

# Toro Student Finalists



The Regional Finals have taken place and the eight finalists for the 2011 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Competition have been selected.

One of them now has the opportunity to become the 23rd Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and succeed Andrew Stanger

**The eight will arrive at Aldwark Manor on Sunday, September 11, in preparation for the Final the following day, which will comprise of a formal interview and the completion of a report, which will only be revealed to them on the Monday morning.**

The winner and two runners-up will be announced around 5pm, with the day concluding with a meal and a relaxed game of tenpin bowling.

The winner receives an eight week trip to the United States, beginning next January. This includes a six week study course at the University of Massachusetts, and trips to the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show, in Las Vegas, and Toro's Californian base.

The runners-up will receive an expenses paid trip to the Continue to Learn Education programme in Harrogate in January.





Name: Robert Mills  
Age: 24  
Golf Club: Sunningdale GC  
Position: Assistant  
College: Merrist Wood College

Robert joined the staff at Sunningdale in June last year having previously worked at nearby Mill Ride GC. Robert was a finalist at last year's Toro Student of the Year and is honoured to be back again for a second time. His father is Head Groundsman at Bishop's Stortford FC and together they have also worked on a voluntary basis to prepare their local cricket pitch.

He was a member of the BIGGA Open Support Team at Royal St George's this year. As a cricketer himself was 1st Team Bowler of the Year, and is a died-in-the-wool number 11 bat!



Name: Miles Todd  
Age: 23  
Golf Club: Rhuddlan GC  
Position: Deputy Course Manager  
College: Deeside College

Miles was promoted to Deputy Course Manager at Rhuddlan just over a year ago and started his NVQ Level III earlier this year. He is a keen footballer having represented North Wales at all age levels and Captain of his club. He was also a member of BIGGA's Open Support Team at Turnberry in 2009, and also a regular attendee at BIGGA events in his Section. In addition to his football he is a keen golfer and mountain biker.



Name: Justin Howard  
Age: 39  
Golf Club: Cranham Golf Centre  
Position: Head Greenkeeper  
College: Myerscough College

Justin arrived in greenkeeping seven years ago, 10 years after working for a major European bank. He became Head Greenkeeper two years ago. He has a desire to keep improving and is studying for his Level III Diploma which will help towards his goal. Out of work he is a keen runner and enjoys watching Brentwood Town FC.



Name: Blair Somerville  
Age: 21  
Golf Club: Helensburgh GC  
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper  
College: GOSTA

Blair started his greenkeeping career at Loch Lomond as a seasonal worker before becoming a full time apprentice and worked on two Barclay's Scottish Opens. He has been at Helensburgh for 18 months, where he completed his SVQ Level II. He is also currently investigating the possibility of an internship in the United States. A 10 handicap golfer he is also a keen follower of rugby and admits to watching most other sports when he can.



Name: Rhys Williams  
Age: 26  
Golf Club: Royal Porthcawl GC  
Position: Assistant  
College: Pencoed College

Rhys has been at Royal Porthcawl since the spring of this year having worked at the Grove GC for three and a half years before that.

As a golfer he plays off 2.5 and won the Grove Club Championship on a couple of occasions as well as a number of club competitions. Prior to that he played international rugby for Wales at under 16 and under 18 level and played semi professionally for Bridgend. He has played alongside current Welsh internationals, James Hook and Andrew Bishop.



Name: Jon Watson  
Age: 32  
Golf Club: Burgham Park GC  
Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper  
College: Myerscough College

Jon has been in his current position for five years and has been at the forefront of some of the design and construction projects at the club. Indeed he has been involved in design and construction work on other clubs in the area and he is currently spending his winter months working on upgrading another club where he is carrying out shaping work. As a golfer he has represented Northumberland at junior level but now admits to enjoying golf at a more leisurely pace off a handicap of 8.



Name: Benjamin Hunter  
Age: 20  
Golf Club: Garon Park Golf Complex  
Position: Assistant  
College: Myerscough College

Benjamin got a taste for greenkeeping on summer work experience and realised that it could provide him with a long and satisfying career. He has been at Garon Park for just under a year and is pleased to be benefiting from the work based learning available to him.

He is an extremely highly regarded athlete having represented Great Britain in the Youth Olympics over 3000 metres and he has since represented his country as a cross country runner. He continues to train hard and is committed to applying high standards to all aspects of his life.



Name: Matthew Perks  
Age: 28  
Golf Club: Ham Manor GC  
Position: First Assistant/Mechanic  
College: Plumpton College

Matthew has worked at Ham Manor for three and a half years having previously been a Machinery Technician at the Cannington Centre for Land Based Studies in Somerset.

Among his achievements have been Best Recruit and Best Cadet in the Army Cadets, while he was also selected as one of nine volunteer Machinery Technicians at the 2010 Ryder Cup, at Celtic Manor, an experience he says will remain with him for the rest of his life.

Outside of work Matthew has interests in golf, football, darts, DIY and art and design.