

An Extraordinary Tournament



Castle Stuart Course Manager, Chris Haspell, describes the extraordinary events surrounding the Barclays Scottish Open, last month.

Seldom in professional golf do you encounter the type of weather we had for this year's Barclays Scottish Open, and I now know how Jim Mackenzie and his Team must have felt at last year's Ryder Cup.

We had a good start on Thursday and Friday, but the players were delayed on Friday afternoon for lightning.

However, looking at the weather system for the following day, nothing was going to prepare us for what was about to happen.

On Friday evening I saw the localised flooding in Edinburgh on the TV, but, not giving it a second thought, I went to bed, while my two boys camped in the garden.

About 2.30am I was awoken by thunder in the distance and I heard some rain, so I got up and made a brew, before going to work, as we were meeting at 3.30am anyway. The guys were all there ready to go, so I went on a quick run around the course. With 10mm in the rain gauge we were still looking good for a 7am start.

When I got to the 12th, that's when it started, with a lightning strike just off the 12th green. Then the rain arrived in earnest and my windscreen wipers would not keep up, it was relentless. It was too risky for the guys to go on the course so I held them back.

At 4.30am I emptied the gauge and it showed 37mm on top of the original 10mm. One hour later we were up to 87mm.

It was around 6am when we had the first landslip, with the second following shortly afterwards. A bank, which has lain untouched for thousands of years, had yielded in two places, on the 1st and 12th. We were up to 97mm around 10am.

I tried to keep the lads away while I formulated a plan, as that kind of thing can quickly drag down morale, especially if you do not have a construction background.

It was then announced that play would be delayed until 2pm. My local contractor arrived on site around 9am so I knew I had a few hours before we were due to tee off.

That's when the guys who had been



invited as hospitality guests turned up, including Gordon Moir and Gordon McKie, from St Andrews, and Euan Grant, from Turnberry - who were pictured on TV working on the course.

They joined the guys from local courses with shovels, forks and squeegees. I cannot thank them enough. It just shows what a great industry we work in.

During the day every time we got the course ready for play more rain would fall very quickly, undoing what we had done, and we toiled until the very last minute, at 7.30pm, when the play was finally cancelled for the day.

It is with this in mind that I would like to name the guys who worked so hard to get the play finished and those who just turned up on spec. The hardest part was keeping them off the course in such violent weather conditions, such was their enthusiasm and tenacity to get things moving.

The team for the week was: James, Alan, Kev, James, Hexley, Andrew, Daz, Gok, Graham, Roy, Ewen, John, Ray, George, Gary, Lee, Matt, Justin, Andy, Chris, David, Martin, Davie, Gordon, Graeme, Mike, Sean, Rob, Jesper, Anders, Craig, Alexander, Simon, Bob, Tony, Alistair, James and Nick, who all did a first class job

The clubs and helpers who turned up on

spec included, Sandy Kineard, Carrbridge GK, Ballindalloch GK, St Andrews Links, Royal Dornoch, Turnberry, Loch Lomond, Moray GK, John Milne Landscapes, Las Plant Pump hire, Fairways GM plus the many marshals and others who helped.

There were many others and I apologise if I have left anyone out. To all, a personal thank you from all of the team here at Castle Stuart. Without your help we could not have finished the Tournament.

Now we are in the process of clearing up. Two landslips also occurred just along the coast from us so we were not isolated. It was just pure weight of water,

Now we are planning some emergency storm drainage to cope should it ever happen again.

