

COURSE PREPARATIONS

The USGA will be responsible for outlining the playing conditions for the U.S. Amateur Championship. Ben Kimball, the USGA staff member in charge of the championship (inside-the-ropes), will be the person working with the Host Club to determine these desired conditions.

Once the Host Club agreement is signed, an initial visit to the Host Club will be made to review the course. At that time, the USGA and the Host Club will discuss any potential changes that may be needed to the course. After this initial visit, periodic visits will be made to stay in touch and review potential changes as necessary.

Approximately two years prior to the championship, the USGA will make a visit to the Host Club to develop a full plan for the course preparation. This plan will be documented in the form of a Course Preparation Memorandum.

The Course Preparation Memorandum outlines and describes the yardage, par and how each hole will be played. Ben Kimball is responsible for generating this document and will work with the Host Club golf course superintendent(s) and the USGA Director, Championship Agronomy to put this together. The course preparation memorandum from the 2016 and 2017 U.S. Amateur Championships are included for reference.

After a full review of the championship course has been completed, a draft version of this memorandum will be generated and circulated to the golf course superintendent(s) and USGA Director, Championship Agronomy for an initial review. Upon initial review, changes may be made, and a 90% complete draft of the memorandum will be distributed to the appropriate individuals (green chairman, club president, golf professional, etc.) at the Host Club. After each subsequent visit, the memorandum will be updated and sent to the appropriate people, with highlights of any changes from the initial plan.

The memorandum remains in draft form ultimately until when the championship is actually conducted. Unfortunate circumstances such as bad weather, equipment problems, staffing issues, etc. are to be expected so last minute changes to the course preparation memorandum may take place.

The exact same procedure exists for the Stroke Play Co-Host (2nd course) that is being used for the stroke play portion of the U.S. Amateur Championship only.



Ben Kimball
Director, U.S. Amateur Championship

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(Updated with feedback from Ben Kimball's 9-28-2015 visit)
(Updated with feedback from Ben Kimball's 5-10/11-2016 visit)

October 17, 2014

Mr. Steve Cook
Director of Agronomy
Oakland Hills Country Club
3895 W. Maple Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48301

Dear Steve,

Thanks to you, Mike, Andy, Lee and Pat for taking the time to escort me around Oakland Hills Country Club during our site visit on October 6 – 8. The players who qualify for the 116th U.S. Amateur Championship will surely be in for a wonderful treat, as well as fabulous tests of golf. The completed renovation of the North Course is truly remarkable and the membership should be very proud of the finished product. The USGA sincerely appreciates the Oakland Hills Country Club's continuing support of our National Championships.

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the golf course preparation details for both the South and North course. Darin Bevard and I will be working closely with you over the next couple years on the below specifications. Darin will advise on the technical golf course conditioning and agronomic matters. As you are well aware, Robbie Zalzneck is the USGA point-person on all other aspects of the championship.

First off, as it relates to the North and South Course master tree plans that I reviewed during my visit, please know that I am completely supportive of the removal of all the trees listed in those reports. Whether it is for agronomic or aesthetic reasons I applaud Oakland Hills Country Club for wanting to make great strides on this front. I sincerely hope that your board and membership see the lasting effects that this tree removal plan along with some of my recommendations listed within could have on the property.

The USGA desires relatively firm conditions throughout the golf course. Fast conditions require good shot-making and enhance the test of golf. With this in mind, you should know that we will absolutely not subject your golf course to harm by mandating unreasonable requests for firmness and green speeds. However, it is important for your host committee and club membership to understand that we will only be irrigating the golf course for turf survival and not turf color during the championship week. This practice may present a different aesthetic result than what the membership is used to seeing day in and day out so further member education is recommended. Ultimately, the health of your golf course is



more important than one week's championship set-up and we will always err on the side of keeping the turf healthy versus risking injury to playing surfaces. The exact firmness of the putting greens will be addressed with you by the Chairman of the USGA Championship Committee, Darin Bevard and myself during the week of the championship.

Below in the hole-by-hole section, you will see each hole's yardage. This is where the tee sign will be located and not necessarily where we will place tee markers on a daily basis. We will plan to use different teeing grounds at some holes. We will take into consideration that day's hole location, each hole's strategic design, how the hole is playing (i.e., firmness) and the daily forecasted weather conditions. Sometime prior to our arrival, we will discuss which teeing grounds to protect.

We briefly discussed putting green speeds for the championship. Based on your feedback, we agreed we would prepare the greens to a speed of (12 ½ to 13 ½ feet – South) and (12 to 13 feet – North), as measured on the USGA Stimpmeter, beginning the Wednesday prior to championship week. However, we realize due to certain extenuating circumstances (recent weather conditions, etc.) we may need to modify our suggested green prep strategy in order to protect turf quality. This is to be expected and the USGA will work with Oakland Hills Country Club to maintain grass health while achieving the desired speeds. We may ask that the greens be prepped even faster (13 ½ feet or slightly more) on the South course when we first arrive so we can find the "break point" where challenging hole locations cannot be used. It is important that we strive for an agreed upon speed no later than the Saturday when the players will be playing their first practice round. The health of your putting greens leading into the championship is extremely important to us and our intent is to keep green speeds consistent throughout the championship. If the above Stimpmeter ranges need minor adjustment, we will let you know prior to or during the two practice rounds. The preparation methods for the putting greens (i.e., the height of cut, the number of cuts per day, whether they are rolled, plant growth regulation, irrigation, etc.) will be made by you, in consultation with Darin Bevard. A goal we have for every championship is to have green speeds remain as consistent as possible from morning until play ends in the afternoon. As it relates to height of cut for the putting greens, we would prefer to have the flexibility of removing daily cuts or rolls as needed so a higher height of cut to start would be our preference. Please consult with Darin Bevard on what that recommend starting height may be.

