



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak CGCS

I woke up on the morning of Thursday, September 13th kind

of groggy. I did not sleep real well the night before, my eyes were kind of red and it felt like a herd of elephants had run me over. I had a bunch of things running through my mind but focus was a little tough. I downed a couple ibuprofen, grabbed some breakfast and I was on my way to the course.

When I arrived there were only two other people there- my assistants. My foreman had already departed to mow tees. There was no equipment lined up in the dark ready for daybreak. The rest of the crew were home in bed, or drinking coffee watching the news. No borrowed help seeking direction, no pin sheets telling of specific hole locations or special tee markers. A feeling of emptiness and malaise had consumed me. Yes, clearly I was hung-over.

But this was not the kind of hangover induced by my old buddy Weiser, or acquired with a long voyage with a certain captain. A couple more ibuprofen and something greasy to eat was not going

to fix this. For I was experiencing tournament hangover, something I had read about, but never experienced before.

Prestwick Golf Club hosted the MGA Four-ball Championship on Sept. 11-12 this year, and the crew and I had the privilege of preparing the course for the event. We had never hosted something of this nature at Prestwick before. The closest we had come in the past to a significant tournament was a state amateur qualifier, a one-day event. I first learned of the event three years ago when my boss, who was planning on playing in the event, informed me of it in a meeting. You can kind of say he impressed upon me the importance of it at that meeting, and I had been prepping for it in the back of my mind ever since.

Now, do not get me wrong, I realize this tournament pales in comparison to what more than a few guys reading this have had to prepare for tournament-wise in their careers. Obviously there is a big difference between what we went through, compared to what happens at the TPC Twin Cities every year, or the enormous undertaking at Hazeltine in 2002 and 2010. However for us, it was as big as it gets.

The biggest hurdles were of the people-power nature. In September, we are down to the aforementioned four guys,

my mechanic and 8 retirees. The retirees were great, as they were able to adjust their personal schedules to accommodate the new mowing schedules, but the grunt work was up to us. I also was short one body on the two tournament mornings, and one piece of machinery. That void was filled by Jamie Bezanson, Superintendent Oneka Ridge Golf Course and Jeff Girard, superintendent of Stoneridge Golf Club. Girard lent us another vibratory roller, and Bezanson lent us his walk-mowing abilities that he used to display as an assistant at Prestwick. It is so gratifying to know you have friends in the industry that are willing to help in a time of need- thanks guys!

With the basics covered we tried to concentrate on the little things, and hope it all came together and for the most part it did. There were a few minor glitches, a few communication break downs, but judging by the positive comments from the players, the MGA guys and, of course, my boss we did a pretty good job. We had a few very long, exhausting days leading up to it but, I never felt tired or run down until- the morning after.

I guess that is when the adrenaline runs out. The nervous energy is over. Back to the mundane tasks performed every day on an empty golf course, and this was just our little tournament. I cannot imagine the emptiness after something like hosting a major tournament. It has to be an extremely surreal feeling. At one

moment all of your focus and energy is directed to a common cause or goal and then in a few short days it is all over.

Reflecting on it all, I can honestly say that I am proud of my crew for their hard work and accomplishments, and would without a doubt like to host another event like this. It is a chance to show off the golf course to high quality golfers who take the game seriously. It is an opportunity to display the skills for yourself and your crew that you can accomplish such a task. It is also a way to galvanize a crew into a single working unit and build a team mentality. But most of all, aside from the bunker work, it is just fun to do. If you have influence over such things, and have been contemplating whether or not to ask to host an MGA event, or something similar, give it a shot. I believe you will find it very rewarding.

As for the crew at Prestwick, we get one week of rest before airification and then the short slide into the winter abyss. If we do get the opportunity to host a similar event, I think in-season would be my preference- at least that is what my back is telling me. It has been a great season for us, as I hope it has been for all of you.

**Now, where did that  
bottle of ibuprofen disappear  
to?**