



OH YOU LUCKY LOT!

Boy! Are you a lucky bunch. The prospect of playing over either Dundonald Links or Kilmarnock Barassie would be enough for most people, but this year's BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, means you playing on both of these superb links courses.

With Dundonald Links – Loch Lomond's younger sister – hosting the opening round on Monday, October 8, and Barassie welcoming us for the second and final round the next day, competitors are in for an absolute treat.

Dundonald was designed by Kyle Philips, who also has Kingsbarns and The Grove on his CV, and is regarded as one of the finest new courses, not just in the UK, but worldwide. Barassie is a final Open Qualifier and holds a prominent position in the list of the UK's top 100 courses.

Known initially as Southern Gables, Dundonald Links' the change of name came along when Loch Lomond purchased the course four years ago and it takes the name back to that of the original 18th century nine hole course that sat on the site and which was turned over to farmland as part of the Second World War effort.

It features Kyle Philips' trademark rolling greens with serious run-off areas to punish the wayward approach and at 7300 yards off the back tees it is a formidable test of golf.

"My desire was to create a championship Ayrshire-style links course that felt and played as though it was an old rediscovered course, by integrating newly constructed features with existing site features," explains Kyle, whose affinity with Scottish golf is widely known and admired.

The par-3s are particularly impressive. Tough, interesting and each completely different from the others.

Course Manager is Frank Clarkson who has been at the course since Loch Lomond's purchase of it.

"The entire team is really looking forward to BIGGA coming for the National Championships. They are really pumped up for it," said Frank.

"Since I arrived we've worked hard to develop the finer grasses and establish it and we feel that we are now at the point where we can show it off. There is so much potential here but we feel we have a lot to live up to as we are surrounded by so many wonderful golf courses in this part of Scotland.

"We can't wait to show our course off to the BIGGA members," he added, with real relish.

Once you have pitted yourselves against Dundonald the Championship Banquet will be held in the traditional Barassie clubhouse where you will catch a glimpse of the task that will await you the following morning. Barassie is tough and typical of what Scottish links golf is all about – large undulating greens, deep bunkers and doglegs but for a course that sits on the outskirts of Troon what else would you expect?

The club is 120 years old but hasn't stood still in that time with nine new holes built in recent years, including the superb par-3 4th and the double dogleg par-5 8th.





The Club, which was joint host of the 2001 Amateur Championship with Prestwick, will again be a final qualifier for The Open in two year's time when the Championship returns to Turnberry for the first time since 1994.

Course Manager Brian Finlayson is delighted that he will be welcoming so many fellow greenkeepers to his club.

"It'll be a nice change to have 80 greenkeepers commenting on the course rather than the 500 I normally have!" he joked.

"After the June we've had we've got a very green links at the moment but we have been known to have good weather in September and October so hopefully we'll have more of a true links feel by the time the Championship comes around.

"We are a really good test of golf," he added

Brian was also delighted that Kubota had become the title sponsor of the event

"We're a Kubota course with four pieces of their kit," he revealed.

"Kubota are delighted to be sponsoring this year's BIGGA National Championship," said Sales & Marketing Manager Dave Roberts.

"The golf course industry has been very good to us over the past 30 years, and we have always enjoyed an excellent relationship with BIGGA as a Golden Key member, so the opportunity to sponsor this prestigious event was too good to pass up and an easy decision to make. We look forward to meeting up with friends old and new in October at these fabulous host courses, and of course, to a highly competitive tournament," said Dave.

Look out for the application form in this month's magazine and hopefully we'll see you in Ayrshire!