The primary rough will be graduated on the South Course. Ideally we want rough that penalizes errant shots but still gives players a chance of recovery, especially in the rough that is closer to the fairways. We discussed that unlike our Open Championships that have the course roped and staked, the Amateur allows spectators to walk in the fairways. You can anticipate a trampling effect to your roughs. We have no problem with this but we also will not know exactly what to prescribe in terms of height and frequency of cut. For now, let's plan that the primary rough will be grown to 3 inches and should be roughly 15 – 20 feet in width; the secondary rough should be 4 to 5 inches and should include the rest of the likely "in-play" areas. The secondary rough might be let go the week of if it is not overly penal. We would like these heights by practice rounds. The USGA will make a decision the Wednesday or Thursday of the week prior on how the rough will be maintained during the championship. If we are lucky and have dry conditions, we might only mow the shorter cut rough on a regular basis or even let all the rough grow for the week. If the grasses are growing, we may prescribe a more regular mowing of roughs.

Your intermediate cut of rough (6 feet in width) adjacent to the fairways should be 1 ¼ inch in height. As you begin to approach each putting green, this intermediate cut should gradually narrow down to 15 to 30 inches (depending upon your mower width) and buffer the putting green collar and primary rough where applicable.

The height of the cut of the grass in the various areas of the course for the championship should be as follows:

South Course

<u>Grass Types</u>	
Tees	– bent/poa
Fairways	– bent/poa
Greens	– bent/poa
Intermediate rough	– bluegrass/rye
Rough	– bluegrass/rye

Practice Tee	.375 to .400 inch
Putting greens	Height necessary to obtain an average measurement of 12 ½ to 13 ½ feet on the USGA Stimpmeter
Collars around greens	.250 to .300 inch
Green approaches & closely mown areas	.250 to .300 inch
Teeing grounds	.250 to .300 inch
Fairways	.375 to .400 inch
Courtesy walks	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width)
Intermediate rough	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width in fairways; 22 inches around greens; flare out if necessary)
Primary/Secondary Rough	(For holes 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18) 1 st cut primary rough 3 inches (12+ foot width) Look at possibly dropping this height closer to championship; evaluate in July.
	2 nd cut secondary rough 4 to 5 inches (beyond 1 st cut)
	(For holes 6 and 12) 1 st cut primary rough 4 to 5 inches

The hole-by-hole notes are as follows.

Hole 1 **431** yards, par 4 – area 1 pace back of the GAM/USGA plate in center of the tee; 2nd tee from back;

The USGA will also likely use a longer teeing ground at 452 yards (1 pace forward from 453 plate) for certain match play rounds and hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 2 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **525** yards, par 5 – area 2 paces back from the 523 plate; 1st tee from back

The 3 trees player’s right of the putting green should be considered for removal to allow us to use the right half of the green with confidence for hole locations.

It is recommended that the closely mown area behind the putting green be reverted back to bluegrass/rye rough.

Hole 3 **192** yards, par 4 – area 6 paces forward from the 198 plate

Hole 4 **445** yards, par 4 – area 1 pace forward of the 446 plate

It is recommended that the tree located player’s right off of the tee (50 yards ahead) be removed for aesthetical purposes.

Hole 5 **486** yards, par 4 – area 4 paces forward of the 490 plate

It is recommended that the club really consider opening up this great Par 4 by removing significant trees left of the drive zone to give players a full view of the hole off of the tee. The removal of these trees will certainly enhance the members playing experience while also improving turf quality and density in an area that has been a struggle in the past. If the club is concerned that Lahser Road will be more “visible” with these trees removed then I would defer to the golf course architect who will probably have some “away from play” solutions to keep some sort of screening there.

The USGA will also likely use a shorter teeing ground at 459 yards (adjacent to 459 plate) depending on weather and hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 6 **387** yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 387 plate

The USGA will also likely use an alternate teeing ground at 305 yards (adjacent to 305 plate) for certain match play rounds and hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

The tree player’s left just short of the fairway should be limbed up to provide a better view of the greenside bunker from the 387 yard teeing ground.

Hole 7 **446** yards, par 4 – area 3 paces forward of the 449 plate

Hole 8 **485** yards, par 4 – area 6 paces forward of the 491 plate

Hole 9 **253** yards, par 3 – area 4 paces forward of the 257 plate



The USGA will also likely use an alternate teeing ground at 221 yards (5 paces forward of the 226 plate) and at 198 yards (area adjacent to the 198 plate) for certain match play rounds and hole locations during the week. These areas should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 10 **454** yards, par 4 – area 8 paces forward of the 462 plate

Hole 11 **453** yards, par 4 – area 2 paces forward of the 455 plate

The USGA will also likely use a shorter teeing ground at 422 yards (1 pace forward of the 423 plate) for certain hole locations or due to heavy wind during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

It is recommended that the closely mown area behind the putting green be reverted back to bluegrass/rye rough.

Hole 12 **592** yards, par 5 – area 1 pace forward of the 593 plate

The USGA will also likely use a shorter teeing ground at 559 yards (2 paces forward of the 561 plate) to certain hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

It is recommended that the club really consider opening up this great Par 5 by removing significant trees right of the drive zone to give players a full view of the hole off of the tee. This would introduce new options for the players when playing that don't currently exist, would avoid penalizing good shots with trees and would certainly bring back the original look and feel to the hole by allowing the natural topography to tell the story.

