

GI NEWSDESK

The latest news from around the globe

The 2012 Ryder Cup at the Medinah Country Club will go down as one of the most dramatic in history.



In a GI exclusive, Curtis Tyrrell – Director of Golf Course Operations at the venue – gives us the inside story on an incredible week

NEWS SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE

Inside the Ryder Cup

The dust is starting to settle around Medinah. Not only have the massive crowds, contractors and structures started to disappear, it finally rained a bit to clear all the dust!

I found it funny talking with Jim McKenzie as his Ryder Cup was beyond wet, and ours was a dust bowl! Anyway, everything is different now. For five years I looked at the turf with September 2012 in mind. Now it's different.

Now we're looking back on what was truly the best of week of my career. I would say it was the best week of my life, but my honeymoon and kids will always take that prize. I had many thoughts, ideas, and expectations for the Ryder Cup. They all came true in their own unique way, and all things leading up to, during, and after, exceeded my expectations. I have no regrets.

I wouldn't change a thing. It was simply unbelievable and I still have adrenaline flowing through me as a result.

There were many highlights. Meeting the many volunteers that proceeded to work their butts off all week for us was certainly a part of it all that I will never forget.

I mean guys just simply dropped it all, and gave 100% running flymos, raking bunkers, hand watering, and mowing! I wasn't sure how this volunteer program was going to go. But to see what

happened was humbling and inspiring. We will always be grateful to each of them, and hope we get to repay the favour in the future!

My team blew me away that week. We have been striving for that one moment for so long, and their execution, management, and professionalism stood apart. I couldn't be more proud of them and what they accomplished.

Managing the turf through the week was so much fun. The weather was finally in our favour and we basically did whatever was necessary to provide what was asked of us.

There were no worries - and best of all, the turf is better today than it was that week. Trying to hide from the European contingent of our team (including Steve Chappell and Lee Strutt) when we were stimping greens was a lot of fun - just kidding of course! Green speeds and the general ball roll was something I was really proud of that week. I thought we delivered what Davis Love III asked, and then some. Too bad our guys got skiddish on the greens when your guys were rolling!

Now that it's over I really only have one thing to say...Let's do it again! C'mon we're ready! Rematch! On a serious note, I would do it again, 100 times over. It was beyond the definition of fun. I wish it was starting again tomorrow.





The view from the first tee at Medinah

Leading figures from across the golf industry paid tribute to the course, which had been expertly prepared by Master Greenkeeper Curtis and his team.

Martin Kaymer, whose winning putt has already passed into sporting legend, said: "It was set up perfect for match play and the greens were really fantastic."

Kerry Haigh, the PGA of America's Managing Director of Championships and Business Development, said: "Curtis Tyrrell and his staff did an outstanding job at Medinah prior to and during the 39th Ryder Cup.

"They had to deal with an extremely hot summer with record temperatures that had its effect on the conditioning of the fairways and greens.

"However, Curtis put together a plan to bring the course back into Championship condition once the weather broke, in late August.

"With this plan he was able to bring the course back to what you could see in person and on television to showcase not only the outstanding talents of the best players in the world of golf but also to show what a truly great golf course Medinah really is.

"The tees, fairways, roughs, greens and bunkers were all beautifully prepared and allowed the course and the players to showcase their skills.

"Curtis was a delight to work with, he was very professional in every way and his talented crew met and exceeded the needs and expectations that are made for the challenges of Ryder Cup preparation."

Lee Strutt, Course Manager at G West and a member of the support team for the tournament, gives us a greenkeeper's eye view of his week in Chicago



My Ryder Cup adventure started in 2011 when I got to know Curtis Tyrrell and I applied to join the support team.

During a visit to the GIS show at Las Vegas in February this year, he confirmed I was on the list of support crew along with Steve Chappell from Gleneagles (home of the 2014 Ryder Cup).

So, on Saturday 22 September we left Gleneagles at 4am for Chicago and got to our hotel at around midnight UK time.

Even though we were tired, the lure of Chicago's lights couldn't stop us enjoying a beer or two at the local Irish bars which are at the heart of the city's rich history.

Sunday afternoon we headed to Medinah Country Club for the first time. It was amazing to see the super scale of the event in person.

