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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Behind the Scenes

This month the magazine highlights a project that has been worked upon behind the scenes at BIGGA for most of this year.

Powakaddy approached the Association in the spring and asked if we could help them gather research data from greenkeepers to assist them with a new wheel the company was hoping to introduce. That led to a survey going onto our website and then further meetings at BIGGA HOUSE with ourselves and Terry Hale, the Powakaddy Chief Executive, and Lee Manvell, the Group Product Manager, where we offered more hands-on assistance to the project.

Several BIGGA members were then invited to take part in testing sessions for the new tyres on golf courses. The comment and advice that was offered was gratefully received by Powakaddy and the results, as discussed in the article, will be seen when the new winter tyre goes on sale in October.

What has come out of the whole process is how much the opinions of Course Managers were valued and respected by a company that operates in the wider golf industry. I can tell you that Powakaddy was very reluctant to move the whole development process forward without first taking on board the comments and criticisms of Course Managers.

To me, that was incredibly refreshing and is a superb example of how BIGGA can work to the betterment of the game as a whole. Powakaddy recognised the benefits of talking to the experts about how tyres can impact on ground under various, sometimes extreme, conditions, and BIGGA enabled these meetings to take place.

Hopefully what will emerge is an ability for golfers to use their powered caddie cars in conditions that would previously have been impossible and allow Course Managers to be comfortable in the knowledge that in doing

so the course is not being damaged. It might open winter golf up to those people who in the past had been unable to take part because the caddie cars were banned under certain conditions and if that means more golf and more green fees, etc golf clubs will benefit.

But the wider picture is also a positive one. A major golf company had greenkeepers, and BIGGA, at the top of its list for advice when it came to making decisions that carried huge financial ramifications.

Elsewhere in this issue the GTC's David Golding discusses the latest generation of greenkeeper education qualifications which have taken over from the NVQ system, everywhere outside Scotland - the National Occupational Qualifications.

In my time with BIGGA I have talked to hundreds of greenkeepers. The older ones talked about having got their City and Guilds while the younger ones talked about which level of NVQ they had or were going through.

The new qualifications are designed specifically for our industry which is a major step forward and are at three levels – Golf Greenkeeper – Golf Course Supervisor – Golf Course Manager. These will ensure that education – much of it to be delivered in bite size learning packages – will be appropriate for the level and needs of the student.

I wish David well as he assists with the complicated process of moving from one system to another and hope that this new era of education proves to be another significant step in the development of the industry.

Scott MacCallum
Editor