Hole 13 **154** yards, par 3 – area adjacent to the “upper” 154 yard plate

The USGA will also likely use alternate teeing grounds at 154 yards (area adjacent to “lower” 154 plate) and 189 yards (area 1 pace forward of the 190 plate) for certain hole locations during the week. These areas should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 14 **500** yards, par 4 – area 1 pace forward of the 501 plate; 1st tee from back

The USGA will also likely use a shorter teeing ground at 480 yards (area adjacent to the 480 plate) as well depending upon course firmness and weather conditions. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 15 **397** yards, par 4 – area 4 paces forward of the 401 plate

The USGA will likely use a shorter teeing ground at 364 yards (area adjacent to the 364 plate) for certain hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 16 401 yards, par 4 – area 5 paces forward of the 406 plate

The USGA will likely use a shorter teeing ground at 312 yards (area adjacent to the 312 plate) for certain match play rounds and hole locations during the week. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 17 237 yards, par 3 – area 1 pace forward of the 238 plate

The USGA will likely use a shorter teeing ground at 212 yards (area 2 paces forward of the 214 plate) as well depending upon course firmness and weather conditions. This area should additionally be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 18 496 yards, par 4 – area 2 paces forward of the 498 plate

The height of the cut of the grass in the various areas of the course for the championship should be as follows:

North Course

<u>Grass Types</u>	
Tees – bent	
Fairways – bent/poa	
Greens – bent/poa	
Intermediate rough – bluegrass/rye	
Rough – bluegrass/rye	

Putting greens	Height necessary to obtain an average measurement of 12 to 13 feet on the USGA Stimpmeter
Collars around greens	.250 to .300 inch
Green approaches & closely mown areas	.250 to .300 inch
Teeing grounds	.250 to .300 inch
Fairways	.375 to .400 inch
Courtesy walks	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width); please put in where appropriate
Intermediate rough	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width in fairways; 15 – 30 inches around greens)
Primary Rough	3 ½ to 4 inches (depending on density)

The hole-by-hole notes are as follows.

- Hole 1** **349** yards, par 4 – area 4 paces back from the 345 plate

It is likely that we will stagger starting times for this tee and #10 given their proximity to one another.
- Hole 2** **405** yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 405 plate
- Hole 3** **398** yards, par 4 – area 3 paces forward of the 401 plate
- Hole 4** **202** yards, par 3 – area 4 paces forward of the 206 plate
- Hole 5** **625** yards, par 5 – area 1 pace forward of the 626 plate
- Hole 6** **213** yards, par 3 – area 3 paces forward of the 216 plate

A dropping zone for this hole will likely be located 7 paces forward of the 95 plate and this area should be protected as needed prior to the championship.
- Hole 7** **424** yards, par 4 – area 3 paces forward of the 427 plate
- Hole 8** **478** yards, par 4 – **area 2 paces forward of the 480 plate**



Hole 9 461 yards, par 4 – area 3 paces forward from the 464 plate

Hole 10 186 yards, par 3 – area adjacent to the 186 plate

It is likely that we will stagger starting times for this tee and #1 given their proximity to one another.

Hole 11 467 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 467 plate

Hole 12 512 yards, par 5 – area 4 paces forward of the 516 plate

It was recommended that the greenside rough edge that abuts the steel wall around this green be fixed so that the level of the grass and steel wall are the same.

Hole 13 169 yards, par 3 – area 3 paces forward of the 172 plate

Hole 14 419 yards, par 4 – area 1 pace forward of the 420 plate

Hole 15 310 yards, par 4 – area 2 paces back from 308 plate

Hole 16 373 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 373 plate

Hole 17 464 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 464 plate

Hole 18 394 yards, par 4 – area 1 pace forward of the 395 plate

You will find below a section entitled **Miscellaneous Items** containing other items relevant to the golf course set-up and preparation. We will make a site visit sometime next year to discuss in detail many of the particulars contained in this letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have. The USGA is most appreciative of Oakland Hills Country Club's willingness to host the U.S. Amateur Championship. We are greatly looking forward to working with you. If you have concerns with any of the content or directives in this letter, please feel free to contact me or Darin.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Kimball".

Ben Kimball
Director, U.S. Amateur Championship



116th U.S. Amateur Championship

August 15 - 21, 2016

South Course

<u>HOLE</u>	<u>YARDAGE</u>	<u>PAR</u>
1	431	4
2	525	5
3	192	3
4	445	4
5	486	4
6	387	4
7	446	4
8	485	4
9	253	<u>3</u>
OUT	3,650	35
10	454	4
11	453	4
12	592	5
13	154	3
14	500	4
15	397	4
16	401	4
17	237	3
18	496	<u>4</u>
IN	3,684	35
OUT	<u>3,650</u>	<u>35</u>
TOTAL	7,334	70

Note: Exact hole yardages (from tee markers to flagsticks) and total golf course yardage will be provided on a daily basis for each of the championship rounds. The total length of the golf course will likely be in the range of 7,000 to 7,300 yards. Much of this will depend upon weather/wind conditions and matching certain teeing grounds with certain hole locations.



116th U.S. Amateur Championship

August 15 - 21, 2016

North Course

<u>HOLE</u>	<u>YARDAGE</u>	<u>PAR</u>
1	349	4
2	405	4
3	398	4
4	202	3
5	625	5
6	213	3
7	424	4
8	478	4
9	461	<u>4</u>
	OUT	35
10	186	3
11	467	4
12	512	5
13	169	3
14	419	4
15	310	4
16	373	4
17	464	4
18	<u>394</u>	<u>4</u>
	IN	35
	OUT	<u>35</u>
	TOTAL	70

