

A full course of Open options

From driving in to puttering around, USGA offers peek

BY VERA CHINESE
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For some spectators at the U.S. Open golf tournament, the draw of shopping, food and other fan experiences may be on par with the main event in Southampton next month.

A temporary Long Island Rail Road platform, air-conditioned tents with 37,000 square feet of retail space, and viewing stands several stories tall are being built at and near Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, the home of the 118th U.S. Open.

The U.S. Golf Association opened up the event space on Monday for a sneak peek of what fans can expect during the tournament June 11-17.

Fans can arrive at the event via Long Island Rail Road, ride-sharing service, Hampton Jitney or car, said Katie Bynum, director of partnerships and championship experience. They will go to the Stony Brook Southampton campus and walk over a recently installed pedestrian bridge to cross County Road 39 to get to the course.

Those who drive will have to park at Francis S. Grabeski Airport in Westhampton Beach or at the Hampton Classic showgrounds in Bridgehampton and



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USGA official Katie Bynum said there will be numerous options for getting to the tournament.

board a shuttle to the event.

Inside the event grounds, fans will find the merchandise tent, where they can purchase golf-themed apparel and home décor, and local items such as “Shinnecock fescue breeze” scented candles from the Hamptons Handpoured company.

The merchandise shelves were bare on Monday but will soon be stocked with 400,000 pieces of memorabilia, said Mary Lopuszynski, director of

merchandising operations.

“We’ll hopefully do 125,000 transactions in 11 days and then go out of business,” she said. The tent will open June 7, four days before the event officially kicks off, and close when the tournament ends. It will take until mid-July to remove the tent from the site, she said.

The U.S. Golf Association is partnering with corporate sponsors to offer fan rest areas and 360-degree virtual reality tours of the Shinnecock clubhouse and trophy room. Other attractions include social media-friendly photo opportunities and a program that will let fans send a greeting to dad in honor of Father’s Day.

The USGA will sell several tiers of tickets, including the “Top of the Hill” tickets offering access to a beer garden overlooking the 12th and 13th holes, Bynum said.

“I promise you there is something for everyone here,” Bynum said.

Above, clubhouse at Shinnecock Hills. Below, Brittany Torres of Hamptons Handpoured with her scented candles, which will be available at the merchandise tent. ■ Video: newsday.com/suffolk



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MORE INSIDE Shinnecock's fresh chance
A47

Suffolk opens campsites to visiting golf fans

BY RICK BRAND
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Suffolk County is opening 376 campsites to out-of-towners at four county parks near the U.S. Open Golf championship at Shinnecock Hills from June 11-17.

“With over 8,000 hotel room nights expected to be booked, for this event alone, we have made the necessary upgrades at our county campgrounds and parks to offer convenient accessible and affordable visits

for golf fans,” County Executive Steve Bellone said.

Visitors can gain access to the county’s computerized reservation system for golfing, camping and the Shinnecock Marina by using the promo code USOPEN18, instead of the normal requirement of having a Green Key Card that usually costs \$50 for nonresidents.

To gain access to the computer reservation systems, interested campers from out of the county or those who do not possess a Green Key Card can go

to the website USOPEN.SuffolkCountyNY.gov. Scroll down to the bottom of the site to Membership Registration, and in the box for the membership code write “USOPEN18.”

Visitors who make reservations will still pay the out-of-town rate for camping. At Sears Bellows Park’s campground, which is nearest to the event at 7.4 miles, the county is also waiving the minimum stay requirement, normally four nights.

Officials say at Sears Bel-

lows in Hampton Bays, 62 of 89 sites are being made available for out-of-county visitors. At Indian Island, 14.1 miles away from the course, 71 of 131 sites will be made available and at Cedar Point in East Hampton, 18.5 miles from the course, 174 of 190 campsites will be available. At Southaven Park in Shirley, 69 of 104 sites will be made available.

Officials expect no impact on local campers because the event comes before the closing

of school and summer vacations. In all, the county has 750 camping sites.

Unchanged are the nightly fees for nonresident campers: \$28 at Sears Bellows, \$33 at Indian Island, Cedar Point and Southaven parks.

The county will also make 12 of 15 transitional boat slips available for rental at Shinnecock Marina, less than four miles from the course. Those arrangements also can be made using the computerized reservation system.