

Davies: Women on course for low U.S. Open scores

The Associated Press

NORTH PLAINS — As the premier event in women's golf, the U.S. Women's Open also is supposed to be the most challenging.

But Laura Davies is predicting a select few golfers will be able to tame the Witch Hollow course at Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club when play begins Thursday.

"I don't think level par is going to win this week by any means because I think the course is very playable," she said. "I should think if you're four or five under Sunday morning, you're going to have a very good squeak at it."

U.S. Open courses are longer than those the women usually play, and that favors the big, accurate hitters such as Davies, Karrie Webb and two-time defending champion Annika Sorenstam.

Davies, who flew in from her native England on Monday, was expecting to find a much different layout from the par-71, 6,365-yard course she found carved in the rolling hills at the foot of the Coast Range 25 miles west of Portland.

It's the ninth-longest course in U.S. Open history and the second-longest par-71, but it didn't look very long to Davies.

"I think it's one of the shorter

Open courses we've had for a long time," she said. "I was quite surprised because I did think it was going to be playing very long. I'd just heard it was a long course. It's going to be one of the more scorable Opens."

However, no U.S. Open course is easy.

Nearly every hole at Witch Hollow requires clearing some obstacle — water, trees, sand.

"You can't bounce it up on the green," Webb said. "I'm a high-ball hitter, so I think that's one of the advantages I have."

The course, which opened just five years ago, was the site of Tiger

Woods' third consecutive U.S. Amateur championship last summer. In the layout put together by the U.S. Golf Association for this week, there are four par-5s, including the 494-yard 18th.

"It's kind of weird to reach a U.S. Open par-5 as the last hole," Webb said. "but that will make for a very exciting finish."

The rough, always long for a U.S. Open, is a little shorter than usual, Webb said, but that's deceiving, especially after this week's rain.

"The rough doesn't look long, but once you get in it's tough to get out of it," Webb said. "It grabs quite a bit and it's really hard to get a ball

to the green if you've got a 7-iron distance in."

Sorenstam and Webb, considered the two best golfers on the women's tour, will be playing together in a three-some with Emilee Klein in the first two rounds.

The gallery should be huge for them, since Sorenstam is trying to become the first to win three consecutive U.S. Women's championships. Webb welcomes her pairing with Sorenstam.

"I'm sure she's definitely going to be in there in contention," Webb said. "Hopefully, I can keep up with her or be a step up on her."

Ruling: Tyson knew he would get the stiffest penalty possible

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At 31, a lengthy absence from the ring would also hasten what many view as a decline in his boxing skills — a decline that was exposed in the two fights with Holyfield. If Tyson is allowed to return to the ring, it could be more as a curiosity than a serious heavyweight contender.

"Anything over a year would be disastrous," veteran trainer Emanuel Steward said. "His style of fighting is a youth-style fighting. Fighters like that don't usually fight past 27 anyway."

Commissioners said they would review the case in a year.

"The one person who has the most influence on how long this will last is Mike Tyson," commission member Dr. James Nave said. "He has to decide how to live his life and how to conduct himself."

The five Nevada commissioners, though careful to say they had not predetermined Tyson's fate, took only 26 minutes to unanimously find him guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct and discrediting boxing. Their decision was made during a morning hearing inside a packed Las Vegas City Hall

council chambers.

They needed only 18 minutes more before voting unanimously again to revoke Tyson's license to box and ordering the maximum fine, 10 percent of Tyson's \$30 million purse. The fine will go into the state's general fund, despite requests from youth groups for the proceeds.

"I, for one, believe we must take the most stringent action before us," commission chairman Dr. Elias Ghanem said.

Goodman offered no defense for Tyson, who had ordered his attorney not to contest the charge, but asked the commission not to impose the most severe sanctions. Tyson's attorneys, however, retained the option of going to court to try and overturn the revocation on legal grounds.

"Mr. Tyson spoke to the world after the fight," Goodman said. "He told the world he was sorry about what had happened. He threw himself on the mercy of this court."

