

Greenside Comment...



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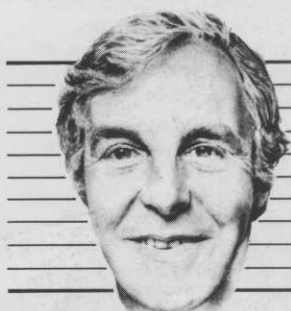
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John Lelean

MOPPING UP AT ROYAL LYTHAM

The Open Championship at Royal Lytham more than lived up to its reputation of providing one of the finest spectacles of competition, equalling, on the postponed final day, the classic Turnberry shoot-out of 1977, between Nicklaus and Watson.

Our congratulations go to Severiano Ballesteros for providing one of the most exciting climaxes to golf's major event and to his runner-up Nick Price.

Ballesteros not only showed he is the finest and most consistent golfer in the world, but his relaxed manner despite the tensions, showed through to bring smiles not only on his own face, but to the thousands lucky enough to have a grandstand seat at Royal Lytham.

With over 700 press representatives every possible word has been squeezed out of the golf, but it is this magazine's pleasant duty to say Royal Lytham could have been a disaster, were it not for the voluntary work from an army of greenkeepers, who by their efforts cleared the flooded course after Saturday's minor monsoon.

Throughout the five days of the competition, greenstaff from all over the country and even

from Sweden and Australia were engaged in bunker raking duties. They had given up part of their holidays to be there assisting Jimmy McDonald, Royal Lytham's Head Greenkeeper, with the demanding job of keeping the championship links in pristine condition.

When the heavens opened, the deluge that followed flooded greens, tees and fairways and although there is no accurate measurement of the rain that fell, it is estimated well over 2 inches saturated the course over a 12 hour period on top of a massive downpour on the Tuesday night.

The Fylde coast does not have a reputation for July rain so it was understandable that the mechanics for removing surplus water were not readily to hand. Into the breach stepped David Palmer from Supaturf who despatched son Marcus, through the night with 40 squeegee mops so that greenkeepers were prepared to commence mopping up operations at first light on Sunday morning.

Not only did they have the greens ready for play, but all the bunkers were re-raked to put back the sand washed off the faces.

R & A Secretary, Michael Bonallack, told *Golf Greenkeeping* "The members of the Greenkeepers Association did a magnificent job and without their efforts it is doubtful whether we could have re-started the Championship even at the later time of 11.15 am. The 6.45 am planned start was just impossible."

"They accompanied every match to maintain the bunkers so the caddies were relieved of the responsibility."

BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas said the Association provided all the volunteer greenstaff with light blue wet suits with the BIGGA insignia and blue shirts with the Association logo. The objective was to present the right image which he felt sure had been achieved.

Next year, added Neil Thomas, we intend to improve still further the greenkeepers' service to the Open Championship by organising additional help on the practice days when players take the opportunity to play a succession of sand shots.

There is nothing quite like the Open Championship and Greenkeepers can feel proud they are contributing so much to its success.

GREENSIDE COMMENT _____ 3

NEWS ROUND UP _____
5, 7, 10, 11, 14

MENTAL ILLNESS _____ 6

LYTHAM OPEN REVIEW _____ 8, 9

50 YEARS OF IOG _____ 12

SITUATIONS VACANT _____ 14

TRADE DIRECTORY _____ 15

contents
contents
contents
contents
contents