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- **Limitation of Play in 2016** – As mentioned in the U.S. Amateur host club agreement, Oakland Hills Country Club is obligated to close the championship course on August 12 to prepare for the start of the official practice rounds. However, the USGA highly recommends developing a golf course conditioning and closure plan that would allow for a reduction of play leading into the championship and even an early closure if unusual circumstances arise. Circumstances such as stressful weather patterns and abnormal wear and tear on the putting greens have made it necessary for past sites to further limit cart traffic, reduce overall play and even close the course early. The USGA would support these aggressive measures, if needed, as it would obviously benefit the grounds staff and give them the opportunity to properly prepare for the championship. In the end, we want to work together to present the golf course to the world's best amateurs in its absolute best condition.
- **Daily Meetings** – The USGA would like to schedule a daily meeting with Steve and his superintendents starting Thursday of advance week. Our side will be represented by the Chairman of the USGA Championship Committee, Darin Bevard, 2 other USGA Green Section staff members, Bill McCarthy and me. Bill McCarthy will be the lead USGA staff person for course set-up and Rules on the North course and he will work with one of our Green Section staff members there; I will take that lead role from a staff standpoint on the South course. We would additionally welcome any presence from the club side that you would additionally like to have partake. The goal with these daily meetings will be to (1) assess the current golf course conditions, (2) devise a game plan and schedule for the afternoon and next morning's maintenance and (3) make sure everyone is crystal clear on these plans. I would suggest we meet at 2:30 p.m. each day (separate meeting at each course) in a convenient and private location of your choosing.
- **Hole Locations** – The USGA will set all hole locations for the championship, including practice rounds. We will be using seven (7) hole locations on the South course: one (1) for practice rounds, one (1) for stroke play and five (5) for match play. We will utilize two (2) different hole locations on the North course: one (1) for practice rounds and one (1) for stroke play. It is imperative that the Grounds staff and/or Golf Shop staff locate holes in the weeks preceding the championship away from the best locations (i.e., if possible, please utilize the center of the putting greens and "over-the-top" locations that the USGA will likely not use). Darin Bevard or I can make suggestions in this regard during upcoming site visits. The fewer times hole locations are changed the 4 weeks prior to the championship the better, assuming you do not wear out certain areas of the green and that the edges of the holes do not become overly dry. Each golf course will need to provide two experienced Grounds Staff members to cut holes starting Saturday morning of practice rounds – one for the front nine and the other for the back nine. Beginning with match play, all golf will start from the South course 1st hole. It may be advantageous to have at least 2 of these staff members attend the championship a year prior to work with the USGA and current host club to get a better understanding of our preferred hole cutting methods and course setup philosophy. Beginning with practice rounds, the hole cutters will need the appropriate materials to paint the inside of the holes above the liners white.

- **Course Maintenance Schedule** – Darin Bevard and I will work closely with the Grounds Staff on preparation procedures each day of the championship. At the very least, putting greens, collars and teeing grounds should be mown in the mornings. Our preference is to have putting green approaches and closely mown areas, as well as fairways and intermediate rough mown in the mornings; if that is not practical due to time constraints or grass clipping problems please plan on having the dew removed. Fairways when mown should be mown in the same direction to eliminate fairways that appear (and play according to the players) divided in half (i.e., we prefer not to have half a fairway mown towards the putting green and the other half mown towards the teeing ground). Push (all mower passes from tee to green) – Pull (all mower passes from green to tee) mowing should be initiated no later than Monday of advance week. The daily cycling between push-pull mowing should be configured so that there is no grain from green to tee – we do not want players hitting “into the grain.” The USGA prefers no striping in all areas of the golf course but realize that implementing that in all areas may be challenging.

The primary/secondary rough as well as other areas not mown in the morning can be mown in the afternoons. Play will begin from both 1 and 10 teeing grounds at 7:00 a.m., 7:15 a.m. or 7:30 a.m. for the two practice rounds and the two stroke play rounds. *(Note: We will finalize the exact start times in the fall of 2016. During the time of the U.S. Amateur this year, please closely monitor how early in the morning balls can be seen in flight on your practice range. This, along with consultation from both Grounds Staffs on the necessary morning preparation lead-time, will assist us in determining the first tee times).* You can likely begin afternoon work during the practice and stroke play rounds around 6:00 p.m. The estimated (subject to change for television) first tee times for match play are as follows:

- Play-off to determine final match play spots – 8:00 a.m. (Wednesday; Holes 10, 11, 17 and 18 repeated on North Course)
 - Round 1 – 9:00 a.m. (Wednesday; extra hole matches to Holes 1, 2, 3...)
 - Round 2 – 7:40 a.m. (Thursday; extra hole matches to Holes 1, 2, 3...)
 - Round 3 – 1:40 p.m. (Thursday; extra hole matches to Holes 1, 2, 3...)
 - Quarterfinals – 1:00 p.m. (Friday; weather pending; extra hole matches to 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18)
 - Semi-finals – 8:00 a.m. (Saturday; extra hole matches to 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18)
 - Final – 8:30 a.m./2:00 p.m. (Sunday; extra hole matches to 10, 11, 12, 16 17 and 18)
- **Bunker Preparation** – Darin and I will instruct the Grounds Staff on bunker preparation, including guidance on the bunker firmness and direction for raking. In general, we desire the faces of the bunkers to be firmer than the bottoms. If anything, we will likely have the bottoms of your bunkers softened up a bit. Bunker rakes must be placed outside the bunkers in locations least likely to affect play.
 - **Practice Areas** – During our visit we identified several areas for practice that should allow us to accommodate the 312 players with ease. Those areas are:
 - The upper level of the practice tee (12-15 paces) from the back edge will be protected and reserved at least 8 weeks prior to the event for daily warm-up for all 312 players
 - The short game area player’s right of #18 tee North

- The practice putting green located behind #10 South teeing ground
- The practice putting green located adjacent to #18 North putting green
- The back 4-5 paces of the practice tee at Bloomfield Hills Country Club
- The front edge of the #1 fairway at Bloomfield Hills Country Club for practice tee overflow space

Please ensure that the conditions of all practice facilities, including putting and short game, mimic the conditions on the golf course (i.e., mowing heights, green speeds and firmness). The USGA will arrange for top-quality practice balls from Titleist. Robbie Zalneck will provide guidance on other practice range-related issues (e.g., staff and materials needed at the range, time of operation, etc.).

