

Inside the Ropes at the U.S. Open at Bethpage Black

By **CARR McCALLA**

TUESDAY (JUNE 16, 2009)

Up at 3:45 a.m. to catch a 5:30 flight. As you might imagine, my wife was pretty excited to serve as my chauffeur.

My flight is scheduled to arrive at LaGuardia at 12:15 p.m., if all goes according to plan. From there it's about an hour's drive east on Long Island to Bethpage. I'll go to the hotel first to check in, then to the course to get the lay of the land. I was here for the 2002 Open and my understanding is that there haven't been a lot of changes to the course since then, but I'll probably hook up with some of the other officials to walk the course.

I talked to my bunk-mate yesterday, Allen Richardson from Murfreesboro, Tenn. Allen and I sometimes room together when our wives don't go with us to the Open. We stayed together last year at Torrey Pines for the first time in a number of years. I had forgotten how loudly he snores so yesterday I made a stop at a local drug store to pick up some ear plugs. We'll see if they work.

Allen's flight was a bit late getting in so I waited on him at the hotel, then we took the shuttle out to the golf course and renewed old acquaintances.

One of the great things about working the Open is getting to know rules people from around the country, actually around the world. One of the first people I saw once we got to the clubhouse was Tai Kawata, tournament director for the Japanese Golf Association. He is invited to many of the USGA events and almost always makes it to the Open. I first met him when we both worked The Masters in 2000. We went by the rules trailer and checked out our locker room before settling in at the rules officials' hospitality room. I had intended to walk nine holes

today but decided to wait until tomorrow morning to check out the course. I'm pretty familiar with it from 2002 and want to read over the rules supplement tonight so I'll know what to look for on my walk tomorrow in terms of potential rules situations.

WEDNESDAY (JUNE 17, 2009)

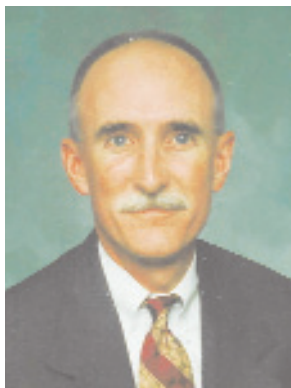
Our alarm went off at 6:15 this morning. My ear plugs did the job last night.

I only heard Allen's snoring on occasion, and when I did, I was able to get back to sleep pretty quickly. Needless to say, I will continue to give Allen a hard time about reimbursing me for the cost of my ear plugs.

We were at the clubhouse by 7:45 for breakfast and started our trek around the course by 9. We also walked with Mark Hill, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Golf Association. His wife

and son made the trip with him, and Brady, his 5-year old, was immersed in getting autographs. We took about three hours walking the course to see what unusual rules issues we might need to be aware of. Bethpage Black is a big, big, golf course.....over 7,400 yards (par 70).

There's a lot of acreage out there and the USGA's done a good job of putting grandstands, concession areas, etc., as far away from play as they can without limiting the spectators' ability to see the competition. Consequently, there should be a minimum of issues with TIOs (temporary immovable obstructions). These are structures that have been constructed on a temporary basis just for the Championship and are treated a bit differently than a normal immovable obstruction. We got back in around noon, had lunch, and headed back to the hotel to get cleaned up for our rules meeting this afternoon. It will be held at the Tam O'Shanter Club about 45 minutes away.



Carr McCalla

The Rules meeting went as expected. We had received our tentative assignments for the first two rounds earlier in the day and those were verified at the rules meeting. On Thursday, I have Luke Donald and Tim Clark. My third was supposed to have been 2008 Masters Champion Trevor Immelman but he pulled out earlier in the week because of injury so Clint Jenson, a mini-tour player from south Florida will fill out our group, then for the second round I'll walk with Stuart Appleby, Fred Funk, and former British Open Champion Todd Hamilton. The weather forecast is for rain beginning sometime after midnight tonight and continuing most of the day tomorrow. The golf course is already somewhat damp and won't be able to take a lot of additional precipitation. I'll leave the hotel around 6:15 in the morning so I'll have time to eat breakfast before preparing for our 8:06 a.m. starting time.

My group starts on No. 10 which is about as far away from the clubhouse as is possible. There will be a shuttle to take the players and rules officials from the clubhouse area to the 10th tee. We've been instructed to plan on catching the shuttle about 25 minutes before our starting time so I'll have to be ready to catch the shuttle around 7:35 to be sure I'll be at the 10th tee in plenty of time.

THURSDAY (JUNE 18, 2009)

It began raining about 4 a.m., mostly intermittently. By the time we arrived at the course around 6:30 it was a steady drizzle that didn't show signs of stopping anytime soon. The conditions were less than perfect when we started and didn't improve. The first three holes on the backside are long par 4s that played even longer with the damp, rainy conditions. They actually played No. 10 from a forward tee today.....Donald and Clark made good up-and-down pars with Jenson starting with a bogey. Donald triple-bogeyed No. 11 after hitting his drive into an unplayable lie in the rough

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