At that point they really hadn't even started anything. It was just piles of sand around. But you could see the scale of this property and said, wow, this is magical. And so we kept in touch. And you started to do your work and we came back a few times and we've got a golf course.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: He makes it sound a little easier than it was (laughter). There was a lot of hard work done by very dedicated people. Our team seamlessly worked with the county's team, it's a public works. But he says he came out and took a look. He came out and said, Bob, do you think this should be a par 5. Just a pile of dirt, pile of sand. We'd like a small green here. Immediately I know I'm talking to a golf architect. He had a few suggestions on architecture, which we debated. And we had already laid out the route plan. We had done two or three route plans. For those of you who don't know route plans, it's the route upon which the play takes place. You start at the first tee and you go to the first green, the second tee, so on, throughout, and you end up back at the 18th green. So that route plan had been debated. We made about five different route plans and then the county adopted one. The original clubhouse was actually down near here. Everybody looks at the water and gets attracted to it. But there was something else here, a train tuck, which is a little noisy and could be a little dirty, sooty. So we thought maybe we should really not have a clubhouse at all, because this is a public park. So we eventually decided to work on the golf course and think about the so-called clubhouse at a later time. It was all about the golf course. So we had the route plan and we came -- the big bulldozers were moving sand. And it was February, as I remember, it was a little chilly. And then we had this one tree. You know, that tree has been a witness to everything that's gone on here. Somehow it survived the miners. It was struggling all of its life. Then it survived basically us. And for a moment, it almost didn't survive the purist, a man named David Pepper, who was the head of the championship committee in our day. You have to understand the word links has a very, very strict meaning, for those of

our brethren across the pond. For them, a links has to be near or on the sea, near an estuary, sandy landscape with fescue grasses and no trees. So I told him it had fescue grasses, sandy landscape, and one tree. And he stopped me and said, Bobby, one tree? One tree too many. But fortunately John Ladenburg said I can do a lot of things, but if I remove that tree they'll impeach me. We are in the Pacific Northwest, and we have tree huggers here, so the tree stays. It became an iconic element and right from the beginning, you understood John Ladenburg's predicament, right?

MIKE DAVIS: Yes.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: This was what year when you first came over that Ron Read's disclosure that there was something of interest in this region?

MIKE DAVIS: I think it was eight or nine years ago.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: In the USGA at the time, David Fay was in your role now, and he was there for quite some time. You were rules and you were setup, what exactly was your role at the time?

MIKE DAVIS: It may have been 2006 or 2005. At that time I was head of our rules and competition department, and over setup for the U.S. Open.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Where did you love your architecture come from?

MIKE DAVIS: I can remember early on, probably 5th grade, drawing out holes, and in the backyard making up holes. And a few times, in fact, I can remember one time one of the holes played over the house (laughter), and I had a thin shot that went through the living room window, and my mother wasn't overly happy about that. But I've always been intrigued with golf course architecture. I think one of the best things about being in the position I'm in is getting to know people like Bob and some of the great architects of all time. In fact, one of the things that's really -- since this is an architectural forum, to sit here and think that Bob Jones is the last living architect to design a golf course that was living that we played U.S. Open on was his father, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., at Hazeltine in 1970. If you go way back in the early '50s, his father was really the father of modern architecture and was very instrumental, some 70 years ago, with the U.S. Opens. And then you think about all the influence he's had on architecture, on U.S. Opens, on national championships and then what Bob has done, and Bob's brother, Rees Jones, and the Jones family in terms of architecture and their contributions to the game and our national championships is just unbelievable. It's been a real treat for all of us to watch

this evolve. And it's really been a great process.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Thank you.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Round of applause for the Jones family, perhaps (applause.) So can you talk to us about the fescue, then, the whole vision for that type of golf?