- **Inclement Weather** – Plans need to be made for inclement weather. Both golf courses must plan to have a supply of squeegees and several pumps on site to help remove casual water. The USGA will provide an on-site meteorologist located at the club who will monitor weather for both golf courses. This person will be equipped with real-time radar, weather stations, lightning detectors and predictors. As the USGA will be responsible for any suspensions of play, it will be necessary for any existing automatic weather sirens to be disengaged.
- **Course Marking** – The USGA will mark both golf courses the week prior – likely the preceding Wednesday on the North Course and Thursday for the South Course. We will provide all course marking paint and paint gun applicators. **Each course must provide or supplement an ample supply of white out of bounds stakes (2" x 2" x 36"), as well as yellow regular water hazard and red lateral water hazard stakes (1" x 2" x 18) for the USGA's use.** It is imperative that both golf courses not use paint on the course to define water hazards and/or ground under repair for at least four (4) weeks prior to the championship.
- **Sod Work** – Please review with Darin or me any sod work that is contemplated later than October of 2015. Bare areas might be preferential to sodded grass if the latter has not healed properly by championship week.
- **Repair of Divots** – Divots, including on teeing grounds, should be repaired after play. Darin will work with the Grounds Staff to come up with the appropriate mix. The USGA desires a mixture that firms up as much as possible such as a 50 – 50 mix of sand and soil. An all sand mix (or sand with a mixture of other non-compacting material, e.g., peat) must be avoided.
- **Protection of Teeing Grounds** – Please protect an area roughly 5 – 6 paces on both sides of the tee sign on each hole from play beginning a few months prior to the championship. In many cases, it might be best just to keep play off most of the championship tees (and portions of the forward tees we plan on using). Further, please provide protective covering (mesh the width of the teeing ground attached to 1"x 2" wooden posts at both ends or enkamat is recommended) starting the Saturday prior to advance week on holes 3, 9, 13, 17 – South and holes 4, 6, 10, 13 and 15 – North . If our desired yardage (tee sign location) is near the back of a given teeing ground, please allow a small area (roughly 2 – 3 paces) where players can hit tee shots during practice rounds; in other words, give some space behind the tee signs for players to hit tee shots during practice rounds.

- **Flagsticks/Prisms/Flags/Hole Liners** – Both golf courses will be provided two sets of flagsticks by the USGA. The USGA will provide prisms to be affixed to the top of the flagsticks to ease the use of distance measuring devices during the championship. The USGA will also provide two sets of hole flags for each golf course that have the hole number, the name of the championship and the USGA logo. Hole liners (cups) will also be provided for both golf courses. These flagsticks, flags, prisms and hole liners must be used beginning with the practice rounds. The flagsticks, flags and hole liners become the club's property upon completion of the championship but the prisms must be returned to the USGA.
- **Tee Markers** – The USGA will provide two sets of tee markers for both clubs. We will set these markers each morning of the championship. The USGA will set these markers each morning beginning with the first practice round.
- **Tee Signs** – The courses will need to provide for and erect the tee signs for both golf courses. (*Note: Robbie Zalneck will provide the specifications of these tee signs*). The USGA will spot with paint the location for the sign near each teeing ground the week prior. The Grounds Staff must ensure these locations are free from irrigation lines and the like.
- **On-Call Grounds Staff During Play** – Both Grounds Staffs should be equipped with blowers during play to remove sand and other debris from the putting greens that might cause pace of play problems. These staff members must have the ability to react in a timely manner. Please also have staff ready should there be a need to syringe any putting green(s) due to play problems or if you have a concern with the health of the grass.
- **Removal of Roping, Signage, etc.** – Please remove all cart ropes, stakes, directional signs, etc. by the Friday prior to championship week. Any benches or ball washers near forward teeing grounds should also be removed if they have the potential for play problems. Where space permits, benches are fine at the teeing grounds to be used for the championship.
- **Roping and Staking of the Golf Course** – The South course will have its teeing grounds and putting greens roped and staked the week prior. The North course will only have its 1st and 10th teeing grounds and its 9th and 18th putting greens roped and staked. Robbie Zalneck will oversee this process that will be handled by either the championship's operational team or by each respective Grounds Staff. The USGA will provide the ropes and stakes. Robbie will provide details on a schedule and materials.
- **Communications Equipment** – It will be imperative for the USGA to keep good communications with both Grounds Staffs during championship week. We will provide each Grounds Staff with a few USGA Rules Committee two-way radios. It is also highly recommended that both superintendents and their key assistants carry cellular phones during championship week. A list of important grounds staff cell phone numbers should be supplied to the USGA in advance of the championship.



Ben Kimball
Director, U.S. Amateur Championship

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(Updated with feedback from Ben Kimball's 11-10-2016 visit)
(Updated with feedback from Ben Kimball's 4-12-2017 visit)

January 11, 2016

Mr. Brian Sullivan
Golf Course Superintendent
Bel-Air Country Club
10768 Bellagio Road
Los Angeles, California 90077

Dear Brian,

Thank you for taking the time to escort me, Darin Bevard, Pat Gross and Mike Sweeney around Bel-Air Country Club during our site visit on November 18. The players who qualify for the 117th U.S. Amateur Championship will surely be in for a wonderful treat, as well as a fabulous test of golf. The recently completed or nearly completed course improvement/modification program that you have implemented has been a remarkable success and I am hopeful that your membership is very proud of the finished product.

