Ryder on Curtis!

Curtis Tyrrell has been eagerly anticipating Friday September 28 2012 since his first day in his current role four years ago.

On that morning, the first tee shot will signal the official start of “once in a lifetime” opportunity to host one of the world’s greatest sporting events. However, while Curtis and his team have made many alterations to the course over the last four years with the Ryder Cup in mind, he’s keen to stress that the 600 members benefit. “The eyes of the world will be on one particular course this month after the circus leaves town. “The preparation’s been pretty extensive for us, with air movement and temperature management around certain greens.”

“Then in June we started bringing in the infrastructure for the tournament – grandstands, corporate hospitality and paths. This will all span 63 acres so it’s quite an undertaking.”

During the tournament Curtis will be assisted by 100 volunteers including BIGGA members Lee Strutt, Course Manager at the new Q West Golf Club, and Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper from Glenlochy which hosts the next Ryder Cup.

While some may expect Curtis to be nervous, he’s keen to stress that the 600 members will also enjoy the benefits long after the event. “I didn’t think my career would progress to this level so it really is a dream come true for me.”

“I want everyone here to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here. I want everyone here to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here. “Medinah is a family club, and when I arrived I felt we needed to set it up for the future. Of course we knew we had the Ryder Cup on the horizon so that obviously played a huge part in our planning. “But I also want our membership to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here. “Course three will be open to members the day after the tournament ends. “We rebuilt all the greens in late 2009. Some were already USGA constructed greens so we brought all the others up to the same standard. “We then re-grassed all the fairways, rebuilt all the bunkers and entirely rebuilt the 18th hole. “Those changes were mainly for the members’ benefit. They love this course and want it to be the best that it can be. “We carried out extensive work last winter. We did some fans to help us with air movement and temperature management around certain greens. “But I also want our membership to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here. “The magazine every month has been invaluable, I’m keen to know what challenges are facing people in our industry in the UK and how they’re facing them and tackling them.

“Despite this won’t be an American victory!”

The eyes of the world will be on one particular course this month when the 39th Ryder Cup rolls into Illinois. GI talked to Curtis Tyrrell, Director of Course Operations at the Medinah Country Club...
Ryder on Curtis!

The eyes of the world will be on one particular course this month when the 39th Ryder Cup rolls into Illinois. GI talked to Curtis Tyrrell, Director of Course Operations at the Medinah Country Club...

Curtis Tyrrell has been eagerly anticipating Friday September 28 2012 since his first day in his current role four years ago. On that morning, the first tee opened at Medinah Country Club, which opened in 1925. The all-important third course has previously hosted the PGA Championships and US Opens.

“Medinah is a family club, and when I arrived I felt we needed to sort it up for the future. Of course we knew we had the Ryder Cup on the horizon so that obviously played a huge part in our planning.

“But I also want our membership to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here.

“Course three will be open to all members the day after the tournament ends.

“We rebuilt all the greens in late 2009. Some were already USGA constructed greens so we brought all the others up to the same standard.

“We then re-grassed all the fairways, rebuilt all the bunkers and entirely rebuilt the 18th hole.

“These changes were mainly for the members’ benefit. They love this course and want it to be the best that it can be.

“We carried out extensive work last winter. We did some fan installation to help us with air movement and temperature management around certain greens.

“That in June we started bringing up the infrastructure for the tournament – grandstands, corporate hospitality and paths. This will all span 43 acres so it’s quite an undertaking.”

During the tournament Curtis will be assisted by 100 volunteers, including BIGGA members Lee Strutt, Course Manager at the new Q West Golf Club, and Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper from Gleneagles which hosts the next Ryder Cup.

While some may expect Curtis to be a bit nervous, he is looking forward to it, saying: “I’ve learned so much from the BIGGA members I’ve met, it’s been awesome.

“The magazine every month has been invaluable. I’m keen to know what challenges are facing people in our industry in the UK and how they’re facing them and tackling them.

“I didn’t think my career would progress to the point where I was preparing the Ryder Cup course.

“There are so many talented guys over here in your average country club, you never think you will get to this level so really it is a dream come true for me.

“I want everyone here to be proud of their contribution towards the Ryder Cup.

“We’re lucky to have a fantastic team and they’re really excited, everyone’s really enthusiastic and energetic.

“After that, my only remaining wish is for an American victory!”

Curtis first caught the greenkeeping bug while working at the Country Club in Woodmore, Maryland, and after graduation he moved to Southern California to work as an assistant at PGA West in Palm Springs.

He then took on two superintendent positions before moving on to the Lake of Isles Golf Course in Connecticut, and finally secured his current role in 2008.

Curtis is a proud member of BIGGA and added that his membership is crucial for keeping up to speed with developments in the UK.

“I’m a BIGGA member because I wanted to expand my knowledge, and learn as much about greenkeeping on the other side of the pond as I could. I wanted to cover all bases, and that’s exactly how it’s turned out.

“I couldn’t have spent my time working our butts off”

The greens are USGA Spec with 100% Creeping Bent of 007 and SR1119 and the tees are also a sand-based construction with a USGA rootzone, also 100% Creeping Bent.

Greens preparation will involve light topdressing once a week up to ten days before the event with mowing six days a week and rolling five days a week.

Curtis bases his fertilizer on a solid agronomic philosophy of soil testing and mixing his fertilizer from bulk purchased liquid nutrients, adjusting according to environmental conditions. He also uses an organic fertilizer based on chicken manure for his grainer program.

Medinah has a significant fleet of equipment including a couple of TurfTurf rollers and items from Toro.

Ryder Cup Preview
PICTURE SPECIAL: The mouth watering course that is Medinah Country Club
PICTURE SPECIAL: The mouth watering course that is Medinah Country Club

SEPTEMBER 2012

The beauty to behold at Medinah Country Club