



BIGGA Open Support Team 2007

CARNOUSTIE 2007

While there were 55 greenkeepers working at The Open as part of the BIGGA Open Support Team there was one greenkeeper who was actually playing in the Championship itself.

David Coupland, who has recently left Boston Golf Club, to play full time amateur golf was the leading qualifier from Monifieth Golf Club and played the opening two rounds in the company of US Ryder Cup player, Vaughn Taylor, and Australian veteran, Peter Fowler.

A 21 year-old +2 player David was in the fourth match on the opening day and with a birdie at the 1st may well have been leading the Championship for a few minutes – he certainly featured on the leaderboard. It was never going to last, but he acquitted himself very well shooting rounds of 79 and 74 – matching Tiger Woods’ score in the second round.

“I really didn’t expect to be here. I entered this year for the first time just to give it a go and qualified with a 71 at the Regional Qualifying at Gog Magog,” he explained while sitting the BIGGA Marquee after his second round.

He then shot 69 in the opening round at Monifieth to lie tied 8th in the chase for three Open places and followed that up with a 65 to win the qualifier outright by one shot.

“I holed a 20 footer on the last and thought that might have done it for me but I had to wait for six hours to see if anyone beat me. It was a nightmare.”

After it was confirmed he headed home and returned to Carnoustie the Sunday before it started to prepare.

“I bumped into most of the players in the locker room, apart from Tiger, obviously, and played a practice round with former Open Champion, Justin Leonard. Australian, Robert Allenby, also give me some advice,

which was very good of him. I did my best not to be in awe of the other players and to play my own game and I was pleased with the way I struck the ball.”

David made seven or eight birdies over the two rounds and brought the galleries to their feet with a monster putt on the 11th in the first round and an approach to two feet on the 13th during the second.

“The crowd enjoyed that,” he said, while admitting that the birdie on the 1st may have been the worst thing he could have done.

“It pumped me up even more than I was and I immediately drove into a fairway bunker at the next and doubled bogeyed.”

Players are well looked after during The Open. David took advantage of the Lexus courtesy car service on one occasion but, in an attempt to keep things as normal as possible, drove himself to the course on the other days.

“I drove my Corsa into the competitors’ car park,” he laughed.

He also received a new Titelist golf bag, two pairs of Footjoy shoes, Nike clothing and some Oakley sunglasses while he was most impressed with the food and refreshments available in the Players’ marquee.

David, who was supported by Bruce Hicks his former Course Manager and the Boston Secretary on the opening round, is determined to give amateur golf his full time attention with the English national squad and perhaps Walker Cup the ambition but he is pleased that being a qualified greenkeeper will give him some insurances for the future.

“I hope to be back playing in The Open again for many years to come,” said David.

BIGGA Bunker Stats – The Story Continues...

	1995 St. A's	1996 Ly'm	1997 Troon	1998 B'dale	1999 C'stie	2000 St. A's	2001 Ly'm	2002 M'field	2003 St. G's	2004 Troon	2005 St. A's	2006 H'lake	2007 C'stie
Bunkers	112	185	84	117	115	112	197	148	106	93	112	96	113
Rd 1	214	501	344	355	539	148	557	359	388	393	252	352	442
Rd 2	201	577	272	406	468	164	547	372	405	371	203	353	482
Rd 3	130	269	107	226	202	65	224	175	149	148	100	183	189
Rd 4	156	271	136	153	265	71	257	169	181	185	121	204	198
Total	701	1618	859	1140	1474	448	1585	1078	1123	1097	676	1092	1311

Golden Nuggets supplied by BIGGA Support Team

Justin Rose was distracted on day one on his 2nd shot to the par-5 6th, when a golf buggy crashed off the side of the road. Information supplied by Scott Corrigan, Greenburn GC.

Geoff Ogilvy smashed a sign on day one on the 13th hole in a temper. Information supplied by George Stephens, Exeter Golf & Country Club.

Jonathon Byrd asked a marshal on day one on the 16th tee to turn the heating on. Information supplied by Stuart Hogg, St Annes Old Links GC.

Day one on the 18th hole, a disagreement between two of the players in the second to last match had to be calmed by officials. Seung-Ho Lee had a drop on one side of the fairway and prepared to play. Meanwhile Holtman, on the other side of the fairway also got ready to play and both played virtually at the same time. Holtman, playing a split second after Seung-Ho hit the ball out of bounds and then played a 2nd ball into the RH Stand. Holtman's caddie went mad and the air turned blue. Information supplied by Gary Cunningham from Trentham Park GC.

