

# 40 U.S. Women's Open Facts, "Fore" the 4th of July!

BY KELLY LAFFEY

The 2013 U.S. Women's Open teed off at Sebonack last weekend to great fanfare. As we prepare for the 4th of July, here are 40 observations from the four-day major. Fore!

1. With her win, Inbee Park becomes the first player since Babe Didrikson Zaharias in 1950 to win the first three major championships of the women's season. Park won the Kraft Nabisco Championship and LPGA Championship earlier this year. "Just trying to put my name next to hers means just so much," says Park.

2. Park said that she wasn't thinking about chasing history, otherwise she wouldn't have been able to focus on playing golf. "I looked at the leaderboard, but I pretty much was looking at what (second place finisher and pairing partner) I.K. (Kim) was doing...I think I played very good the first three days to put myself in a position like that."

3. When Inbee Park won, So Yeon Ryu and Na Yeon Choi—the past two Open champions—rushed out onto the 18th green to spray her with champagne. Park finished at 8 under, four strokes ahead of second place finisher, I.K. Kim.

4. The top three finishers, Park, I.K. Kim and So Yeon Ryu, were all South Korean.

5. This was I.K. Kim's second runner-up finish at a major.

6. Park's win gives South Korea its fifth consecutive major championship victory. This is also the 10th major in a row without an American victory, making for the longest American championship drought in the history of women's golf.

7. The top Americans were Paula Creamer and Angela Stanford, who finished in a triple tie for fourth with a total score of 289, one over par.

8. Said Paula Creamer on what needs to be done to have an American champion: "I think that it's just really about junior golf and giving little kids the opportunity to play the game." Creamer, the 2010 Open Champion, hosted a junior golf clinic with Matt Lauer on June 25.

9. I had my picture taken with Jodi Ewart Shadoff, the top English player and the third player in the trio of fourth place finishers.

10. Only the top three players finished below par, the undulating greens proving to be intensely difficult for the majority of the field.

11. Unpredictable forecasts reigned. Prior to the first round, officials moved the tees up in anticipation of bad weather, but sun periodically broke through the clouds later in the day.

12. The media tent had sunscreen and bug spray, saving many from the painful burn.

13. Friday's Round 2 was suspended at 6:40 p.m. because of "fog and a non-dangerous situation." What do they mean by the latter?

14. Despite the weather conditions that varied between fog, heat, wind and the threat of intense showers, Inbee Park wore pants and a long-sleeve shirt during each of her rounds.

15. Golf fashion trend: The ponytail braid is in. Madras and salmon pants were not as well represented as they are at men's tournaments.

16. The only golf hat spotted with a team logo was a Titleist New York Mets cap. This is probably because the Mets spend the most time golfing of any MLB team.

17. Though the graphic maps of Sebonack were not the most helpful guide, the course was very well set up. Holes 1, 2, 9, 10 and 18 were all within eyesight of each other, making it very easy to catch clutch plays.

18. The best way to watch the Open, particularly during the Championship round, was to secure a seat right by the ropes and wait for the top groups to pass through.

19. Golf may be the only sport where you have multiple opportunities to make a bad shot.

20. Golf may also be the only sport where people actively discuss what they would have done better in each circumstance.

21. For as many female golfers as there were this week, there were not a lot of female caddies.

22. After withdrawing from the Open on Saturday, citing illness, American Michelle Wie Tweeted "There are no words to explain how disappointed I am in myself right now..." Wie withdrew one hole shy of completing her second round. She was 11 over par at the time and would not have made the cut.

23. The chandelier in the women's clubhouse bathroom belongs in a Hamptons foyer.

24. On the temporary signs erected to direct people to different holes and amenities, there was also an arrow pointing to "Yankee Stadium, Bronx, NY 87 miles" and "Statue of Liberty 99 miles." As the long weekend was not a washout, as predicted, I think most people were perfectly content to be in the Hamptons.

25. Why is it so easy to forget that you're mere miles—or even less—from the insane traffic on County Road 39 while hanging out at Sebonack?

26. American Jessica Corda fired her caddie Jason Gilroyed during the third round of the tournament, turning to her boyfriend Johnny DelPrete to carry her bag. "I just told him, Johnny, grab the bag, let's go." When asked about her decision at a post-round press conference, Corda stated that "(We) had a couple of disagreements here and there, and I wasn't in the right state of mind..." Had Corda ever seen another player fire a caddie mid-round? "No." Interestingly, Corda's father was caddying for her younger sister Nelly, who finished tied for 64th at the Open.

27. The snacks in the clubhouse included

chips and salsa, guacamole, a cheesy artichoke dip and a tomato mozzarella spread. There was also Minute Maid Lemonade paired with mint leaves that made the generic drink taste as fancy as the club that it was being served in.

28. Why was the merchandise tent placed at the main entrance, far away from the clubhouse and main spectator hub?

29. This was the first Women's Open on Long Island, and the first in New York State since 1973.

30. Long Island player Annie Park missed the cut. Though the 18-year-old from Levittown was frustrated that she couldn't seem to make any of her putts, she says that overall the Open "...was a great experience."

31. The grass in the parking lot was at least a foot tall. Sneakers were the shoe of choice.

32. Most of the players took time to sign their ball and give it to the volunteer who was holding the scoreboard. A classy gesture.

33. The volunteer fee for the Open was \$125. This covered the uniform, preferred parking, credential for the week and meals during shifts.

34. This is Park's second U.S. Open title, having previously won in 2008. She is the 15th multiple Women's Open winner. "It feels great to put my name on this trophy twice. That just means so much," says Park.

35. After her 2008 Open win, Park played in 72 events without winning on the LPGA. Now, in the last 12 months, she has won eight times.

36. Inbee's secret may be her mental approach: "I feel the happiest when I'm at the golf course. And I feel calm when I'm on the golf course. I think I'm just a much better person when I'm on the golf course," she says.

37. For her first place finish, Inbee Park received a \$585,000 purse. Second place finisher I.K. Kim took home \$350,000. The total prize money given out was \$3,175,000.

38. Boats periodically gathered in Great Peconic Bay at the 18th green to watch the players make their final putts.

39. After the win, Inbee Park Tweeted "What did I just do today? (It's) amazing...thanks to all the people @usopengolf and the fans!!" Park has 2,038 followers as of this writing, a number that is sure to rise as her stardom does.

40. There is some confusion as to whether Inbee Park will be chasing a Grand Slam when she tees off at the British Open in August, the fourth major of the year. In the past, winning that major would have meant that she nabbed the elusive Grand Slam. But this year there are five majors, as the Evian Championship has been added to the roster. When asked what tourney she would have to win to make it a Grand Slam, Park laughed, "I think the British Open is the one I have to win. So it would be great if I could win five, but I still think four means a grand slam." 🐼