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: I think we also ought to give a tip of the hat to USGA Greens Section. The person who represents that in this area is Larry Gilhuly and Pat Gross is also a part of it. Fescue is a very, very tricky gas. In one sense, it's a simple grass in that it doesn't require a lot of fertilizer. Mother Nature waters it. It's not mushy, lushy, parkland style turf. It's hard, firm and fast, and therefore allows a game which I have come to love, particularly after working with Tom Watson and Sandy Tatum, playing a lot in the British Isles, and particularly in Scotland, and The R&A and other places, and the older I get the more I love it. Because the ball runs another 20 yards, you know. And I can get a little closer to the green, instead of the young, nimble lads. It address to the longevity of my playing years, and I think that's one of the fun parts of it. But really it's about the lumps and bumps and lumps and rolls. Tommy Armour, who was my teacher at Winged Foot when I was growing up in the New York area, New Jersey, said, Bobby, remember, now, in Scotland we name the holes. We name the features of the holes. There's a Elysian Fields, and Hell's Bunker, and the Principal's Nose and the Spectacles, and this is Miss Granger's Bosom. And I said, well, that's kind of interesting. I was about 17. He said you must remember when you're playing match play, you're playing your opponent. When you're playing meadow play, you're playing each hole. It's animate, you're wrestling with each holes. In links golf you're wrestling with the ground game, not just the air game and the two go together. And that's what's unique about Chambers Bay. It's both the aerial game. This is a big, big space, I went out and walked with one of our Open champions, Justin Rose, for nine holes.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: You met his caddie the previous night.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: I did. His caddie is a funny character, we had a couple of drinks. And also with Jordan Spieth and Hunter Mahan, and they play quickly. They play quickly. But Justin is very methodical. He's really studying the course. He played alone. So he's studying the course. And I think the second thing I want to say about this, being up close to a player of that skill level, the ball-striking is just phenomenal. I'm going to hit it at the crease on the right side of where the ricochet mound is on the right side of the tree, and he hits it there. Maybe I'll hit

it ten yards left, and he hits it there. He's playing phenomenally. So this is very important. What he said was, I have to learn to move the ball into the bounces, so it softens the shots. He's already thinking how to adapt his game to the aerial game to the links game at his skill level.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: He's also chasing destiny. As Mike will attest, and I was privy to interviewing Justin on the Thursday before Merion, I was a guest host on Golf Channel's Morning Drive that week, and he came in as a guest, and he had spent three solid days with his caddie, with his short game coach, and they had invested a lot of time working out their strategy for Merion. And Merion obviously has wonderful U.S. Open history, it's hugely significant. And it's considerably smaller than the property we have here. So it was always going to be a unique test. But I remember distinctly Justin Rose coming out with us, and I was with Gary Williams at the time and one other, and we were kind of quizzing Justin as to different holes. And it was phenomenal to hear him display his knowledge, his intimate knowledge, from what he had gleaned through his preparations. And obviously that is key to winning a U.S. Open is preparation. And it's those classic traits, acceptance and determination, patience, but also preparation is key. And you only have to look at Ben Hogan and Jack Nicklaus for those examples. But Justin Rose is here doing exactly the same. And he's chasing destiny, because he doesn't want to be a single major champion and he'll have to be one of the hot favorites after what you've seen and what we know of him. It's interesting to see them dissect it. Because this is unique. It is new, this challenge is new to these guys.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Let's go back to the newness of it. As you mentioned, my dad's contributions with Joe Dye in the '50s of transforming the game at Oakland Hills at that great Open championship, Hogan said I brought this monster to its knees with the great 67 round. I hope, and I think we share this, John Ladenburg and you are kind of the brothers in it together, the three musketeers, we hope have brought this to a new transformation, that this is a new kind of golf course. It has the elements of the past, but it's something new. And the players seem to be responding in three different ways. But some feel anxious, they're not used to this. Some are looking forward to analyze it to the nth degree. And then there are the players that say hit the ball and play golf. Let's play. And I think those are the people who are the most creative that are going to have the best opportunity to score here and have fun. But I think I'd like to hear Mike talk about how when the USGA executive committee, with Mike's very much guidance, offered John Ladenburg and Pierce County and its course, Chambers Bay, the offer to host the Amateur

first and then The Open, how he had the course was a baby, she was just a baby in 2007. And how we nurtured her from then to now.