While backing out of the gorse bush looking for Andersson Hed's ball, the end of the rake caught Rich Beem right between the legs. He joked that he was glad he wasn't trying for children. Information supplied by Neil Woolfrey from Great Lever & Farnworth GC.

Spencer Levin stopped a female spectator on the 9th, had a mouthful of her beer then gave her a kiss – it was his girlfriend! Information supplied by Asa English from Charnwood Forest GC.

The Duke of York accompanied Shaun Micheel and Sandy Lyle's game on day three of the Championship. Apparently he would like his lawn like the fairways of Carnoustie! Information supplied by Richard Beacham from Wrekin GC.

Tiger Woods 2nd shot on the 6th on day three, struck a lady spectator on the head and bounced out into the rough. Tiger checked she was ok and gave her a signed glove. After completing the hole he asked the rules official, Andy McFee, to give her the ball as well. Information supplied by Richard Saunders from St Neots GC.



Tiger Woods on the Putting Green



John Pemberton, BIGGA Chief Executive, David Coupland, Ex-Greenkeeper at Boston GC and Billy McMillan, BIGGA National Chairman



Practice Ground



Martin Haywood from Bawtry Golf & Country Club and David Leatherland from Kedleston Park GC



David Byrne (right) from St. Helen's Bay Golf Resort, Ireland

News from the Open...

The BIGGA Cabin where Support Team members register before making their way to the 1st tee is not always found in the heat of the action but this year it was in the corner of the Carnoustie Hotel car park close to the pavement and a little bit easier to find. Peter Alliss popped his head round the door to congratulate the team on the work they were doing, while Radio 2 DJ, Chris Evans, was also spotted outside and signed some autographs for the team.

Team member, Neil Woolfrey, hit the back pages of his local paper after the first round. He was assigned the match which included a friend and local pro, Steve Parry, and bet £100 at 3-1 that he'd outscore his two playing partners. The bet duly came good and Neil was £300 richer. While delighted, the publicity in his local Bolton paper meant he was left with a nagging doubt that his wife might find out about the bet!

A greenkeeper never forgets. In 1992 BIGGA Board Member, Gavin Robson, leant Justin Rose a pound coin to act as a ball marker. At the end of the round Justin marched off with Gavin's hard earned. Five years on Gavin spotted Justin at Edinburgh Airport as they both travelled to their respective homes after this year's Championship. "Can I have my pound back?" Gavin demanded. It's not known whether Justin recognised the Burton GC Course Manager but he did cough up, adding 10p to cover interest payments over the period.



BIGGA National Chairman, Billy McMillan and Carnoustie Course Manager, John Philp

Plonker of the Week Award

Three candidates. There was the man who was waiting outside the University of Abertay at 5.25am ready to go bunker preparing only to realise that the pick-up time was 4.30am. A quick taxi ride and £20 lighter in his pocket he arrived in time to prepared the last hole and a half! Candidate number two had his phone on silent and slept in on the Saturday missing his mini bus and, consequently, his match. Winner, however, was the BIGGA official who carefully made sure that the minibus was wide enough to fit through a tight railway bridge but forgot about the fact that the minibus was a foot taller than the height of the bridge. Ouch!

John Philp and his team received universal praise for the condition of Carnoustie. The players were lining up to express their delight to R&A officials at what they found when they arrived in Angus and the course delivered an amazing Open Championship.

It is all the more praiseworthy as the weather conditions in the lead up to and during the Championship were not what would be considered ideal. High rainfall in the months preceding the Championship meant a course much greener than would have been hoped - certainly not close to the straw coloured course 12 months before at Hoylake - but given that the conditions by the team were as perfect as they could possibly have been. During the week the heavy rainfall continued but Carnoustie continued to soak it up and it was only on the final morning when some bunkers had to be emptied and some greens squeegeed. Most other courses would have succumbed under such a deluge.



John Philp, Carnoustie Course Manager, Billy McMillan, BIGGA National Chairman and Grant Moir of the R&A, at on-course briefing



The Greenkeepers Sheds



Mo Bah, Remedy Oak GC



2007 Open Championship winner, Paul Harrington