

**P**reparation for next year's Open at St Andrews is under way.

Head greenkeeper Eddie Adams and his team have started revetting the 110 bunkers on the Old Course. This work is normally carried out on a three-year rolling cycle, but links supervisor Walter Woods wants them all done by next February.

"The whole world's going to be looking at St Andrews and we want to present the golf course in the best possible fashion," he told Greenkeeper International. The two largest bunkers – Hell and Shell – have already been done. It took a four-man team ten days to lay the 6,000 individual turfs that now make up the face of Shell bunker which blocks the entrance to the 7th green. 60-70 other bunkers – using almost five acres of turf – will be revetted during the season, taking advantage of the Sunday closure policy on the Old Course.

The sand will go in at the end of May, a couple of months before the Open so it has time to compact ("So the pro can feel it firm below his feet with only the top inch raked," says Walter).

Walter also plans to cut back on fertiliser and water this year (despite the new 357,000-gallon water tank, two new boreholes and the new wall-to-wall sprinkler system installed to water all the greens, tees and fairways on the four main courses and the greens and tees on the new Strathtyrum layout).

"We're trying to achieve a very dry surface because *Poa annua* doesn't like a dry surface," says Walter, BIGGA's first chairman. "When you're on a championship course, it's important you have the right types of grasses. so

# St Andrews gets



**Screens hide the work underway on the new £3m clubhouse**

this year what we will do is try to drought out as much of the annual meadow grass as possible."

That will probably leave patches, but the 37-strong St Andrews team will replace these using turf from the aprons and laying new turf there.

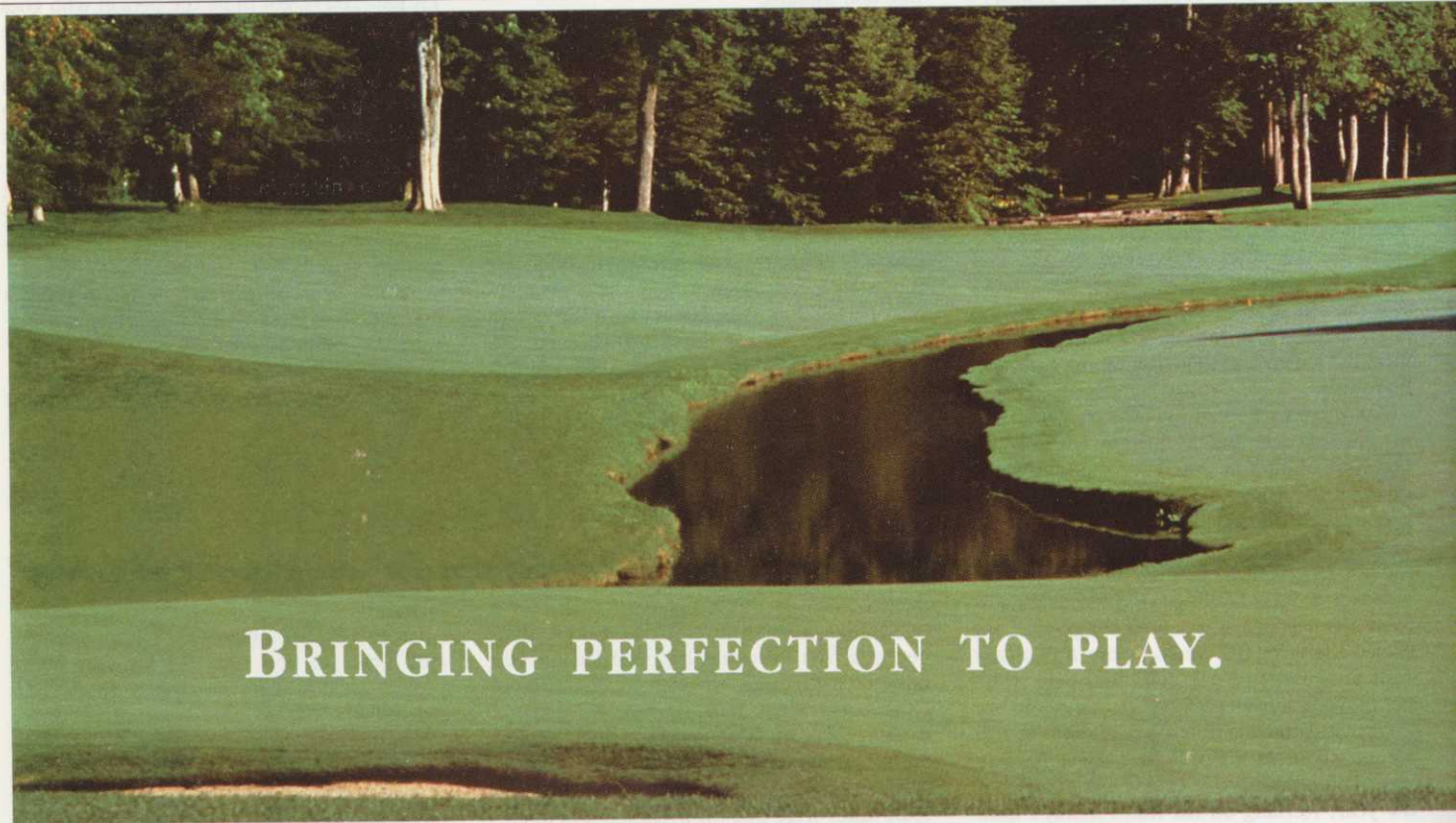
During the season Walter and Eddie will assess the situation daily. "We've got to keep a very strict eye on it because if we're creating drought areas we don't want to lose more than we want to," says Walter.