MIKE DAVIS: Well, you're right. It's only eight or nine years old now. I guess I'll make a more general statement and maybe get into that. But one of the great things about golf in the United States, and I thought about this, and other people have thought about this, but the diversity of golf courses, because this is an architectural forum is amazing in this country. We've got mountain courses, we've got seaside courses, we've got courses that are in the desert. We've got golf courses over 120 years old. We've got new golf courses. And I think that -- we've got golf courses with cool season grasses, warm season grasses. And I think that when you look at it, we've got such a diversity, and a diversity of actual architecture, as well. We've got all the great architects, the Alister MacKenzies, Donald Ross, Tillinghast, CB Macdonald, so on, did some great work in this country. But everybody up to now, and I think one of the wonderful things here is this is showcasing some of the new great architecture, and I think from the USGA standpoint, to play a course like Chambers Bay that is completely different than any other U.S. Open golf course that we've played, it's got more elevation changes than any we've played. It's wider, in terms of the width of fairways that we've played, angles are a bigger part. There's a lot of lumps and bumps, both in the fairways, in the approaches to the greens or within the greens, around the greens. And those lumps and bumps, particularly when you've got closely mown grass like this and fescue. Fescue by its very nature seems to have less tackiness to it, so when the ball hits, it just seems to skid and bounce more versus other grasses tend to be a little tackier, if you will, or maybe a little more organic buildup underneath the grass where the ball hits and stops. So you've got these lumps and bumps that in some ways can help the golfer, they can use it to their advantage, maybe they play off the slope that you mentioned, Bob, in some cases they're backwards to greens. But other times these slopes that were put in very much are defenses in the golf course. The architect put it there that you've got to figure how to play around it, over it, into it, whatever the case might be. So for all those reasons, it needed to be a much wider golf course. And I think that for us what we try to do is go to truly the greatest golf courses in this country. And whether it's the U.S. Open or the U.S. girls junior amateur, and really showcase the architecture. So it's such a unique thing. And listen, it's a bit like ice cream. Some people like vanilla, some people like chocolate. And there's certain horses for different horses, horses for horses, and I think here this week it's a different style. But at the end of it, it's going to be a very stern comprehensive test. It's going to show shot-making skills and abilities. It's going to

require the players to really think their way around. And it's going to present a different challenge every day, not only on how we set the golf course up but the weather we'll get. We've got a wonderful forecast for the week. But we're looking at probably the first day, day and a half, Thursday and part day Friday with maybe a light wind out of the southwest. Then it's going to shift out of the north and just by that thing, it's going to change the nature of how the holes play, which will be fantastic. So I think that it's fun to showcase this architecture and it's been just delightful working with Bob and Bruce through this process and it really should be just a marvelous, but a very unique and kind of a one-of-a-kind test. And I think that's neat for all of us.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Certainly is. So we have Robert Trent Jones, Jr., the architect here, we have Mike Davis the executive director, and this of course is an invitation to USGA members to enjoy this. We'd like to hear some of your questions. We have a gentleman in the front row. We're going to open it up for the next few minutes and field questions.

Q. I'd just like to say that you really got this right. I go to Ireland to play golf a lot and the 10th hole here, I swear I was in Ballybunion. I think you really got it done well here, and I think it's going to be a great week. Mr. Davis, I'd like to say thank you for Pinehurst last year. Everybody there wants you to come back.

MIKE DAVIS: Thank you.

Q. This question is for Mr. Davis. I'm not sure if it's probably written down somewhere, but would you mind going over -- we listened to Ryan Moore earlier saying he's played here quite a bit, but coming out this past week for the tournament it's like playing it for the first time, playing a whole new course. Would you guys mind going over what you did to change it for this tournament?

MIKE DAVIS: Sure. Well, I didn't hear Ryan's interview, but I think probably what he was getting at was just the firmness and how fast the golf course is playing because that would be one of the things, if you say getting it in championship condition, or what really makes this a U.S. Open course this week versus just another week. Well, the architecture is the same. So what is different is the speed of the greens, generally speaking, would be faster than would normally be played. Although we're going to Oakmont next year, the club members like to say they slow the greens down for the U.S. Open. But there's just more precision needed. And so when you get a golf course firmer than it is, you really have to think about where your ball is going to bounce to and roll to. So particularly for Tour level players if they've got, whatever, a 167-yard

shot and it's soft, they're so good they can hit it 167 yards and stop it. This week the shot maybe hit is 151 yards and left of it and let it feed to the hole. So if you're here maybe next year at this time, you wouldn't see the ball feed quite as much. So I think that it's no different than say the last major played at Augusta National. If you go play Augusta National, say, a month before the Masters, you're, generally speaking, playing a somewhat slower golf course. Not a slow golf course, but a slower. So I think that that's oftentimes, players will come in ahead of time and say I want to get my sight lines, how to aim off the tee or play to the green, but they know the ball probably won't react the same.

Q. How do you make it firmer?

MIKE DAVIS: In this case we've been blessed that it was a -- most of you are from this area, you know that this May and this June were unseasonably warm and dry. So that's really the recipe. But I will tell you we have put significant amounts of water on the last few nights on this. You look at it and say, really? But I will tell you that even walking the course this morning, it's definitely -- it had more of a green hue to it than it had last night. We're trying to get it the right firmness to where it's a good championship test, but at the same time I think that if you asked us where could we really fail with the setup, it's getting particularly the greens too firm. So it's just water management. And how we do that really gets down to we use moisture meters in the greens, probably 30, 40 places within the green that we're measuring. We have a device that the USGA equipment standards group, our scientists, engineers developed that reads how firm the greens are. We really -- there's a lot of science that goes into this week to really get it to where a well struck shot reacts the way we want to.