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the golf course preparation details for Bel-Air Country Club for the 2017 U.S. Amateur Championship. Darin Bevard, Pat Gross and I will be working closely with you over the next couple years on the below specifications. Darin and Pat will advise on the technical golf course conditioning and agronomic matters. As you are well aware, Robbie Zalneck is the USGA point-person on all other aspects of the championship.

The USGA desires relatively firm conditions throughout the golf course. Fast conditions require good shot-making and enhance the test of golf. With this in mind, you should know that we will absolutely not subject your golf course to harm by mandating unreasonable requests for firmness and green speeds. However, it is important for your host committee and club membership to understand that we will only be irrigating the golf course for turf survival and not turf color during the championship week. This practice may present a different aesthetic result than the membership is used to seeing on a daily basis so further member education is recommended. Ultimately, the health of your golf course is more important than one week's championship set-up and we will always err on the side of keeping the turf healthy versus risking injury to playing surfaces. The exact firmness of the putting greens will likely be addressed with you by Pat Gross and Bill McCarthy along with myself during the week of the championship.



Below in the hole-by-hole section, you will see each hole's yardage. This is where the tee sign will be located but not necessarily where we will place tee markers on a daily basis. Sometime prior to our arrival, we will discuss which teeing grounds to protect.

We briefly discussed putting green speeds for the championship. Based on your feedback, we agreed we would prepare the greens to a speed of (11 to 12 feet) as measured on the USGA Stimp meter during the competition days. However, we realize due to certain extenuating circumstances (recent weather conditions, etc.) we may need to modify our suggested green prep strategy in order to protect turf quality. This is to be expected and the USGA will work with Bel-Air Country Club to maintain grass health while achieving the desired speeds. We may ask that the greens be prepped even faster (12 ½ feet or slightly more) when we first arrive so we can find the "break point" where challenging hole locations cannot be used. It is important that we strive for an agreed upon speed no later than the Saturday when the players will be playing their first practice round. The health of your putting greens leading into the championship is extremely important to us and our intent is to keep green speeds consistent throughout the championship. If the above Stimp meter ranges need minor adjustment, we will let you know prior to or during the two practice rounds. The preparation methods for the putting greens (i.e., the height of cut, the number of cuts per day, whether they are rolled, plant growth regulation, irrigation, etc.) will be made by you, in consultation with Darin Bevard and Pat Gross. A goal we have for every championship is to have green speeds remain as consistent as possible from morning until play ends in the afternoon. As it relates to height of cut for the putting greens, we would prefer to have the flexibility of removing daily cuts or rolls as needed so a higher height of cut to start would be our preference. Please consult with Darin Bevard and Pat Gross on what that recommended starting height may be.

Regarding rough, we discussed that unlike our Open Championships that have the entire course roped and staked, the Amateur allows spectators a little more freedom move around the golf course. With that being said, you can anticipate a little trampling effect to your rough. We have no problem with this but we also will not know exactly what to prescribe in terms of height and frequency of cut. For now, let's plan that the primary rough will be grown to 2 ¼ inches by the advance week of the championship. The USGA will make a decision the Wednesday or Thursday of the week prior on how the rough will be maintained during the championship. If we are lucky and have dry conditions, we might only mow the rough every other night or maybe we just let it grow for the week.

Your intermediate cut of rough (6 feet in width) adjacent to the fairways should be 1 ¼ inch in height. As you begin to approach each putting green, this intermediate cut should gradually narrow down to 15 to 30 inches (depending upon your mower width) and buffer the putting green collar and primary rough where applicable.

The height of the cut of the grass in the various areas of the course for the championship should be as follows:

<u>Grass Types</u>	
Tees	– hybrid Bermuda/bent/poa
Fairways	– hybrid bermudagrass
Greens	– poa
Rough	– bermudagrass/kikuyu

Practice Tee	.375 to .400 inch
Putting greens	Height necessary to obtain an average measurement of 11 to 12 feet on the USGA Stimpmeter
Collars around greens	.250 to .300 inch
Green approaches & closely mown areas	.250 to .300 inch
Teeing grounds	.375 to .400 inch
Fairways	.375 to .400 inch
Courtesy walks	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width)
Intermediate rough	1 ¼ inch (6 foot width in fairways; 15 – 30 inches around greens)
Primary Rough	3 inches

The hole-by-hole notes are as follows.

- Hole 1** **500 yards, par 5 – 1st tee from back**
- Hole 2** **441 yards, par 4 – area 3 paces back from the 438 plate**
- Hole 3** **174 yards, par 3 – area adjacent to 174 plate**
- Hole 4** **450 yards, par 4 – area 2 paces back from the 448 plate**
- Hole 5** **162 yards, par 3 – area 3 paces forward of the 165 plate**
- Hole 6** **354 yards, par 4 – area 1 pace back from the 353 plate**
- Hole 7** **406 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to 406 plate**
- Hole 8** **516 yards, par 5 – area 3 paces back from the 513 plate**

A dropping zone for this hole will likely be located on the front of the 128 yard teeing ground (dependent on selected hole location) and this area should be protected as needed prior to the championship.

Hole 9 420 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 420 plate

It is recommended that the cedar trees (150 yards or so from the back tee) on the left side of this hole being considered for removal.

Hole 10 195 yards, par 3 – area adjacent to the 195 plate

Hole 11 388 yards, par 4 – area 4 paces forward of the 392 plate

Hole 12 391 yards, par 4 – area 3 paces back from the 388 plate

It was discussed that the fairway, player's left of hole, be extended in the drive zone closer to the creek edge. The USGA would be supportive of this change. Cart traffic on the left side of this hole has hindered rough growth so grooming this area to fairway height instead will certainly bring the creek more into play.

