



# Ryder on Curtis!



The eyes of the world will be on one particular course this month when the 39th Ryder Cup rolls into Illinois. GI talked to Curtis Tyrrell, Director of Course Operations at the Medinah Country Club...

**Curtis Tyrrell has been eagerly anticipating Friday September 28 2012 since his first day in his current role four years ago.**

On that morning, the first tee shot will signal the official start of his "once in a lifetime" opportunity to host one of the world's greatest sporting events.

However, while Curtis and his team have made many alterations to the course over the last four years with the Ryder Cup in mind, he's keen to stress that the 600 members will also enjoy the benefits long after the circus leaves town.

Ironically, while BIGGA members in the UK have battled one of the

worst summers in memory, Curtis and his colleagues have been left cursing exactly the opposite problem as excitement reaches fever pitch.

He said: "It's a once in a lifetime experience for me, and all my team – it's the pinnacle of all our careers and we're working our butts off."

"I've been on the edge of my seat with excitement for probably a year now."

"The preparation's been pretty intense. We've had the hottest July ever recorded, it's been over 100F during the day and 80F through the night."

"The greens have come through

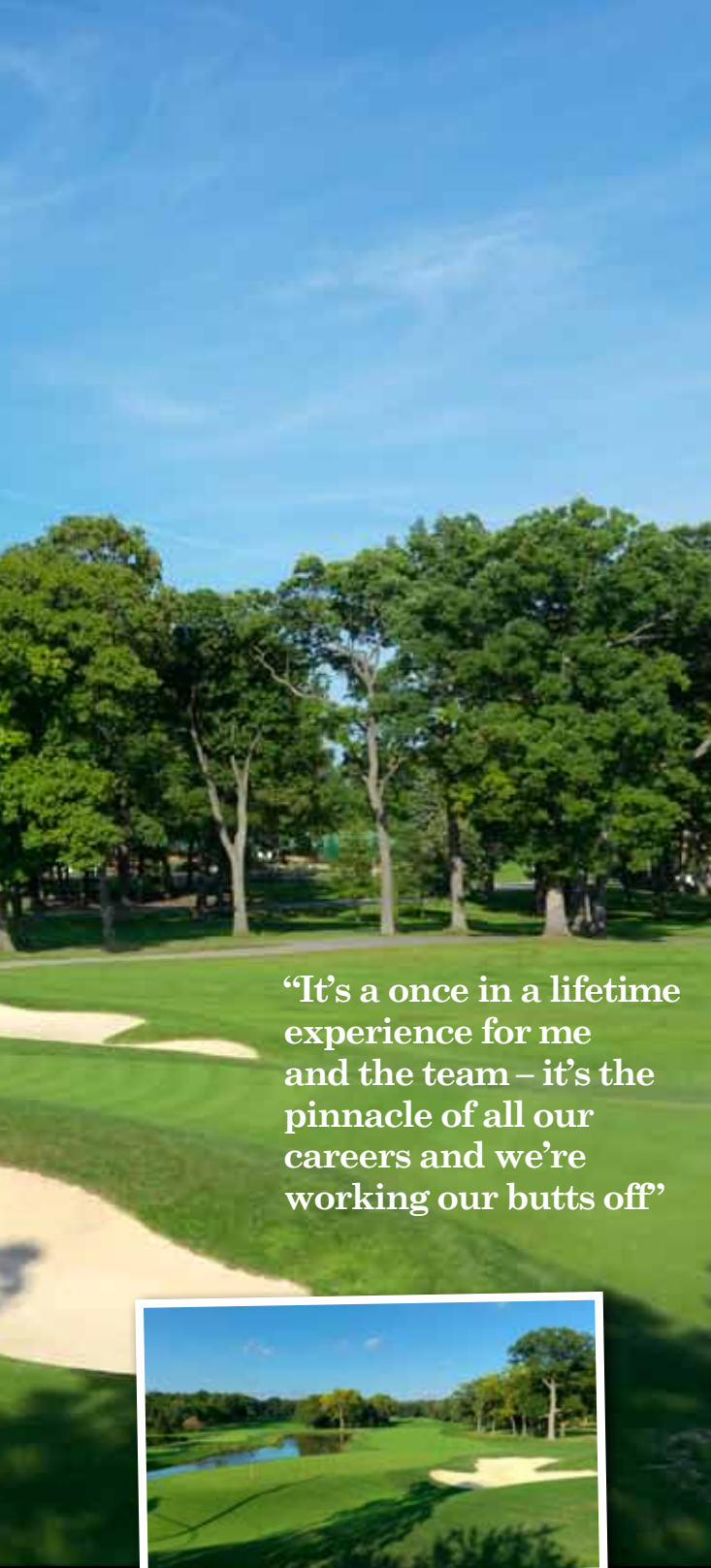
okay, although some fairways with high *Poa annua* have suffered.

