

# Inside the ropes: Hurricane update

BY CARR MCCALLA

Just as last month's Inside the Ropes went to press, Hurricane Rita was bearing down on southwestern Louisiana. As if we didn't already have enough storm issues to deal with, Mother Nature dealt our state another blow. Communications are still a challenge in both the New Orleans/Southeast Louisiana and Southwest Louisiana areas, and, as a consequence, we're not able to report on the status of clubs/courses in those areas with great certainty. While we're not able to give many details, we can report in general terms on how those areas fared. In the New Orleans/Southeast Louisiana area, it appears that courses east of a line from Cut Off and extending through LaPlace and Hammond, had significant wind damage and flooding. Clubs west of and including those areas mentioned above certainly had damage, but in most cases courses are already open for play there. Courses east of that line (with some exceptions) have had severe enough damages that many are not yet open and in some cases, may not re-open for significant periods of time. The farther east you travel in Jefferson and Orleans parishes, the more significant the flood damage becomes. East New Orleans and south Slidell took the brunt of the storm with Eastover and Oak Harbor both sustaining significant damages. Clubs north of Lake Ponchartrain (other than Oak Harbor) had more wind damage than flooding, in many cases losing a significant portion of their trees.

As of press time, we still have not been able to communicate with the southwestern part of the state to any great degree but it appears that the Lake Charles area courses sustained much wind damage, and, in some cases, flooding as well. As you move inland from there, damages decrease the more northerly one goes. As we mentioned in last month's column please continue to keep these areas in your thoughts.

## 2005 FOUR-BALL CANCELED

Unfortunately, the 2005 LGA Four-Ball Championship has been canceled. We were cautiously optimistic that we might be able to re-schedule this popular event until Hurricane Rita came ashore. The additional displacement of people caused by that storm and the consequent lodging needs for evacuees and relief workers simply made it impossible to find a place to house our participants. That being said, we owe a debt of gratitude to The University Club of Baton Rouge (our original host venue who will also be hosting the 2006 LGA Mid-Amateur Championship) for their support of this difficult decision. Additionally, we need to thank The Farm in Carencro and the Atchafalaya Golf Course at Idlewild in Patterson for their readiness to accommodate us if we were able to re-schedule. Throughout the aftermath of the storms it has certainly been gratifying to see our LGA Member Clubs' willingness to help in any way they can. As was mentioned last month, we sincerely appreciate everyone's patience as we worked through the challenge of trying to re-schedule the 4-Ball Championship.

## USGA STATE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Not only did Hurricanes Katrina and Rita impact a vast percentage of Louisiana golf courses/clubs, they also caused us to scramble to field a team at the USGA State Team Championship at Berkeley Hall last month. As we reported last month, Sulphur's Billy Gabbert was selected

to replace Tommy Brennan of Covington at the Championship, after Brennan was forced to withdraw due to Katrina's impact on his home and business in the New Orleans area. The day Gabbert was scheduled to leave for the Hilton Head area was the very day Rita made landfall, forcing Billy to withdraw in order to evacuate his family. Team member

Robby McWilliams of Bossier City was scheduled to fly out of Houston that day as well, and, as we all know, the Houston airport was shut down in anticipation of Rita's arrival.

Robby was finally able to get out of Dallas on the following Monday, arriving in South Carolina late that night just in time to tee off, without benefit of a practice round, on Tuesday. Jeff Calloway of Baker, our other team member was able to get there as planned, leaving from Baton Rouge on Sunday. Fortunately, LGA Assistant Executive Director Michael Walder, at the Championship to serve as a rules official, had packed his clubs, so he was recruited to fill Gabbert's spot on the team. While the team certainly didn't finish as high in the final standings as they would have preferred (a tie for 42nd) simply being able to field a team given the challenges they incurred was a significant accomplishment. We're pleased to report that the team representing Louisiana, sponsored by the Louisiana Women's Golf Association, in the Women's Championship at Berkeley Hall finished in a tie for eighth place. Team members were Kay Daniel, Martha Lang, and Julie Harrison.



## DEADLINE FOR LICENSING OF CLUBS TO ISSUE USGA APPROVED HANDICAP INDEXES NEARS

The USGA's handicap certification/licensing program is scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2006. The LGA has been working diligently to help our member clubs meet the deadline and are pleased to report that 85 LGA member clubs have attended a USGA or LGA conducted Handicap Seminar, one of the requirements for licensing. LGA Member Clubs will fall under the LGA's license, provided they meet all the requirements set forth by the USGA. The LGA will work hand-in-hand with its member clubs to satisfy those requirements by the deadline date. Non-LGA member clubs must obtain their license directly through the USGA. It is extremely important for your club to meet the licensing requirements as failure to do so will result in handicap indexes issued by non-licensed clubs not being USGA approved. The USGA has already begun listing, by state, those clubs who have met licensing requirements on their website at [www.USGA.org](http://www.USGA.org). The USGA, along with the majority of state and regional golf associations across the country, are encouraging clubs not to accept handicap indexes for tournament play from clubs that are not listed on the USGA website (i.e., not licensed), in an ongoing attempt to bring more consistency and credibility to handicapping nationwide.

## EXCITING NEWS COMING IN DECEMBER

Don't miss next month's edition of Inside the Ropes. We're working on some exciting new benefits for our individual members (i.e., members of LGA member clubs) that we hope we'll be able to announce next month. In the meantime, we'll see you next month.....Inside the Ropes!

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