Curtis took time out to give us a guided tour, explaining how he had dealt with some of the issues they'd had this extremely hot summer.

On Monday we viewed the last minute preparations and received our uniforms and schedule for the week.

There were approximately 90 full time staff as well as 109 volunteers during the week – meaning a lot of organising and scheduling.

We then had an opportunity to get to know the 104 superintendents and assistants from all over the US.

There were just four of us from Europe and one expat - so we knew if Europe won we might be a bit outnumbered on the cheering front!

From Tuesday onwards we carried out many different preparation duties including bunker maintenance, hand watering, flymoing, green stimping, hand blowing...and polishing sprinkler heads!

During Thursday onwards, once morning setup had taken place, we were unable to get back to the maintenance facility due to the large crowds of spectators.

So we were held back for a while until the surrounding highway was shut so that we could drive in convoy back

along the main highway to the maintenance facility.

It was some spectacle - a convoy of 30 to 40 golf vehicles towing blowers, rollers and crew with spectators waving as we went past.

Friday morning, the pressure started to mount, there was less banter and more focus as this was the first day of the actual event.

The first day's play ended with the US 5-3 up.

It was great that things had got off to an exciting start and the course was performing just how Curtis had planned it.

One of the most amazing things was hearing so many people cheering the matches, it is one hell of a thing to hear 65,000 people cheering all at once!

Saturday's preparation followed a similar plan to Friday's, and the US ended the day 10-6 up.

Sunday saw the start of one of the most amazing days in Ryder Cup history, where the European underdogs came back as a team to regain their title!

It was amazing to have been a part of the preparations and maintenance of the course and to be standing there witnessing the penultimate game clinch the Ryder Cup.

It was an amazing gesture by Curtis to ensure that we could celebrate our win for as long as we wanted that evening and he joined us in the celebrations.

That will be one lasting memory of the event, a very hard working man, his team and his family had spent the last five years living the dream and preparing his golf course for the third biggest sporting event in the world.

The Europeans had won, but he stood to the end with us to celebrate the best team winning.

A remarkable man, a true professional, and now a friend.

To those that look at these events and wish to take part - I can only encourage you to take every opportunity to get involved, even though I spent a fair bit of cash!

I can certainly say that I hope it won't be my last Ryder Cup.

GI NEWS FEATURE

Ash Tree Alert

Dr Terry Mabbett reports on an unprecedented potential threat to your course

GI LEADS THE WAY REPORTING CHALARA DIEBACK

Major national newspapers and TV news reported the story about chalara dieback in October – a full month after it appeared in Greenkeeper International.

The Daily Mail, The Telegraph and The Guardian all reported on the threat from the fungus to the nation's ash tree population.

It also appeared on ITV news and became one of the most popular stories on the BBC website – but our readers were ahead of the game after Dr Terry Mabbett's article in our September edition. The warning, entitled 'Native Common Ash Trees Face Surprise Disease Threat', broke the news about the potentially devastating alien plant pathogen which had arrived in the UK. It also featured practical tips on dealing with its "unprecedented threat".

Keep an eye on Greenkeeper International for the exclusives!



BUCK TO BASICS CLINCHES TITLE

The final of the BIGGA Golf Management Competition took place on 15 October at Frilford Heath GC in Oxfordshire.

For the second year TACIT sponsored the whole competition and BIGGA would like to thank them for their support of the Association and its members in sponsoring this competition.

Section qualifying events took place during the summer and eight teams won through to the final.

TACIT had chosen Frilford Heath Golf Club for the final and it proved a superb venue with the course in excellent condition.

The teams of four players which were made up of members of the club management together with their Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager played an 18 hole stableford competition on the Red

Course after which players sat down to a three course dinner.

The winning team won a set of 20 hole cups and 20 flag pins for their course together with the trophy and there were club prizes for the second third and fourth places together with individual team prizes and nearest the pin and longest drive prizes.

Pictured here is the winning team from Buckingham GC who won the competition with 82 points, in second place was Mendip GoC 80 points, third Brockenhurst GC 75 points and fourth Newport GC 72 points.

The nearest the pin prize was won by Tony Thomas from Morrision GC and the Longest Drive prize was won by Steve Rawlings from Mendip Gold Club.