Q. Somebody who grew up in the neighborhood, welcome to Tacoma, thank you for being here, not Seattle. I did hear you mention the Ryder Cup, so we're ready, if you want to put in a good word for that, as well. My phone has been blowing up today about the hardness, and everyone complaining about the greens today. Since you mostly talked about that I would say the Pacific Northwest, what other courses have you looked at in the region to host a major? Because this is the new guy on the block. There's a lot of older courses, that I'm sure are probably a little jealous. Talk about that history in the Northwest.

MIKE DAVIS: We certainly have a great history of coming to the Pacific Northwest for national championships, we just haven't brought the U.S. Open. So that's why I think it was so meaningful for us to get to this part of the country. It goes way back. Just a few weeks ago we played the inaugural U.S. Women's

Amateur fourball at Bandon Dunes, and Bandon Dunes is in southern Oregon and has so many similarities to this. It's built on sand. It's all fine fescue. But, listen, the buzz that's been here in Washington and Tacoma, the excitement, it's wonderful to see. It's absolutely wonderful to see. We had dinner, Bob and I last night as well as Bruce Charles, with John Ladenburg, and one of his comments was what this is doing for the game of golf in the Pacific Northwest is tremendous. That's great because I'll make one point. We talk about trying to grow the game and look for future generations, but this championship ultimately is for the greatest players in the world to play, whether it's male, female, amateur, professional, junior, senior, if you're good enough to play, qualify for the U.S. Open of which roughly almost 10,000 tried, great. But you know what, U.S. Opens also inspire other golfers, and that's part of why we want to do this is that I personally got inspired, one of the things I can remember going to the 1980 U.S. Open when Jack Nicklaus won at Baltusrol. That inspired me. It was one of the reasons I took up -- I was already a golfer. But hopefully bringing this to this part of the country will really help and grow the next generation.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: And certainly hope it's going to bring a lot of business and tourism for many years to come. This is going to shine a light on the region, which I think is a bigger picture. The U.S. Open will be presented to the winner on Sunday. It's going to be a magnificent championship, and a unique challenge. But the bigger picture is what it is going to do for the region, and it's untold and unknowing exactly how much impact it's going to have, but certainly it will be significant.

Q. Mr. Jones, there's been some assumption that there will be some criticism or unhappiness with the course because it's so distinct, and because you didn't want to build a routine course, it's easy enough to roll off your back. But with the world's greatest golfers playing your course, is there any criticism that they might have that you're concerned about or any particular facet of the course as built that you were very eager to hear how they'll react to?

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Well, first of all, I'm a golfer first, and a golf architect is on defense. So basically I listened very carefully to what the players are saying, and I tried to put myself in their shoes. I'm not that skillful, I played at a higher level at one time. But the -- what I'm hearing is their mental attitude as well as their acceptance of the test that's being presented to them by the USGA at championship conditions. It's not just the golf course, itself. The architecture in this course is fairly simple in one sense. There are no trees, therefore, there are no vertical

hazards. There are no water hazards, as Puget Sound is not in play, like Augusta for the back nine; therefore, if we have to defend the course as a golf architect in another way. You can defend it by length. You can defend it by narrowness, and Hoganesque kind of lines of sight. I think of Olympic in 1955, when he and Fleck were tested, for example, and so on. What we chose to do is actually make it as big as the Pacific Northwest, a long golf course that can be very long, you will choose the length for each day as you see fit among other factors, and we also added another element which is the uneven tees and we have fairly strongly contoured greens. Those are our new defenses to make the best players of the world -- remember, these guys are breaking down defenses. They're like great sequence, they go and analyze the field of battle and they break it down and they want to win the goal, in this case, the championship, itself, and the trophy. So they're already saying -- they're in contest with the architect. So basically I would say the greens are fairly strongly contoured, so there's a relationship between the speed of those greens and the contours. For example, I like to say, well, you wouldn't have a maintenance manual for a Volkswagen and then use it on a Porsche, or vice versa, even though they're both German car companies. So you have to think that through. But at the high level, this is like green ice, this is like downhill skiing in the Olympics. They're not skiing on snow, they're skiing on ice. So this is one of the reasons I think you've been able to get the course to play up. Now, the better players like this, because it separates the big boys from those who are a little bit not psychologically ready for the test.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: They haven't channeled their inner Hogan yet.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Am I concerned about the criticism? Of course. I'd like to learn from them as much as possible. Generally speaking, the golf course is never finished. It's a work in progress. We've already refined the course for the Amateur, itself, and then again now for The Open. Augusta keeps changing. The game itself keeps changing. But I think the new elements that we added to this course are in keeping with our time, and the better players adapt to it. For example, the moving tees are unique. They're very gentle, you can find a flat spot in them, you're going to give them a lot of choices, right? And the invisible batter's box. They can be an assistance for a golfer that wants to hit a right-handed slingshot, which might be required on No. 14, if he does it, he gains 100 yards. There's a risk and reward if you take that risk. That's the architectural elements. Those who adopt it and embrace it, they like it. They're telling me they enjoy it. Those who are uneasy with the newness of it, we'll listen to them, but they probably won't make the cut (laughter).

