

East meets west on the course, but cold war remains for would-be Russian golfers

Those pukka Californian wheeler-dealers get everywhere, though I doubt if they could have imagined the vast amount of Soviet red-tape that needed trimming before the long overdue Moscow Golf & Country Club could become a reality.

No less than fifteen years in the making, after numerous false starts, the course is at last scheduled to open in 1992 – to foreigners only!

Charismatic Boris Yeltsin has lobbied long and hard for more sporting facilities in the capital and will no doubt be frustrated by the decision taken to ban play to local citizens, a miserly touch no doubt cooked-up by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Californian company, American International Golf

Resorts Inc., jointly concerned in the venture.

The 6,600 yard course, designed way back in the mid-70s by Robert Trent Jones II, is being financed by the Californian group and a consortium of investors and will include a huge hotel and a clutch of swanky villas.

The whisper in official circles is that some 75 per cent of western multi-national firms with Russian interests are putting up the cash, prompted perhaps by the distinct lack of recreational facilities available for foreigners in the capital.

Nevertheless, our sympathies lie with poor old Ivan, who must wait in vain for a chance to join the golfing jet-set.



North Scotland section members, still cherishing fond memories of a fine day of golf when they played their Autumn Outing at an immaculate Turriff Golf Club in mid September, were horrified to learn that on the morning of September 29th the River Deveron, which adjoins the Turriff course, rose and fell in a flash flood which at its height was 13" above normal, and at its highest level for 32 years.

At 5m the menacing roar of the river in full flood could be heard, even in the distant town of Turriff, heralding a trail of devastation that included the loss of 64 sheep from the fields up stream from the golf course.

Hay bales, trees, debris and livestock were flushed away in the ripstream as the river banks disappeared and within no time at all eight greens on the course were under water.

That the course was only closed for eight days speaks volumes for the fine work carried out by head greenkeeper George Geddes and his staff who, when faced with the mammoth task of clearing trees, branches, silt and a particularly nasty tide mark of straw and mud, came through with flying colours. A month later only the heavily silted 14th green – pictured above just after the disaster – remained unplayable.