Arnold Phipps-Jones

Opportunities Abroad for Young Greenkeepers – Part 2

IIEPUK Ltd is a not-for-profit educational organisation which co-ordinates international exchange programmes in over 35 countries.

This Autumn IIEPUK has been asked by WISE (Worldwide International Student Exchange) to find 300 young people in the UK to fill internships starting next spring on PGA level golf courses from Florida to New York.

Vanessa Peach, director of IIEPUK, spoke about the benefits of doing an internship overseas as an unbeatable life experience and a potential job clincher.

"Overseas internships are not for everyone but if a young person wants to boost their career prospects gaining international experience will certainly help

them to stand out from the crowd.

"Most importantly, every intern is investing in their future, not only through the work skills they will gain but life skills too.

An internship will suit a young, outgoing and motivated individual, who likes a challenge and works hard but has fun too.

"The important thing is for them to live the dream and come back with enthusiasm, having achieved their goal and done something that many of their peers will not have done – plus they'll have been paid! They will also have made new friends and valuable business contacts."

Accommodation is included plus a monthly stipend of \$1,100 that will more than cover programme, visa and flight



expenses as well as pay for a holiday at the end of the placement before returning home.

The internships will last up to ten months starting in February and March 2013.

The same programme will run in 2014 and so if anyone is interested for 2013 or 2014 contact Emily@iepuke.com

Success for Sussex



Kevin Weller and his team produced a superbly presented golf course with some lively paced greens after heavy overnight rain for the annual triangular match between the Essex, Surrey and Sussex Sections of BIGGA at Lingfield Park Golf Club.

This year after a closely contested match the ten men of Sussex broke the stranglehold held by Surrey over recent years of the event by a winning margin of just three points with Essex finishing a close third.

Nearest the pin winners on the day were Sam Cook and George Barr, with Antony Kirwan hitting the longest drive.

Lingfield Park, like BIGGA, are celebrating 25 years since the formation of their Club.

We are grateful to Ernest Doe for their continued support of this popular event.

REMUNERATION 2013

The Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) have recommended a 1.5% increase in the level of recommended Salary Scale for Greenkeepers.

This increase is less than the 2.5%+ RPI rate normally adopted as the Committee accepts that the current year has been a very difficult one for Golf Clubs and the continued strain on their finances.

The CGCS recommended rates of pay package are guidelines only and the Committee is aware that they are for negotiation only and that, as in many industries, some staff will earn substantially more, while others will earn less, depending on the standing of the golf club. The CGCS wants to emphasise that these scales are for 'packages' and should be treated as such, whilst taking into account individual and team performance and any increase in responsibility and/or qualification.

The CGCS, once again, wishes to draw the attention of golf clubs to impending changes in pension legislation. Regional variations will be published and downloadable in PDF format from the BIGGA and GCMA websites from December onwards.

SUPPORT 'MOVEMBER' AND WIN A TRIP TO NEW YORK



Greenkeepers are being urged to support the annual 'Movember' charity drive – and put themselves in with the chance of winning a fabulous trip to New York.

British Seed Houses (BSH) has joined forces with movember.com to support men's health charities such as Prostate Cancer UK and the Institute of Cancer Research.

All you have to do is email a clean shaven picture of yourself taken on 1 November to seeds@bshlincoln.co.uk or tweet them to @[aberforage](https://twitter.com/aberforage) or @[bshamenity](https://twitter.com/bshamenity) together with a front page of a daily newspaper to authenticate the date.

Then email or tweet the end result on November 30 – and the winner will scoop flights and accommodation for a weekend in New York for two in either January or February next year, together with £500 spending money.

BSH have shown their grassroots support by growing a giant moustache in support of the men's health charity.

The giant 'Mo', around 120 foot by 40 foot, is a larger-than-life version of the logo used by the charity on its movember.com website.

BSH has also pledged £1,000 towards the cause. The giant moustache was grown by Andrew Cook, the South Wales and South of England Area Sales Manager for the agricultural side of the business, who has a farm in Somerset.

Andrew said: "I began with a scale drawing and then marked the area out with fencing stakes in a field where we were growing grass for silage.

"I then mowed it into shape using an agricultural mower and did the final trimming with a strimmer. I was pleasantly surprised at how well it worked out."