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: You heard it here first, folks. Very quickly, Mike, just from the USGA perspective, and the course setup, because it is The Open Championship, the uniqueness of the greens from your perspective and also just the differential between the green and the fairway, because that is something that is a subject, that's a topic this week. Just those two quick ones, perhaps.

MIKE DAVIS: Sure. First of all, just from our perspective, the greens are big. They're very, very big. I think these would have to be the biggest greens we play on for a United States Open. They're bold, as Bob said. They receive -- there's shots that you play, that you're playing seemingly straight up the hill or straight down the hill. But they have wonderful contours. And once you learn them, you can really use those contours to your advantage. And they're essentially fine fescue putting greens, too. And I bring that up, too, because we've never, at least in the United States, had a U.S. Open on fescue greens before. And I think the thing that's so unique here at Chambers Bay is that the roughs are fine fescue, the fairways are fine fescue, the teeing greens are fine fescue, the putting greens and surrounds are fine fescue, and the putting greens are fine fescue. It's all one type of grass. So when you look at it esthetically, I can't tell where the green really is. If you've been down to Bandon Dunes in Oregon, that is all fine fescue, same thing there. And in fact to really define what the greens are this week we are using little white paint dots to actually define, so the players know when they can lift -- mark and lift their golf ball, or when they can actually -- you can only remove sand when it's on the green. Otherwise it's not considered a loose impediments. From a rules standpoint, there's no problem at all. From a sustainability standpoint, what a great story, when it's all types of grass really maintained and prepared the same way. And then one thing there's been a few comments so far, the looks of the greens. What's fascinating in some of the greens, probably 12, maybe 15 greens, you'll see almost a splotchiness, if you will. And what that is is there's some patches of poa annua in there. From a coloration standpoint, they look very different. When you go to many other golf courses in the United States that have bentgrass green, you'll have bentgrass and poa annua, they happen to be the same color so they don't stand out. But fescue is a very different colored grass from poa annua, so you look at that. What I'm so pleased about and really thanks to a great grounds staff and superintendent here, really knows how to maintain fescue greens, as well as the USGA Greens Section, who have been helping them, they really putt beautifully. Then may look the same. I've had players say to me I've never seen greens that look this way, but they really putt well. And at the end of it, this is all about the playability. It's

getting the right firmness, the right speed and a nice, smooth roll, we're very pleased about that.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: Playability, and I think memorability, as well, with the views and the elevation changes it's extraordinary, really, and then sweeping down to Puget Sound and of course Fox Island.

Q. Just a question to you. How fast can a golf course get when it gets to be to the point it's too firm and fast, and the balance between luck and skill then basically washes out? You mentioned you instituted some changes in terms of measuring moisture on the golf course. What lessons were learned from the '04 Open at Shinnecock? And Bob, a question that relates to you, when we talk about firmness and challenge, what was learned from the 2010 U.S. Amateur, as opposed to what was going to be happening at this week's U.S. Open?