They will also be doing more aeration work this year. "The more aeration we can do this

year, the less we'll have to do next year – we don't want to leave marks on the course before the Open."

The public will be playing on the championship tees this year to firm them up. "Lots of greenkeepers think that not playing on tees helps them. We have a different view – we like them being played on. The professional likes a good, firm, hard tee. And they've got to be level. So we put the public on them – we've got all winter to repair them. But at least we're taking the thatch out and we're firming them up."

The fairways will be checked constantly.



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# set for '95 Open



Tented village to go here – on the new practice range

They won't be fertilised or watered, and more grass will be allowed to grow. There will be extra divot filling to combat wear and tear and, in the winter, members and visitors may be asked to tee up on the fairways.

Walter wants the 6991-yard championship course to look like a true links course with yellowish fairways, revetted bunkers and fescues showing up on the greens.

"We don't have much in the way of roughs, but what there is will be tidied up," he added.

Other jobs they plan to do before next spring include preparing the paths for spectators and the galleries.

"We take advantage of the year before because we find it gives us more time to get things done. When the Open Championship comes we'll just roll through that as if it were another week..."

The 124th Open will be the 25th at St Andrews and Walter's fourth and last.

## Clubhouse yields bonus

Work is well under way on a £3m clubhouse behind the 18th green of the New Course – the first visitors' clubhouse to be built at the 'home of golf'.

The two-storey building, which is due to open next spring, will feature sandstone walls and a pitched slated roof. On the ground floor there will be male and female changing rooms and showers while the first floor, with extensive views over the courses, will boast a lounge, bar and dining room. It will also have a balcony all the way round.

The foundation work for the 25,000 sq ft clubhouse yielded a welcome bonus for links

supervisor Walter Woods. Hundreds of tons of good links sand has been dug up and is now being used for bunker filling and on the fairways of the new Strathtyrum course, which will be officially opened this summer after a year of limited play.

Other developments in the pipeline are new maintenance sheds and a proper road system within the links to facilitate the movement of machinery and allow better spectator flow during the '95 Open.

■ Although the new 5,049-yard Strathtyrum course was built on essentially flat agricultural land, it has a links feel to it thanks to the man-made contours around the greens. Sand found during the construction of the clubhouse is being put on the fairways to add to the links feel.

Several thousand trees and bushes have been planted between holes 10, 11, 12 and the nearby main road into St Andrews. Further planting will be carried out as the course develops. This is in addition to the 3,000-6,000 whin and gorse bushes that are planted around the course every year.

■ The Eden Course, the first course to be closed under the Links Trust's new policy of taking one course out of play each winter for maintenance, came back into play on March 1 after a three-month layoff. Work included turfing the 14th and 15th greens, extending tees, remodelling bunkers and tidying up the pond. At the 10th hole, the old railway line has been completely turfed over.

■ The tented village will be erected on the new 400-yard floodlit driving range, between the hotel and the 12 covered and 12 open bays which have attracted more than 50,000 users since it opened last July.



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