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# 99TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

**KPMG extends agreement with PGA of America, LPGA for the next six years**

In late June, KPMG announced that it will extend its title sponsorship agreement with the PGA of America and the LPGA through 2023 for the KPMG Women's PGA Championship.



Broadcast in partnership with NBC and Golf Channel, the KPMG Women's PGA Championship connects a major golf championship with a women's leadership summit (KPMG Women's Leadership Summit) and an ongoing charitable initiative (KPMG Future Leaders Program) to inspire and develop new generations of women leaders.

The Championship, featuring a \$3.5 million purse, is operated by the PGA of America in close collaboration with the LPGA. The partnership in 2015 debuted by taking the Championship to Westchester Country Club in Harrison, New York; in 2016 at Sahalee Country Club in Sammamish, Washington; and this year at Olympia Fields in Illinois.

The purse size will increase to \$3.65 million when the Championship heads to Kemper Lakes Golf Club in Kildeer, Illinois, in 2018. Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minnesota, will be the host site in 2019.

"Three years ago, a historic partnership for a great championship was realized thanks to KPMG. Today, we begin an exciting new chapter," said PGA of America CEO Pete Bevacqua. "KPMG's off-course dedication to excellence, along with premier venues such as Olympia Fields - and Kemper Lakes and Hazeltine National in years to come - ensure that this Championship shines on the world golf stage."

dressing, or the accumulation of sand at the collar's edge as a result of brushing sand off the greens (into the turfgrass) following aeration and topdressing application. This accumulation of sand often goes unnoticed because the higher height of cut in the collars. Furthermore, this accumulation of sand causes the collars to rise even higher and effect play - causing balls that would otherwise leave the green surface to come to rest against the collar.

"Golfers, especially low-handicap players, recog-

nize the benefit of top playing qualities such as uniformity, firmness and lack of grain in these areas, and understand how these factors impact play onto and around the putting surface," adds Sternquist.

Other than impacting play, why are these artificial turf dams so hazardous? "They block surface drainage off the putting surface," says Sternquist. "When surface water becomes trapped on the putting green it can result in fungus and cause the green to become diseased. Having to replace a full green complex is a costly endeavor.

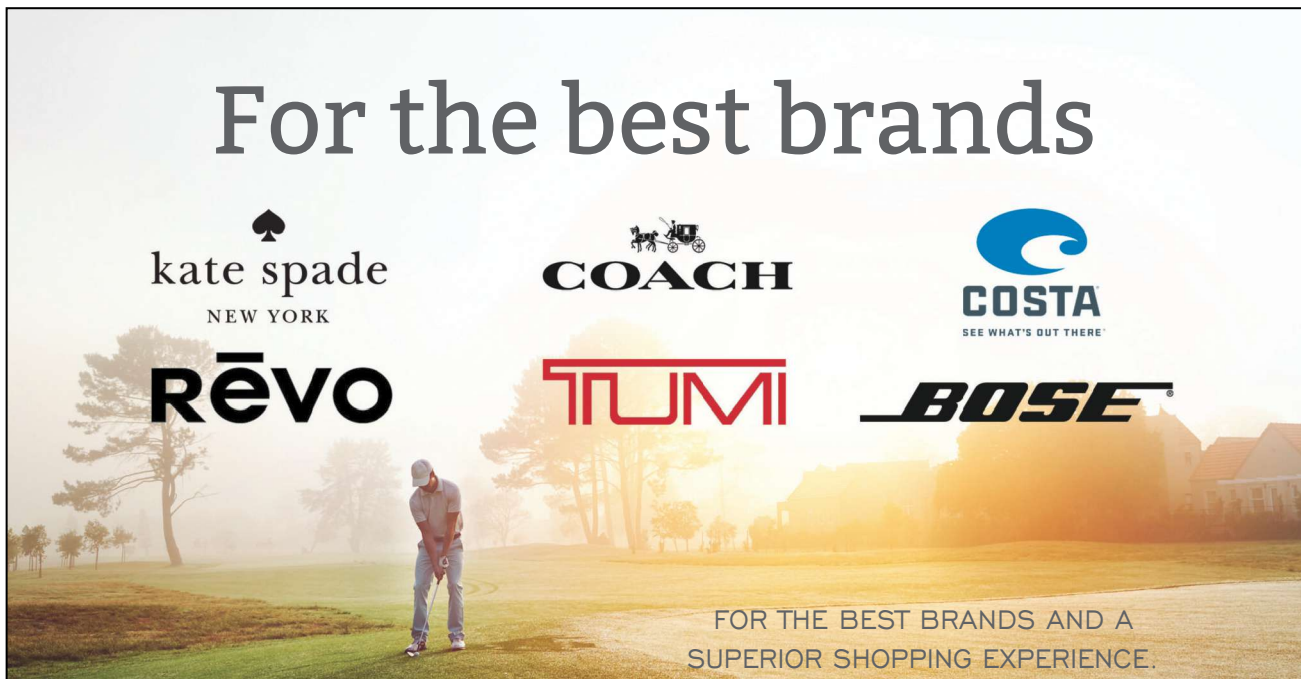
"We're fortunate to have an owner that's committed to providing excellent conditions and golf experiences. By investing in this collar renovation, we're ensuring that for our golfers and also, potentially, saving a lot of money in the long run." ■

**Improving Pace of Play With Technology**

*Jim Lombardo,  
PGA Head Professional,  
Erin Hills,  
Hartford, Wisconsin*

Pace of play has long been a topic of discussion for golf course operators, and it has become increasingly important in recent years as modern golfers demand faster and more efficient golf experiences to fit life's time constraints.