Hole 13 232 yards, par 3 – area 4 paces forward of the 236 plate

Hole 14 581 yards, par 5 – area 4 paces back from the 577 plate

Hole 15 465 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 465 plate

Hole 16 198 yards, par 4 – area 3 paces back from the 195 plate

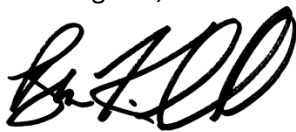
Hole 17 468 yards, par 4 – area adjacent to the 468 plate

Hole 18 416 yards, par 4 – area 2 paces back from the 414 plate

You will find below a section entitled **Miscellaneous Items** containing other items relevant to the golf course set-up and preparation. Upon our next site visit we will look to discuss in detail many of the particulars contained in this letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have. The USGA is most appreciative of Bel-Air Country Club's willingness to host the U.S. Amateur Championship. We are greatly looking forward to working with you. If you have concerns with any of the content or directives in this letter, please feel free to contact me or Darin.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Kimball".

Ben Kimball
Director, U.S. Amateur Championship



117th U.S. Amateur Championship

August 14 - 15, 2017

Bel-Air Country Club

<u>HOLE</u>	<u>YARDAGE</u>	<u>PAR</u>
1	500	5
2	441	4
3	174	3
4	450	4
5	162	3
6	354	4
7	406	4
8	516	5
9	420	<u>4</u>
OUT		36
10	195	3
11	388	4
12	391	4
13	232	3
14	581	5
15	465	4
16	198	3
17	468	4
18	416	<u>4</u>
IN		34
OUT		<u>36</u>
TOTAL		70

Note: Exact hole yardages (from tee markers to flagsticks) and total golf course yardage will be provided for the stroke play rounds. The total length of the golf course will likely be in the range of 6,600 to 6,700 yards. Much of this will depend upon weather/wind conditions and matching certain teeing grounds with certain hole locations.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- **Limitation of Play in 2017** – As mentioned in the U.S. Amateur host club agreement, Bel-Air Country Club is obligated to close the championship course on August 10 to prepare for the start of the official practice rounds. However, the USGA highly recommends developing a golf course conditioning and closure plan that would allow for a reduction of play leading into the championship and even an early closure if unusual circumstances arise. Circumstances such as stressful weather patterns and abnormal wear and tear on the putting greens have made it necessary for past sites to further limit cart traffic, reduce overall play and even close the course early. The USGA would support these aggressive measures, if needed, as it would obviously benefit the grounds staff and give them the opportunity to properly prepare for the championship. In the end, we want to work together to present the golf course to the world’s best amateurs in its absolute best condition.
- **Daily Meetings** – The USGA would like to schedule a daily meeting with Brian and his staff starting Thursday of advance week. Our side will be represented by the Chairman of the USGA Rules of Golf Committee, Pat Gross and USGA staff member, Bill McCarthy. We would additionally welcome any presence from the club side that you would additionally like to have partake. The goal with these daily meetings will be to (1) assess the current golf course conditions, (2) devise a game plan and schedule for the afternoon and next morning’s maintenance and (3) make sure everyone is crystal clear on these plans. I would suggest we meet at 2:30 p.m. each day (separate meeting at each course) in a convenient and private location of your choosing.
- **Hole Locations** – The USGA will set all hole locations for the championship, including practice rounds. We will be using two (2) hole locations on the course: one (1) for practice rounds and one (1) for stroke play. It is imperative that the Grounds staff and/or Golf Shop staff locate holes in the weeks preceding the championship away from the best locations (i.e., if possible, please utilize the center of the putting greens and “over-the-top” locations that the USGA will likely not use). Darin Bevard or I can make suggestions in this regard during upcoming site visits. The fewer times hole locations are changed the 4 weeks prior to the championship the better, assuming you do not wear out certain areas of the green and that the edges of the holes do not become overly dry. You will need to provide two experienced Grounds Staff members to cut holes starting Saturday morning of practice rounds – one for the front nine and the other for the back nine. It may be advantageous to have at least 2 of these staff members attend the championship a year prior to work with the USGA and current host club to get a better understanding of our preferred hole cutting methods and course setup philosophy. Beginning with practice rounds, the hole cutters will need the appropriate materials to paint the inside of the holes white above the liners.
- **Course Maintenance Schedule** – Pat Gross and Bill McCarthy will work closely with the Grounds Staff on preparation procedures each day of the championship. At the very least, putting greens, collars and teeing grounds should be mown in the mornings. Our preference is to have putting green approaches and closely mown areas, as well as fairways and intermediate rough mown in the mornings; if that is not practical due to time constraints or grass clipping problems please plan on having the dew removed. We prefer but certainly do not mandate that fairways

be mown in the same direction to eliminate fairways that appear (and play according to the players) divided in half (i.e., we prefer not to have half a fairway mown towards the putting green and the other half mown towards the teeing ground). Push (all mower passes from tee to green) – Pull (all mower passes from green to tee) mowing should be initiated no later than Monday of advance week. The daily cycling between push-pull mowing should be configured so that there is no grain from green to tee – we do not want players hitting “into the grain.” The USGA prefers no striping in all areas of the golf course but realize that implementing that in all areas may be challenging.

The primary rough as well as other areas not mown in the morning can be mown in the afternoons. Play will begin from both 1 and 10 teeing grounds at 7:00 a.m., 7:15 a.m. or 7:30 a.m. for the two practice rounds and the two stroke play rounds. *(Note: We will finalize the exact start times in the fall of 2016. During the time of the U.S. Amateur this year, please closely monitor how early in the morning balls can be seen in flight on your practice range. This, along with consultation from both Grounds Staffs on the necessary morning preparation lead-time, will assist us in determining the first tee times).* You can likely begin afternoon work during the practice and stroke play rounds around 6:00 p.m.

