

On the Fairway to a Glittering Career

A young Scots greenkeeper who has just returned to his home turf with glowing references from two of America's greatest golf courses, has landed a dream job at one of the England's top ten clubs.

25 year old Danny Murray, from Balerno near Edinburgh, was scarcely off the plane from the States, when he was signed up by Wentworth to work on its three championship-standard courses in Surrey.

Danny trained at Oatridge College in West Lothian and thanks to his tutors there, crossed the Atlantic to take up a year long internship at Pinehurst, "the cradle of American golf", in North Carolina. He was part of the TOP scheme, run by Ohio State University, to allow young greenkeepers to broaden their experience of what is a global industry. While there, Danny grabbed the chance to work at New York's famous Winged Foot Club before, during and after the 2006 US Open championship, extending his stay by six months.

Eric Greytok, the Director of Golf Courses at Winged Foot, was impressed: "He made a significant impact during the preparation, completion and clean-up of the 2006 Open. He also assisted in the completion of a \$750,000 renovation project on the East Course.

"One of Danny's strongest attributes is that he possesses a strong work ethic and a good character, that is often hard to find in an employee. He has a bright future in management ahead of him and will be very successful in this industry."

The reference from Jeff Hill, the Course Superintendent at the eight-course Pinehurst complex was just as glowing: "He won everyone's respect for his hard work and dedication to doing a great job. I feel confident that Danny will be very successful in the turfgrass industry."

Michael O'Keeffe, the Irish-born head of the TOP scheme at Ohio State, said: "We're very pleased that Danny Murray will be able to use the

experience he has gained in America in his next job. Many head greenkeepers around Europe recognise the advantage of hiring these young people who have made an extra effort to add value to their CVs."

Danny looked in on Oatridge College on his return from the States and took the chance to urge other young Scots to follow in his footsteps, once they have had some experience in greenkeeping in this country. He said: "I'd say wait until you're 21 or 22, then go for it. It's a fantastic experience working on some of the best courses in the World, like Pinehurst and Winged Foot, but you have to be prepared to put in the effort.

When I was at Winged Foot we were expected to do 14 hour-days and it wasn't easy when the temperatures got up to 95 at times."

At that point Danny was hoping for a job in the London area and it was only a few days later that he got the call from Wentworth.

Previously Danny worked at Gogarburn in Edinburgh and Archerfield Links in East Lothian. He attended Oatridge while doing his apprenticeship at the Marriot Dalmahoy Golf and Country Club in Midlothian.

He is one of 10 former greenkeeping students from Oatridge who have taken part in the TOP scheme and who have gone on to top jobs. A scratch golfer, Danny says one of his fondest memories of the States will be playing - and winning - mini "Ryder Cup" contests between British and American greenkeepers.

Eileen Barry, the Liaison Officer at Oatridge College, said: "We're so proud of Danny and how well he did in the United States. The letters of reference he brought back are so good they really should be framed!"

HOBBIES

Name: Eric Barber

Age: 70

Position: Retired member of BIGGA

Golf Club: Teign Valley (of which he was part owner)

Hobby: Athlete



As far as being active as a child goes, Eric started running from a young age, cycling from the age of 13 and began swimming in the army at the age of 18.

Cycling was always Eric's passion until his son joined Torbay Amateur Athletics at the age of nine. Eric got a feel for running and started to go running once or twice a week, entering two local races a year.

"I always said I'd take up cycle racing

when I retired but I decided to take up running instead, at the age of 59," said Eric.

A natural athlete, Eric progressed quickly winning the Westwood League Cross Country in Devon and Cornwall (in the 55-59 age group) and also joining and winning races at the South West Veterans Athletics Club.

Progressing to compete nationally, Eric found himself in top 10 placing on the track and road. He competed in Triathlons, Duathlons and Aquathons. At the ripe old age of 63, Barber competed in the World Championship, Veterans Athletic, in Gateshead obtaining three out of four top 20 places. He competed again at 65, when the World Vets

GI has begun a new feature, finding out what greenkeepers get up to in their spare time.

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Athletic Championships were held in Brisbane, Australia and won the British Marathon Championship in 2003 and the half Marathon in 2005, in his age group.

"Because I chose cycling over running when I was younger, there was less chance of me getting injured, therefore I am a more able runner," commented Eric.

Eric's best ever race was in 2003 in Zofingham, Switzerland. "The competition consisted of a 10k run, followed by a 150k cycle, finishing with a 30k run," It was on a hilly terrain with an undulating circuit. In the lead after the first run, Eric was passed by an Italian competitor during the cycling but was able to pull it back on the last run to finish 28 minutes ahead of the Italian rival, to win his age group.

Now 70 years of age, the Veteran South Devon athlete has become triple world champion after decimating the field (in the 70 to 74 age group) in the World Duathlon Championships hosted by Canada in Newfoundland.

"I get to know the course before I compete and adopt the 'if they can do it, I can do it' attitude," said Eric.

"One of the benefits of competing is meeting up with old rivals again. Around 79 countries take part in the World Championships. We are all good friends and when the race is over we all have a chat and socialise with one another."

Eric aims to still be competing at the age of 80 and still running at 90.

Eric has recently been selected to represent England in the 70-74 age group at the British and Irish Masters Cross Country International, at Falkirk, Scotland on November 18.