

A Public Disgrace – Why?

After reading Sandy McDivot's article on the US Open, in the July edition of Greenkeeping International, I was embarrassed to show my Association's monthly publication to any of my colleagues here in the USA. Just exactly why was it a public disgrace?

Beth Page is situated just 35 miles outside the centre of Manhattan an area renowned for a host of golfing gems such as Shinecock Hills, Winged Foot, Quaker Ridge, National Golf Links, Garden City and Westchester Country Club to name a few. These all may be great courses but they certainly are not accessible to the public. Beth Page however is a genuine "municipal" course with daily fees set at \$31 and fixed at that by the USGA since 98 and until 2005 during which time it can only rise with inflation.

As for the 35,000 rounds a year, courses in this area are usually only open from April through to November. This isn't an Augusta National type closure so they can maintain bentgrass fairways during the Georgia summer heat. It's one dictated by extreme cold weather conditions and around 100 inches of snow. Another point to remember is that Long Island is situated further south than the UK and daylight hours are somewhat shorter. Take these two points into consideration and the 35,000 rounds a year no longer sounds like a walk in the park for the maintenance crew.

It was actually the USGA investing the money in the course and not the Tax Payers money as you article implies. Now rather than the USGA investing \$3 million in this "Country Club for the people" I'm sure Mr McDivot would have rather seen the USGA paying the normal \$4 million to one of the more affluent courses on the open roster to open their doors to the USGA for 10 days for their little tournament.

As for Mr McDivot's views on tournament preparation that was the real disgrace! Aren't we professionals trying to do the best we can with whatever resources we have, be it \$3 million dollars or £30,000s?

Glenn Kirby,
Oak Hill Country Club, An Englishman in New York

Editor's Reply: Regular readers of Sandy McDivot's columns will know that he takes a tongue in cheek look at the world and I am sure he meant no offence to Beth Page or its Superintendent and staff. He was merely making a rye comparison between the course presented for the 2002 US Open and what is the widely held perception of a British "Muni".

Many Thanks

May I, through the BIGGA Magazine, thank all concerned regarding the organisation of this year's 131st British Open at Muirfield. The occasion was a huge success and memorable to all those who attended and took part.

On a personal note, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to those Greenkeepers who donated various items of memorabilia from the Open to go towards a Promises Auction, which I am trying to organise this coming autumn. The Auction is to raise much needed funds for a local Hospice and as soon as the boys found out about my intentions they freely donated anything they had collected during the four days. I am truly grateful to all those who have contributed in any way you have shown as always true, unselfish spirit and I thank you for this.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next BIGGA event.

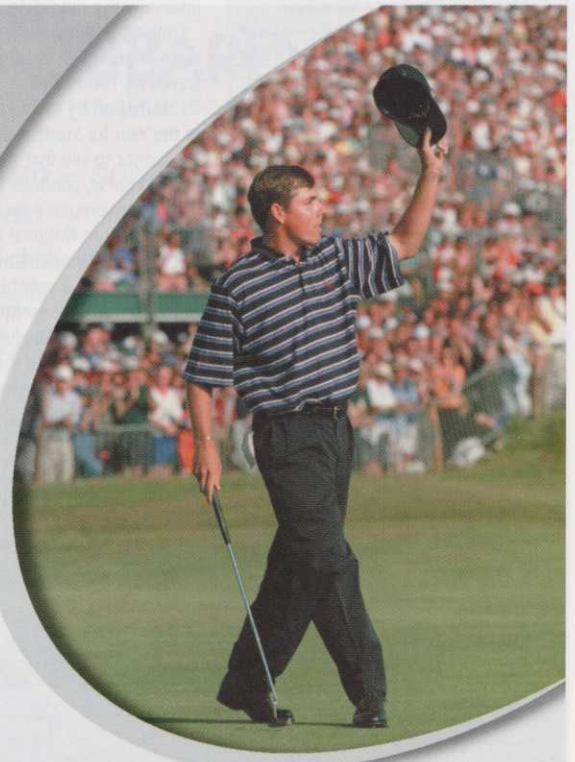
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Anthony Davies MG
Course Manager, Prestbury GC

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