



Opportunities Beckon



Scott MacCallum previews the forthcoming Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year

Seven highly talented and motivated greenkeepers will descend on BIGGA HOUSE later this month for the 19th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year final.

Each year the standard of the finalist rises and to reach the final attaches a beacon to the CV drawing its attention to potential employers. Winning the title opens the door to all sorts of possibilities – Euan Grant, who has just taken over from George Brown at this year’s Open Championship venue, at Turnberry, is a former Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner for example.

The finalists arrive at Aldwark Manor in Sunday, September 13, when they will meet up with the judges and get to know each other before they start what could be one of the most significant events in their careers.

Dinner and a couple of drinks should tee up Monday just nicely for

the candidates, where they will be interviewed by a panel comprising Peter Mansfield, of Lely; Jeff Mills, Chairman of the BIGGA Learning and Development Committee; Bruce Jamieson, of Toro, and Sami Collins, BIGGA’s Head of Learning and Development.

The finalists will also be charged with producing a course report on the Aldwark Manor course’s holes on the hotel side of the river.

Once all seven interviews have been completed the reports will be studied and the interview panel will decide on the 2009 winner and two runners-up.

The winner will win an eight week trip to the United States beginning next January, which includes a six week study course at the University of Massachusetts and a trip to the GCSAA’s Golf Industry Show, in San Diego, and Toro’s Californian Headquarters. The runners-up will receive an expenses paid trip to Harrogate Week.

The Seven Finalists are...

Martin Finegan

Martin Finegan is an Assistant at Waterville Golf Links in County Kerry. Martin, 44, holds a degree in Farm Management and worked in the family transport and agricultural contraction business. He moved to London in the late 80s and was soon running his own agency supplying labour to construction companies with up to 300 employees.

He later sold the company, moved back to Ireland and built his own house. Martin took a full time course in Greenkeeping and Turf Management at Colaiste Stiofain, in Cork, making a round trip of 150 miles every day. Married, his hobbies include golf, fishing, swimming and reading while he also helps out with his local Gaelic Athletic Association teams.



Richard Jenkinson

Richard Jenkinson was born and bred in St Andrews and is currently working on construction and grow-in of the new g-west course near Gleneagles.

Richard started as a seasonal worker on the Old Course and moved to Archerfield Links, in East Lothian, as First Assistant before moving to Perthshire. He holds an HNC in Golf Course Management from Elmwood.

He is married to Ferelith and they have a young daughter, Amy. Richard, 37, is a keen piper, played football at a senior level and also holds Gold, Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards.



Rhys Norville

Rhys Norville is an Assistant at Newport Golf Club, in South Wales, finding his vocation having initially started on the course to being a PGA Professional.

He is currently undertaking his NVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf at Coleg Gwent. Currently playing off a handicap of 3 he is a member of Tredegar Park GC and is a regular competition winner and serves on committee.

Rhys, 20, is a qualified sports coach and has sat on the Newport Youth Council helping improve opportunities to 16-25 year olds in the Newport Area.



Benjamin Burrill

Benjamin Burrill is an Assistant at Ilkley Golf Club in West Yorkshire. He joined Ilkley on a full time basis in 2007 having work on a seasonal basis for the previous seven years and holds an honours degree in Real Estate Management and Business from John Moores University, in Liverpool.

Benjamin, 24, is currently studying for his NVQ Level 3 at Askham Bryan. His interests include kite surfing, water skiing, tennis, golf and running – he completed this year's London Marathon.



Oliver Pennington

Oliver Pennington has been an Assistant at La Moye Golf Club, in Jersey, for five years and is currently studying NVQ Level 3 at Myerscough.

A keen golfer, playing off 10, 22 year-old Oliver has worked on the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team at both Royal Birkdale and Turnberry and has attended Harrogate Week. He also enjoys kayaking and cooking.



Adam Wise

Adam Wise has been an Assistant at Richmond Golf Club, in Surrey, since 2007 having previously worked as a seasonal worker at the club.

He holds an honours degree in Sports Management Golf from Bournemouth University and particularly enjoyed the sports turf modules in that which sparked his desire to become greenkeeper.

Adam, 24, is currently undertaking an NVQ level 2 in Sportsturf at Myerscough.

A county golfer from B,B&O he also played for his university and currently plays to a handicap of 3.

His other interests include running, rowing and music.



Peter Leach

Peter Leach is Deputy Course Manager at Exeter Golf and Country Club. Peter, 29, holds an honours degree in Geography and Environmental Management from the University of the West of England in Bristol and is currently working towards a Foundation Degree in Sportsturf at Myerscough.

A mad keen golfer, he is a former Junior Captain of Exeter G&CC and his father is a ex- Devon County Player and uncle a professional. He is also a keen walker, and snooker and pool player.

