



Differences... and similarities

Brad Owen, pictured, of the Augusta National Greenkeeping Staff, made his first visit to the UK to work as a member of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team. He gives his impressions of his visit...

Tom Lehman said it best with a single word, "Wow". Although he probably said it with a good bit more emotion, the same word can describe my trip and impressions. It was quite an experience to see up close and be part of "The Open" for the first time. To be inside the ropes and walk with the players gives you a better understanding of how the player attacks the course and how the course can fight back. It also was unique to walk the course from the player's perspective in the early part of the day and then to see behind the scenes maintenance in the late evening. The maintenance that so many people take for granted, or are not even aware of, is very interesting and I was surprised that it was not discussed more by the media.

There are many differences in philosophies concerning the maintenance of turf for a major golf tournament between England and the US but the most important philosophy is very similar to any other major tournament. That is, to pro-

vide a fast, firm and difficult challenge for the golfer that puts a premium on a well played shot and anything less is a take away shot. Other similarities include some of the goals of BIGGA and our Superintendents' Association and those include: projecting a professional image and furthering the education of its members along with educating the public on just what the superintendent's job is all about. During our stay in Blackpool, BIGGA proved to be a very good host as did many of the people we met along the way. I would strongly recommend this experience to anyone who appreciates golf and turf grass management. A big thanks goes out to BIGGA for making this trip a reality.

Finally, I found it interesting to see a course such as Royal Lytham St Anne's that was obviously a model for so many American courses that try to imitate the links style course (even if it is inland just a little bit!). You can read all you like and look at pictures all day but you really need to see it up close for the best impression. The very first course I worked on was designed by Jack Nicklaus and he incorporated many features such as the mounding, small bunkers and elevated tees along with penalising rough in his design.

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SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Name BIGGA's Education Officer?
2. What date does the National Education Conference start?

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