Erin Hills, site of this year's U.S. Open, is walking only and boasts an extremely challenging golf course with rolling terrain and fescue-lined fairways. So facility operators, and golfers who venture



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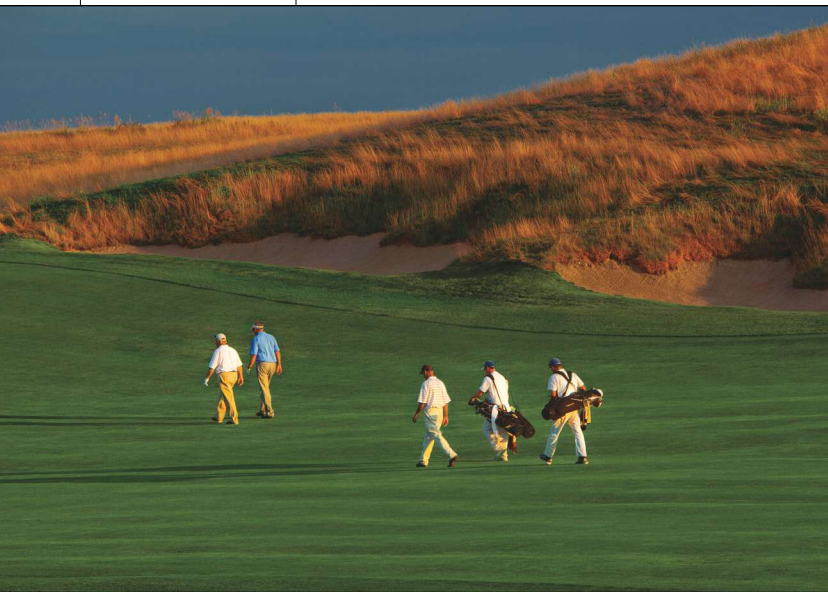
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## 2017 KPMG Women's PGA Championship yields record ratings



**G**olf Channel and NBC's coverage of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship delivered record viewership for the networks this year.

Sunday's final round on July 2 was the most-watched telecast of this event on record - 840,000 average viewers (+1 percent YOY, +21 percent over 2015) - which saw Danielle Kang win her first LPGA Tour event over defending champion Brooke Henderson with a birdie on the final hole.

Saturday's third round on NBC was the most-watched third round telecast at this event on record, with 736,000 average viewers (+14% YOY). It was also the most-watched Round 3 telecast of a women's golf event since the 2014 U.S. Women's Open on NBC.

In total, more than 6.5 million unique viewers tuned in to Golf Channel and NBC's coverage of the KPMG Women's Championship (+8 percent YOY), the largest total viewership of the event on record.

to the Wisconsin destination (*pictured*), expect the round to be longer than the four-hour standard. However, pace of play is still vitally important to the facility - both in terms of delivering value to golfers and operational efficiency.

"Because we have caddies with roughly 95 percent of our groups, we were looking for a way to track the caddies and keep them on pace," says Jim Lombardo, Erin Hills' PGA Head Professional. "We researched full GPS systems and came across a company called Tagmarshal."

Tagmarshal's technology centers on small GPS locators, or "tags," that can be carried by a caddie or attached to a golf car. The tag not only monitors a group's whereabouts on the course, but also meticulously tracks pace of play relative to the rest of the on-course groups and calculates average round times.

The captured data is output onto the screen of an iPhone, iPad or computer. Because caddies at Erin Hills are not permitted to take their phones on course, marshals are armed with iPads and are continuously monitoring the flow of play. Tagmarshal's platform indicates when a group starts falling behind by highlighting them in yellow - they will turn red when they're way behind pace. This allows marshals to precisely target the group that's causing the slow play and go directly to the source of the problem.

"The marshals will pull aside the caddies in a slow group and ask them why they're out of position. Once they know the problem, they can communicate and come up with a solution," says Lombardo. "If you have a few slow groups out

there, the system will identify exactly who those slow players are and we can go directly out to them. And the players behind them will see that we're working on it."

Before implementing the system in 2015, the average round at Erin Hills was 5:02. It's now down to 4:52 - it was as low as 4:45 before U.S. Open conditions set in.

"We decreased our pace of play by 10 full minutes, which allowed us to gain one full tee time. Adding that one extra tee time - at a \$280 green fee - for a foursome that's over \$1,000 in green fee revenue," says Lombardo. "We're open 170-175 days at 75-80 percent occupancy, so if you do that math you can see where there's a significant financial impact over the season."

The system also tracks each caddie by name, so Erin Hills knows which caddies average the fastest loop times. For daily-fee facilities, the system integrates with most tee time software and can track individual golfers, so facilities know who their fastest players are. More bells and whistles: Operators can monitor average times for each hole, revealing how certain hole placements or a new renovation impacts pace of play.

"It's a great value to us," says Lombardo. "For me to walk into the office and peer at my computer screen and in a matter of seconds know exactly how my course is playing, that's value." ■

### PGA Championship preview

**O**n Sunday, Aug. 6, from 2-3 p.m. ET, tune in to CBS as the annual PGA Championship Preview Show will air preceding coverage of the 2017 WGC - Bridgestone Invitational.

The broadcast will be highlighted by a sit-down with 1997 PGA Champion Davis Love III, a segment with Wayne Gretzky, a roundtable discussion with the CBS Sports team, and a 2017 PGA Professional Championship review.