- **Bunker Preparation** – Darin, Pat and I will instruct the Grounds Staff on bunker preparation, including guidance on the bunker firmness and direction for raking. In general, we desire the faces of the bunkers to be firmer than the bottoms. If anything, we will likely have the bottoms of your bunkers softened up a bit. Bunker rakes must be placed outside the bunkers in locations least likely to affect play.
- **Practice Areas** – During our visit we identified several areas for practice that should allow us to accommodate the 312 players (156 daily) with relative ease. Those areas are:
 - The practice tee space (2 sides – North and West) will be protected and reserved at least 8 weeks prior to the event for daily warm-up of the 156 players playing at BCC that day.
 - The short game area located between hole #2 and hole #8
 - The practice putting green located between hole #2 and hole #8
 - The practice putting green adjacent to the Bel-Air Country Club Clubhouse

Please ensure that the conditions of all practice facilities, including putting and short game, mimic the conditions on the golf course (i.e., mowing heights, green speeds and firmness). The USGA will arrange for top-quality practice balls from Titleist. Robbie Zalneck will provide guidance on other practice range-related issues (e.g., staff and materials needed at the range, time of operation, etc.).

- **Inclement Weather** – Plans need to be made for inclement weather. You must plan to have a supply of squeegees and several pumps on site to help remove casual water. The USGA will provide an on-site meteorologist located at Riviera Country Club who will monitor weather for both Riviera Country Club and Bel-Air Country Club. This person will be equipped with real-time radar, weather stations, lightning detectors and predictors. As the USGA will be responsible for any suspensions of play, it will be necessary for any existing automatic weather sirens to be disengaged.

- **Course Marking** – The USGA will mark both golf courses being used the week prior – likely the preceding Wednesday at Bel-Air CC and Thursday at Riviera CC. We will provide all course marking paint and paint gun applicators. **Each course must provide or supplement an ample supply of white out of bounds stakes (2" x 2" x 36"), as well as yellow regular water hazard and red lateral water hazard stakes (1" x 2" x 18) for the USGA's use.** It is imperative that both golf courses not use paint on the course to define water hazards and/or ground under repair for at least four (4) weeks prior to the championship.
- **Sod Work** – Please review any major sod work that is being contemplated with Darin, Pat or myself before starting. Bare areas might be preferential to sodded grass if the latter has not healed properly by championship week.
- **Repair of Divots** – Divots, including on teeing grounds, should be repaired after play. Darin will work with the Grounds Staff to come up with the appropriate mix. The USGA desires a mixture that firms up as much as possible such as a 50 – 50 mix of sand and soil. An all sand mix (or sand with a mixture of other non-compacting material, e.g., peat) must be avoided.
- **Protection of Teeing Grounds** – Please protect an area roughly 5 – 6 paces on both sides of the tee sign on each hole from play beginning a few months prior to the championship. In many cases, it might be best just to keep play off most of the championship tees (and portions of the forward tees we plan on using). Further, please provide protective covering (mesh the width of the teeing ground attached to 1" x 2" wooden posts at both ends or enkamat is recommended) starting the Saturday prior to advance week on holes 3, 5, 10, 13 and 16. If our desired yardage (tee sign location) is near the back of a given teeing ground, please allow a small area (roughly 2 – 3 paces) where players can hit tee shots during practice rounds; in other words, give some space behind the tee signs for players to hit tee shots during practice rounds.
- **Flagsticks/Prisms/Flags/Hole Liners** – You will be provided two sets of flagsticks by the USGA. The USGA will provide prisms to be affixed to the top of the flagsticks to ease the use of distance measuring devices during the championship. The USGA will also provide two sets of hole flags that have the hole number, the name of the championship and the USGA logo. Hole liners (cups) will also be provided. These flagsticks, flags, prisms and hole liners must be used beginning with the practice rounds. The flagsticks, flags and hole liners become the club's property upon completion of the championship but the prisms must be returned to the USGA.
- **Tee Markers** – The USGA will provide two sets of tee markers. We will set these markers each morning of the championship. The USGA will set these markers each morning beginning with the first practice round.
- **Tee Signs** – The course will need to provide for and erect the tee signs for the golf course. (*Note: Robbie Zalzneck will provide the specifications of these tee signs*). The USGA will spot with paint the location for the sign near each teeing ground the week prior. The Grounds Staff must ensure these locations are free from irrigation lines and the like.

- **On-Call Grounds Staff During Play** – Grounds Staff should be equipped with blowers during play to remove sand and other debris from the putting greens that might cause pace of play problems. These staff members must have the ability to react in a timely manner. Please also have staff ready should there be a need to syringe any putting green(s) due to play problems or if you have a concern with the health of the grass.
- **Removal of Roping, Signage, etc.** – Please remove all cart ropes, stakes, directional signs, etc. by the Friday prior to championship week. Any benches or ball washers near forward teeing grounds should also be removed if they have the potential for play problems. Where space permits, benches are fine at the teeing grounds to be used for the championship.
- **Roping and Staking of the Golf Course** – The course will have its starting teeing grounds (#1 and #10 only) and putting greens (#9 and #18 only) roped and staked during the advance week. Robbie Zalzneck or Bill McCarthy will oversee this process and will work with either the championship’s operational team or the Grounds Staff in order to get this done. The USGA will provide the ropes and stakes. Robbie will provide details on a schedule and materials needed to complete the task.
- **Communications Equipment** – It will be imperative for the USGA to keep good communications with the Grounds Staffs during championship week. We will provide your Grounds Staff with a few USGA Rules Committee two-way radios. It is also highly recommended that your key assistants carry cellular phones during championship week. A list of important grounds staff cell phone numbers should be supplied to the USGA in advance of the championship.