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Who will succeed Thomas Flavelle? Thomas has already enjoyed a superb trip to the States and secured another job since he won the award last year – showing what a boost it can be for your career.

Even being nominated is an achievement, so congratulations to the eight finalists.

The final consists of two intense days during which they will be asked to complete a written task focusing on the golf course here at Aldwark Manor and interviewed by a panel of judges from Toro and BIGGA.

The winner and two runners-up will then be selected.

The winner will head to the States. On arrival I found myself waiting at a very cold bus stop, when a large hotel car park and the driver Prescott from turf contractor in a classroom, taking notes and revising for tests at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMASS).

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http://www.toro.com

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year

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The final eight

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The winner will head to the USA on an all expenses paid trip courtesy of Toro. This will last for eight days - during which they will attend a short course study at the University of Massachusetts.

They will also get the opportunity to visit the GCSA’s Golf Industry Show in Orlando (where it all began) and explore Toro’s base in California.

The runners-up will receive a paid trip to the Continuex Learning Education programme at BTME 2014.

To be eligible for the next award, candidates should be a greenkeeping student studying for a qualification up to Level Three. All entrants are nominated by their course tutor.

Thanks to everyone who entered, including those who did not make the shortlist – there’s nothing to stop you entering again next year. Good luck to all the finalists – the winner will be announced next month.

JOSHUA THORLEY
Born: 7 February 1985
Role: Assistant Greenkeeper
Club: The Richmond Golf Club
Handicap: 24
College: Myerscough

Joshua began his working life as a roofer but found his true calling as a greenkeeper after joining The Richmond in 2010. He is studying for his level 3 qualification, and is looking to work overseas and gain experience at a tournament. He would eventually like to progress to Deputy then Course Manager. He enjoys football, golf and runs his own sports clothing website.

SAM EVANS
Born: 23 August 1986
Role: Deputy Head Greenkeeper
Club: Oakland Park Golf Club
Handicap: 23
College: Myerscough

Sam worked for some time at Haythorp Park where he passed a series of qualifications, before recently moving to Oakland Park. He wants to improve his mechanical knowledge, and hopes to become Course Manager. He has had a highly eventful few years as he holds a degree in Sports Management & Coaching and got married last year. He enjoys all manner of sports especially cricket, and is also a fan of football, golf and rugby.

BEN WATERS
Born: 23 May 1984
Role: Assistant Greenkeeper
Club: Shrewsbury Golf Club
Handicap: 13
College: Reaseheath

Ben began greenkeeping in 2010 after initially working in manufacturing, and after a period of work experience at Shrewsbury Golf Club realised it was the job for him. He has aspirations of becoming a Head Greenkeeper and also would like to work in the USA. He is currently studying a Sports Turf NVQ2.

LUKE TURNER
Born: 7 March 1990
Role: Greenkeeper
Club: Willington Golf Club
Handicap: 28
College: Plumpton

Luke is currently studying for his level 3. He has regularly volunteered to join the team at Devonshire Park which holds tennis tournaments, while continuing to put all his efforts into Willington. He would like to gain international experience at some point in his career. He’s always been fascinated by links golf courses and is a keen surfer and rugby player.

SCOTT ROBERTS
Born: 15 September 1990
Role: Assistant Greenkeeper
Club: Hanley Common Golf Club
Handicap: 6
College: Merriet Wood

Scott grew up at Hanley Common and spent a spell of work experience at Queenswood Golf Club, where he became involved in a project of rebuilding all 21 greens. In 2011 he joined Hanley Common, where he works alongside his dad, Mike. He’s joined the support teams at a series of tournaments including the BMW PGA at Wentworth and has joined BIGGA’s Surrey committee. Ultimately he would like to work abroad. He enjoys golf, football and darts.

DANIEL HARDY
Born: 13 December 1984
Role: Deputy Course Manager/Mecharic
Club: Cann Hall Estate Golf Club
Handicap: 14
College: Myerscough

Kenn golfer Daniel started his career as an assistant motor mechanic before undertaking a Marine Engineering course. He then took on his current dual role at Cann Hall Estate and plans to start his Level 3 studies. He holds ambitions of not only managing a course but eventually undertaking the Master Greenkeeper qualification. As well as golf sporty Daniel enjoys cycling, football and cricket.

JAMES WILKINSON
Born: 29 April 1981
Role: Assistant Greenkeeper
Club: Highwoods Golf Club
Handicap: No
College: Plumpton

James was working for a landscaping firm when he was given the job of returfing the greens on a local course and found that he was very interested in the course he secured a job as a greenkeeper. Since then, he has spent a spell of work experience at Highwoods. He’s enjoyed this role hugely and has been supported by the club in his college studies. Outside of work he enjoys fishing, running and watching football.

PAUL WALSH
Born: 5 May 1981
Role: First Assistant Greenkeeper
Club: The Royal Dublin Golf Club
Handicap: No
College: Tralee – College of Amenity Horticulture in Dublin

Paul began his career studying Mechanical Engineering but became hugely interested in turfgrass management, and in 2008 began working at Palmerston House Golf Club in County Kildare. He joined The Royal Dublin Golf Club in 2010 and after achieving his FETAC Advanced Certificate in Greenkeeping was promoted to First Assistant. He hopes to progress to Deputy Head Greenkeeper in time.