





Blown away by St Andrews

The BIGGA Open Support Team proved its worth at St Andrews this year when poor weather hit. Scott MacCallum reports from St Andrews



The 150th anniversary Open at St Andrews saw the BIGGA Open Support Team returning to the venue where the very first team started work back in 1984. Much has changed in those 26 years but one thing has remained constant – just how important the team is to the smooth running of an event where you never know what will happen next.



Brian Hunter, left, with Scottish Chairman, John Geddes

This year, for example, a suspension of play on the second afternoon because of high winds meant matches couldn't be completed until Saturday morning.

The knock on effect meant that those 30 players left out on the course had to play the same course as the players who had already completed their rounds. That, in turn, meant that Gordon McKie and his team couldn't complete their third round prep until much



Three Nigerian BIGGA members visited the Marquee

later than intended which put pressure on everyone involved.

The BIGGA team was there to help and a phone call from the R&A's Grant Moir at 9.15pm on Friday evening asking for 20 Support Team members to divot fairways ahead of the fairway mowers at 4.30am the next morning was met by a sea of hands volunteering to take on the task. Such desire to get in and help, whatever the hour, is what the BIGGA Open Support Team is all about.

Drawn from a list of BIGGA members who applied for the team at the turn of the year greenkeepers came from all points of the UK and Ireland as well as the USA, Sweden, Germany and Slovenia.

A St Andrews Open benefits from the collective greenkeeping might of the St Andrews Links Trust Greenkeeping resources,

managed by Gordon Moir, so, outside of emergencies, the BIGGA team members were able to concentrate on supporting their matches.

And what a fine job they did. The Association should be proud of them all. The hard work and effort was matched only by the fun and laughter that was had by all.

One of the many highlights was the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Cecil George (see page 34). National Chairman, Paul Worster, was Master of Ceremonies and introduced Past Chairman, Elliott Small, who outlined Cecil's career. The actual presentation was made by BIGGA's first Chairman, Walter Woods, the former Links Superintendent at St Andrews.

Thanks must go to all team members but, in particular, the Pod Leaders, Billy Merritt, Richard Saunders, Douglas McIntosh,



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John Keenaghan and Jeremy Hughes and all those who drove mini buses. Their work was supplemented by the Cabin staff, of Peter Boyd and Clive Osgood; and 1st Tee team of Richard Whyman and Paul Jenkins. The responsibility for administration and the Marquee was carried out by Rachael Duffy, who was ably assisted by the Board of Directors Chris Sealey and Gary Cunningham.

The thoughts of everyone on the team went out to one of their number, Anthony Gillis, of Cork Golf Club, who had to cut short his time in St Andrews, almost before it had begun, and return home because of a family illness.

Next year the team will reform and be there to help at Royal St George’s Golf Club. Look out for the application form in the December and January issues of Greenkeeper International.



ABOVE LEFT: Cecil Receives his award from Walter Woods
ABOVE CENTRE: Tools of the trade
ABOVE: Back packs kindly donated by Ransomes Jacobsen
LEFT: John Pemberton with Mark Pyrah of Sherriff, who kindly sponsored the TVs
NEAR LEFT: Walter and Jack, doyens of the industry



BIGGA Titbits (by BIGGA Open Support Team Members)

- An early start does have its benefits. In the second match out Loren Roberts' caddie spotted a lady watching the golf from the window of a room on the third floor of the Old Course Hotel covered only by her bra.

Bob Maibusch MG, of Hinsdale Golf Club, Illinois, USA.

- Jean Van de Velde is still serving his apprenticeship as an on-course reporter. In trying to get a better view of Tiger Wood's putt on the 15th he wandered onto the line of the group teeing off on the 16th. He was met with shouts of "Jean! Jean!" from the crowd, and the golfers, including Tiger, but as he was wearing headphones it took him a while to realise that he was an obstruction. He turned red and moved out of the way cheers from the crowd and the other players.

Matt Wormald, of Luffenham Heath Golf Club.

- In an eventful day for Tiger he formed part of an illustrious queue for a portaloos on the 7th. Justin Rose went first, Tiger was next in line with Camilo Villegas bringing up the rear.

Matt Wormald, of Luffenham Heath Golf Club.

- DA Points pulled a bag of beef jerky from his bag during the delay. Once he'd finished he then pulled a roll of dental floss from his bag and announced to the gallery, "The big problem once you've eaten beef jerky is that you gotta floss!"

John Mair, of Dumfriesshire Golf Centre.

- Just as Steve Stricker sent his putt on the way to the hole on the 8th green a hare raced across the green missing the rolling ball by inches.

Billy McMillan, of Tyrell's Wood Golf Club.

- Ignacio Garrido's caddie had a bad day on Saturday. Caught short he disappeared into the bushes to do what he needed to do and as he raced to catch up he tripped, fell over and all the clubs fell out of the bag.

Jeremy Hughes, of Vale of Llangollen GC.

- **BIGGA Support Team member John Mitchell, of Pernporth GC,** had an unusual working day on Saturday. With 10 matches still to be completed early in the morning John was part of a small BIGGA team which arrived at the golf course at 5.30am to finish the matches. John was allocated the match closest to home and joined his group on the 18th tee. With no bunkers on the 18th Henrik Stenson asked him why he was there and John told him that it was to make sure the team of referee, scorer, scoreboard carrier and BIGGA Support Team member was intact. John completed the walk up the 18th returned his rake and, not having been allocated a match on Saturday, had completed his day's work by 6.40am.



The Open - Complete Bunker Stats (1995 to 2010)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	St. A's	Lythm	Troon	B'dale	C'stie	St. A's	Lythm	M'field	St.G's
Bnkrs	112	185	84	117	115	112	197	148	106
Rd 1	214	501	344	355	539	148	557	359	388
Rd 2	201	577	272	406	468	164	547	372	405
Rd 3	130	269	107	226	202	65	224	175	149
Rd 4	156	271	136	153	265	71	257	169	181
Total	701	1618	859	1140	1474	448	1585	1078	1123

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Troon	St. A's	Hlake	C'stie	B'dale	T'berry	St A's
Bnkrs	93	112	96	113	123	85	112
Rd 1	393	252	352	442	472	272	149
Rd 2	371	203	353	482	379	332	200
Rd 3	148	100	183	189	219	172	77
Rd 4	185	121	204	198	198	185	85
Total	1097	676	1092	1311	1268	961	511

• *Two players completed the four rounds without going into any bunkers at all - Rickie Fowler and Edoardo Molinari.*