"After his boxing losses, he would shake his opponent's hand. He was a gentleman," Goodman added. "He remains a gentleman today and retains his dignity today."

Prosecutor Gordy Fink, however, por-

trayed Tyson's actions in his WBA heavyweight title fight another way.

"There's a fine line between sports and chaos," Fink said. "What happened June 28, those events went beyond that line."

Attorneys for Tyson had indicated earlier that they expected him to appear before the panel, and Tyson flew back to Las Vegas after spending the weekend in New York City.

But he caught an overnight flight back to New York early Wednesday, accompanied by two bodyguards.

"If I had been advising him, I probably would have advised him to come," Nave said.

Goodman, though, said Tyson knew he would probably get the stiffest penalty.

"I think he knew it was likely," Goodman said. "I expected this to happen and I advised him not to be here."

That may not have helped his case with the commission, which also had the option of suspending him. A suspension of more than a year might have actually resulted in a tougher penalty if Tyson can successful-

ly apply to get his license back.

Nevertheless, Goodman decried a "lynch mob mentality" against Tyson, and predicted commissioners will have an easy decision to make when Tyson appears before them next July to ask to be able to box again.

"Mike Tyson will go before the commission then and say I did my time and paid my price," Goodman said. "He's a great fighter and he'll be back in a year."

That was news to Nave, who refused to say what he believes will happen in a year.

"I respect Oscar's opinion, but I don't know what his thought process is," Nave said.

Holyfield's lawyer, Jim Thomas, told the commission the heavyweight champion had settled his differences with Tyson, but that he wanted a penalty severe enough to show that boxing is a civilized sport.

"Evander has forgiven Mike Tyson," Thomas said. "But people want to know if this is a true and legitimate sport whose rules will be enforced or whether it is uncontrollable violence."

Frank: Paxson personable, friendly

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realized what a thrill this would have been for me 12 years ago. To meet Jim Paxson — impossible. When you are eight years old, those guys hardly seem real.

It wasn't until after class was over and I walked by Paxson in the hall on his way out that I began to realize what I had just experienced.

I told him "Thanks." He smiled, nodded his head and kept walking.

Sure, he wasn't Michael Jordan, but to me he was better than Jordan.

And after a quick peek at his career numbers, he was a much bet-

ter player than I ever remembered.

He was one of only four players to score 10,000 points in a Blazers uniform and was named to the all-star team twice. Not really Jordanesque, but not half bad.

After all these years, was Paxson all I thought he would be?

Very much so.

He was personable, candid and friendly, something not common in today's world. He was just as I pretended to be during post-game interviews following the Blazers' win.

Two days after Paxson's visit, I met with my professor and finally realized just how special Mon-

day's class was.

He asked me what I thought of Paxson. I told him my story, he smiled and asked me why I didn't tell Paxson about it.

I really didn't know why. I had thought about it, but maybe I was too embarrassed. Maybe I thought I would look stupid.

Looking back on it now, I wish I would have said something.

So all I can do now is say, thanks, Jim, for making one of my childhood dreams come true.

Ryan Frank is an associate editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the paper.

Golf: Play will move quickly

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Whether the wind is blowing or not, Emerald Valley is a challenging course for golfers who have trouble staying in fairways.

■ **Course condition:** 8. Mountainous pines and evergreens frame the thinly cut fairways and greens of the Emerald Valley golf course.

The fairways are long and winding. While they don't require a real long drive off the tee, the ball does need to be driven straight. Right or left of the fairway on holes three,

four, five or seven and you're searching for your ball in sparrows' nests and oak hollows.

On a dry day, the greens on the par-72 course are quick, very quick.

Even though there are only a handful of sand bunkers on the front nine, the pins are well guarded. They are shaded by either a trickling stream or a rushing river, depending on how far left or right you go.

■ **Speed of play:** 8. Play will move quickly.

■ **Best holes:** 2 and 4.

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