MIKE DAVIS: Really good question, there. You know, when we talk about firm and fast conditions, and getting them in championship condition, what it's really doing is it's adding that additional element of saying -- it's back to my example of a 167-yard shot, that when you introduce the concept of whether you're hitting a drive and where is it going to go after it lands, particularly on some of these undulating fairways or hitting into a green or just around the greens at some of the bouncy shots, it brings in that element that you have to think about what's going to happen. You have to think about your spin rate, you have to think about your trajectory, how the ball is going to roll out. But there gets to be a point when they can be too firm and too fast. So on the fast part, if you're talking about putting greens, if we start to lose good hole locations that the architect intended to be used, that would be a problem. So when we look at a golf course on greens speeds, it's not cookie cutter. When we go to Pebble Beach usually those greens are 10 and a half, 11 on the Stimpmeter. That's what works at Pebble Beach. Next year, at Oakmont, we'll get up in the mid 14s. That's the personality of Oakmont and it works there. This week they'll be somewhere 11 and a half, at the most 12 and a half range, and we're very focused not only on the speed but as I say the firmness. If you think about a U.S. Open most years, it really is the most difficult test that the best players in the world face. So by that very nature we're setting it up closer to the point -- closer to the edge, if you will, where a well executed shot is not rewarded. That's what happened the final day at Shinnecock in 2004. And you learn from those kinds of things. Specific to here in 2010, we knew in the practice rounds at Chambers Bay the golf course was getting too firm. And what was fascinating is we put water down before stroke play. We just didn't get enough. And so we had a golf course in stroke

play that at least some of the holes were well executed shots, were not being rewarded. We don't want that. It's not -- certainly not one of our goals. It's not to make it the most ridiculous hard test that we can, it's to make it a good test, where well struck shots are rewarded. And so literally after we got done with stroke play in the U.S. Amateur, we flooded the course. I was not happy. I don't know how much water we put down, but we flooded it and it still was able to play very firm the rest of match play, but it played the right firmness. We learned from that. So we are really trying to manage, right now, we are so blessed with this weather that we get to dictate the golf course conditions versus Mother Nature, and that's a wonderful thing. So you learn from that. And that's why we've been putting down a good bit of water at nights. We're doing now hand watering. It's not a perfect science. It is science, but it's not perfect. And try to look at evaporation rates, whether it's going to be cloudy, which way the wind is coming out of, but we're positioned for really a great U.S. Open.

Q. My question goes back to the grass. You brought in fescue into a area where poa annua invades everything. And I love the fescue greens. Were you afraid that the poa was going to come in and take over, and what was your plan to deal with that?

MIKE DAVIS: Well, I guess first and foremost, maybe Bob, you can start out. It wasn't the USGA's choice to do it, but we were supportive of it.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: Fescue was the links style grass, we thought we should take a chance. You have to remember, golf architecture and golf maintenance is like gardening, it's an act of love. You do it every day. And people who garden and work their hands in the soil know that this is almost a religious experience in the sense of seeing things grow. Every gardener will tell you if you're growing certain plants, let's say growing roses, you don't want petunias, and vice versa. So you have to, even though they're both beautiful flowers, you have to weed out the one you don't want. Poa annua is, in this case, a weed, as opposed to fescue, and it can be weeded out. It takes a lot of care. They have got this down to a science in the British Isles, particularly places like Castle Stuart. And there are new techniques that are coming on board where we can eliminate the poa in the future. Have faith and the next time you're here, it will be pure poa -- pure fescue, I mean -- or pure poa.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: A word from you, Mike, to wrap things up. You're obviously excited about the championship. It's going to be an incredible test. It's a unique test at a unique venue. And the thing about unique, there are no levels of uniqueness. There's no

such thing as very unique or a bit unique. We're dealing with uniqueness. And there's something very special that I think we're all kind of invested in now from the FOX perspective, obviously it's the USGA. But Bob and everyone here, and the community around Tacoma, we're in Tacoma and not Seattle, and we're very proud to be here. But from the USGA, what's your big wish this week, Mike Davis?

MIKE DAVIS: Well, we love the fact we're in the Pacific Northwest for the first time. Everybody's been so engaging and welcoming here. It's just been delightful so far. I love the fact we're at new architecture, we're at a publically municipal owned golf course where the public can come. It's a different looking golf course, different architecture. So to me this just exposes some of the great things about our game of golf. We're positioned to have a great championship and honestly what we want to do at this point, the architect and then the United States Golf Association, is really hand it off to the players and it's their championship starting Thursday and let them create the drama and hopefully we can stay in the background and we're not having to walk into this media room saying something else.

ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.: If we have the privilege of composing the golf course, and you have the baton, he's the symphony leaders, the players are the musicians, and you're going to have some great music.

SHANE O'DONOGHUE: And it's all going to play out on FOX on Thursday. Thanks for Mike Davis, the executive director, and thanks for you USGA members, to Robert Trent Jones, Jr., and Bruce Charles and those who helped creating this and the magnificent John Ladenburg. The stage is set for Thursday. Here's to a great United States Open (applause).