

What to wear to the U.S. Open?

By [Win McMurry](#) Jun 11, 2011 10:47 PM ET



“What do you wear to watch golf?”

It’s a question I hear a lot working in the golf industry.

As we near the year’s second major, many in the greater D.C. area may be asking this same question as they prepare to visit Congressional Country Club for this year’s national championship.

Honestly, you see it all out there. That’s probably because many people have no clue what they’re venturing into when they attend a major championship or a **PGA Tour** event. It’s not a football game. It’s not a tennis match. It’s not the Kentucky Derby. It’s a golf course made up of 18 holes that spans some 7,000 yards and you are expected to walk. It pains me to see women wearing sky high heels and trying to walk the course. That’s an instant giveaway that it’s her first time to a golf tournament and maybe even her first time on a golf course.

So it's fitting that the first item on my wardrobe list for golf tournaments is comfortable footwear! It's a challenge because it's not easy to find cute yet comfy shoes that coordinate with the rest of your spectator outfit.

Elizabeth Noblitt, founder and CEO of www.shishiputter.com, an online ladies golf magazine for golf fashion, equipment, and travel, advises women to, "Please wear the right shoes to watch golf. If you must wear heels, be sure they are wedges so they don't get stuck in the grass."

She opines that the better option is to wear ballet flats so you don't slide on the grass and take a pair of heels to change into later.

For women, I prefer sandals with a comfortable sole and arch support. They must have a back to them that wraps the ankle so you're not constantly scrunching your toes to keep the sole to your foot. Thus, flip-flops with flimsy soles are a poor choice.

"Being that it's a televised event, looking and acting your best is always a smart move," says Noblitt. "Dress and plan for the weather. Wear sunscreen, your favorite sunglasses and bring an umbrella."

"In the case of bad weather when grounds can be muddy and goopy, pair your outfit with a great pair of wellies. And if weather is gorgeous for your days as a spectator, try cute wedges (not too high) but please no white sneakers," says Sharon Sunoo, co-founder of women's golf apparel line Birdy & Grace.

Clean non-flashy tennis shoes or sneakers (not basketball shoes) are appropriate for men. If you'd like to step it up a notch, a sporty loafer is okay as long as it has a durable soft sole.

For men, as well as women, Leif Sunderland of the designer golf wear company Travis Mathew says there's nothing worse than seeing spectators wearing spikes. "Seriously, do not

wear golf shoes unless you're inside the ropes!"

That's not to say that you shouldn't take cues from the pros. It is appropriate to wear similar attire to what you'd wear playing golf. For men a nice pressed polo and khaki pants or shorts are the norm. Make sure your clothes are ironed, your shirt is tucked in, and your belt matches. Light colors and earth tones are the best choices for color to keep you cool and to avoid being a distraction. If the weather is not too scorching hot I also favor nice button down shirts with the long sleeves slightly rolled up at the cuff.

"Wear something that will keep you cool but looking sharp," Noblitt says.

For women, the golf-course-appropriate look that's both cool and sharp ranges from shorts and polos to tasteful sundresses. Jeans, for both men and women, are acceptable, however I suggest avoiding them as many elite golf courses frown on denim worn inside the clubhouse. While clubhouse access during golf tournaments is usually off-limits to the majority of spectators, you should dress to be appropriate anywhere you may find yourself on the grounds, thus leggings and other tight fitting sportswear are also a poor choice.



For some outfit ideas Noblitt suggests women look to designer Toby Tucker Golf. "The clothes are sophisticated enough that you'll be comfortable no matter who you might meet, appropriate for the occasion, and fashionable."

She suggests something like this red and black striped putting skirt.

"The A-line cut looks great on nearly everyone and it's cotton to keep you cool," says Noblitt. "Pair it with the black

roll-sleeve shirt for an easy summer outfit.”

Similar to Toby Tucker Golf, Birdy & Grace combines a classic golf look with hot trends and functionality for the lady spectator.

“Our long sleeve air polo or our trinity polo offer a slick and sexy look while providing sun protection,” says Sunoo. “Each piece has a fabulous mesh piece along the under part of the arms to offer a cool look while also keeping you cool.”



To complete the look, Sunoo suggests coupling outfits with a great hat like a fedora and short shorts or a skirt.

Hats are vital, especially if you’re sensitive to the sun, but they should not be distracting. For men a golf cap is appropriate, and for women a broad-brimmed hat or fedora is a nice alternative. As for other accessories, remember that large bags are not accepted through the gates and onto the grounds at tournaments. Besides, you do not want to be lugging a large handbag anyway, nor do you want to be holding a clutch all day. I suggest a small purse, no larger than 8x8 inches, with a comfortable strap that can be worn across the chest to keep it secure to your body. Many PGA Tour players’ wives opt not to carry a bag and instead wear a tasteful belted wallet that can be found at Louis Vuitton or Gucci.



Cell phones are now accepted, but cameras, video recorders, coolers, and backpacks are not so leave them at home. It's a good idea also to dress in layers. Carry a light jacket, pullover, or sweater. For women, a pashmina or similar type of scarf is also a great option since it is easy to wrap around your neck when you don't need it on your arms.

Bottom line when it comes to dressing for watching golf is to be practical, comfortable and respectful.

Here is the Travis Mathew list of "Dos and Don'ts" for the U.S. Open or any other PGA Tour event.

Don'ts

1. Do not wear golf shoes unless you're inside the ropes
2. Do not wear pants that have multiple colors or other geometric shapes
3. Do not wear any colors that require fellow spectators to wear sunglasses
4. If you're a guy, do not wear tank tops (or t-shirts for that matter) with your favorite saying or sport's team on it

Dos

1. For females, do wear heels and sundresses. Look to the **Phoenix Open** and **Byron Nelson** for examples.
2. For males, you can't go wrong with black, white, gray or various earth tones. For example, any color that Travis Mathew uses in their collection.
3. Do leave your mock turtlenecks, fanny packs and periscopes at home.
4. And finally, only one person should wear red on Sundays.