

# BIGGA at The Open



The famous claret jug and a nice big cheque may have gone to new Open Champion, Justin Leonard, but the greenkeepers who attended the Championship, both from Royal Troon's own team and the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team were also basking in glory at the end of the week.

Billy McLachlan and his team fully deserved the fulsome praise which was heaped on the course and its condition by everyone – including the players who usually are notoriously slow at giving greenkeepers plaudits.

None more so than the new Champion himself who spend a sizable chunk of his Champion's speech praising the work of the Royal Troon greenkeepers and that of the Support Team.

The team itself was drawn from 52 greenkeepers all over Britain – from as far north as Royal Dornoch and as far south as St Enodoc on Cornwall – with three from Sweden and two from Augusta National.

The team assisted by Billy, Jim



## History of Bunker Data

	St Andrews ('95) (117 bunkers)	Lytham ('96) (185 bunkers)	Royal Troon ('97) (84 bunkers)
Rd 1.....	214	501	344
Rd 2.....	201	577	272
Rd 3.....	130	269	107
Rd 4.....	156	271	136
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>1618</b>	<b>859</b>

Devlin and the Royal Troon team with post round divotting and pre-round bunker raking while each match was accompanied by a member of the team to rake any bunkers which were found during the course of the round.

For the third consecutive year the team produced the statistics for the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition run for the Media during the week. Each day every

bunker which was found was marked producing a daily total of bunkers hit as well as a cumulative figure. This provided some excellent statistics for the press, television and radio as well as the race for the final prize. Each daily winner received a bottle of whisky while the overall winner receives a Hayter Harrier 48 lawn mower, worth over £600, kindly donated by Kim Mcfie, Sales and

Marketing Director of Hayters.

The total of bunkers found over the week was 859 and the person who won the top prize was Sally Abell, of the Coventry Evening Telegraph, who estimated 857. She will be presented with the mower at a later date. Sally collected the first of the daily prizes and was joined for the other three days by representatives of the three biggest golf magazines, Colin Callander, Editor of *Golf Monthly*, Neil Pope, Editor of *Today's Golfer* and Peter Masters, Features Editor of *Golf World*.

The in-house competition, run for members of the Team, was won by David Cuthbertson with the daily prizes going to Jimmy Neilson, Steve Mitchell, Billy Merritt and Steve Wenlock.

The members of the Support Team were at their smartest during the week as a result of wearing shirts supplied by Lyle and Scott, shoes supplied by Spaldings (Etonic) and waterproofs supplied by Walrus. BIGGA would like to thank those companies for their support.

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◆ The Paul Broadhurst, Justin Leonard, Wayne Riley match interrupted a family on the 12th hole. As the players stood on the tee they could see the family sitting in the middle of the fairway about 30 yards in front of the tee tucking into their lunch. Riley called out: "Are we disturbing you?" and apologised for having to move them when the three had played off.

*Information supplied by Steve Johnstone of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Darren Clarke was interrupted by Mark James' ball running on to the 9th green before he had holed out. Darren wrote a note and pinned it with a tee beside Mark's ball. Content of the note is not known but everyone concerned had a laugh.

*Information supplied by Iain MacLeod of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Ian Woosnam holed his bunker shot at the 18th on day one and promptly presented the ball to the man who raked his bunkers – Sam Morrison, Head Greenkeeping at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club and Chairman of the Scottish Region of BIGGA.

◆ Wayne Riley hit a spectator on the head at the 5th hole on the second day and saw the ball bounce into a bunker. Wayne made par and a message was sent to him at the 7th to say that the spectator was OK.

*Information supplied by Stig Persson of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Mark Roe and his caddie couldn't wait to finish their second round and ended up eating fish and chips walking down the 13th fairway.

*Information supplied by Billy Merritt of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ The cut mark could have been affected by the very last match. American qualifier John Kernohan, standing at three over par on the 11th tee, saw his drive heading out of bounds. He hit a provisional but Gavin Kyle of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team had seen the original bounce off the top of the wall and remain in bounds and got a message back to Kernohan. He ended up dropping only one shot and qualify on 4 over par and those on six over missed out.

*Information supplied by Gavin Kyle of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team.*



Ronan McKeown was presented with the ball which won the Championship by the new Champion Justin Leonard as he left the final green



Top: Tiger Woods found more than his fair share of sand on the final day, losing his chance to win but kept our man Andy Sheehan busy

Above: Pat Murphy with Gordon Child, Bob Lupton and Elliott Small who were presented with watches by BIGGA President Viscount Whitelaw on their retirements from the roles of Regional Administrators in the South West and South Wales, Northern and Scottish Regions



Scottish Chairman Sam Morrison with Billy McLachan Head Greenkeeper at Royal Troon

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◆ Tiger Woods hit a young child with his tee shot from the 7th. Tom Lehman, playing in the match in front went into the crowd to find out if the child was OK.

*Information supplied by David Spurden of BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ The Duke of York walked a few holes with Colin Montgomerie and Mark McNulty's pairing as well as that of Fred Couples and Jesper Parnevik during the third round.

*Information supplied by Chris Sheehan of BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Peter Leonard struck a scorer on the hand at the 15th hole and the ball, which was heading towards the rough, bounced onto the approach. He then birdied the hole, apologised and handed the scorer £5.

*Information supplied by Kneale Diamond of BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Vijay Singh and his caddie thought they had one of the Championship heroes walking with their match on the last day. The caddie took one look at Steve Johnstone, of the Support team and yelled to his boss, "Look at that, we've got Darren Clarke with us today!" Vijay turned round and said "Gee yes, So it is!"

*Information supplied by Darren Clarke lookalike, Steve Johnstone, of BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support Team.*

◆ Kim Macfie was able to catch up with a couple of old friends during the Association of Golf Writers' Dinner on the Tuesday evening of the Championship. Kim, a Troon man and member of the host club, gave the vote of thanks at the wedding of another Troon man Colin Montgomerie and his wife Eimear, and the dinner provided the ideal occasion for Kim to catch up with Europe's number one and his good lady.

◆ President of the South Coast Section, Jim Fry, arrived for the final day of the Championship in style – aboard the Orient Express and wearing one of Arnold Palmer's blazers. Jim, pictured left, had met the great man in the United States and Palmer presented Jim with the blazer. Fortunately they were of similar sizes!



Top right: John Berry was the man who got the show on the road in the first match of the first day  
Left: Saturday night football. At least that's what they called it  
Below: Early morning or late night? You decide



Report and pictures by  
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