"A lot of people don't realise we have three courses here and it's number three that's hosting the Ryder Cup. To help recovery after the summer's unprecedented heat, we're closing this course a month before the tournament for deep aeration and overseeding, and some areas are being returfed."

"The greens are running at 11 on the stimpmeter and green speed will be decided nearer the time by myself and the US captain Davis Love III."

Curtis was not slow to make alterations soon after his arrival at





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the club, which opened in 1925. The all-important third course has previously hosted the PGA Championships and US Opens.

“Medinah is a family club, and when I arrived I felt we needed to set it up for the future. Of course we knew we had the Ryder Cup on the horizon so that obviously played a huge part in our planning.

“But I also want our membership to be proud of the course and proud of how well it plays while the world’s greatest players are here.

“Course three will be open to members the day after the tournament ends.

“We rebuilt all the greens in late 2009. Some were already USGA constructed greens so we brought all the others up to the same standard.

“We then re-grassed all the fairways, rebuilt all the bunkers and entirely rebuilt the 15th hole.

“These changes were mainly for the members’ benefit. They love this course and want it to be the best that it can be.

“We carried out extensive work last winter. We did some fan installation to help us with air movement and temperature management around certain greens.

“Then in June we started bringing in the infrastructure for the tournament – grandstands, corporate hospitality and paths. This will all span 43 acres so it’s quite an undertaking.”

During the tournament Curtis will be assisted by 100 volunteers including BIGGA members Lee Strutt, Course Manager at the new G West Golf Club, and Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper from Gleneagles which hosts the next Ryder Cup.

While some may expect Curtis to have several weeks off to recuperate after the Cup, nothing could be further from the truth. The very day after the champions are crowned,

work will begin on a huge \$6.4m redesign and renovation of course one.

Curtis first caught the green-keeping bug while working at the Country Club in Woodmore, Maryland, and after graduation he moved to Southern California to work as an assistant at PGA West in Palm Springs.

He then took on two superintendent positions before moving on to the Lake of Isles Golf Course in Connecticut, and finally secured his current role in 2008.

Curtis is a proud member of BIGGA and added that his membership is crucial for keeping up to speed with developments in the UK.

“I’m a BIGGA member because I wanted to expand my knowledge, and learn as much about green-keeping on the other side of the pond as I could. I wanted to cover all bases, and that’s exactly how it’s turned out.

“I’ve learned so much from the BIGGA members I’ve met, it’s been awesome.

“The magazine every month has been invaluable, I’m keen to know what challenges are facing people in our industry in the UK and how they’re facing them and tackling them.

“I didn’t think my career would progress to the point where I was preparing the Ryder Cup course.

“There are so many talented guys over here in your average country club, you never think you will get to this level so it really is a dream come true for me.

“I want everyone here to be proud of their contribution towards the Ryder Cup.

We’re lucky to have a fantastic team and they’re really excited, everyone’s really enthusiastic and energetic.

“After that, my only remaining wish is for an American victory!”

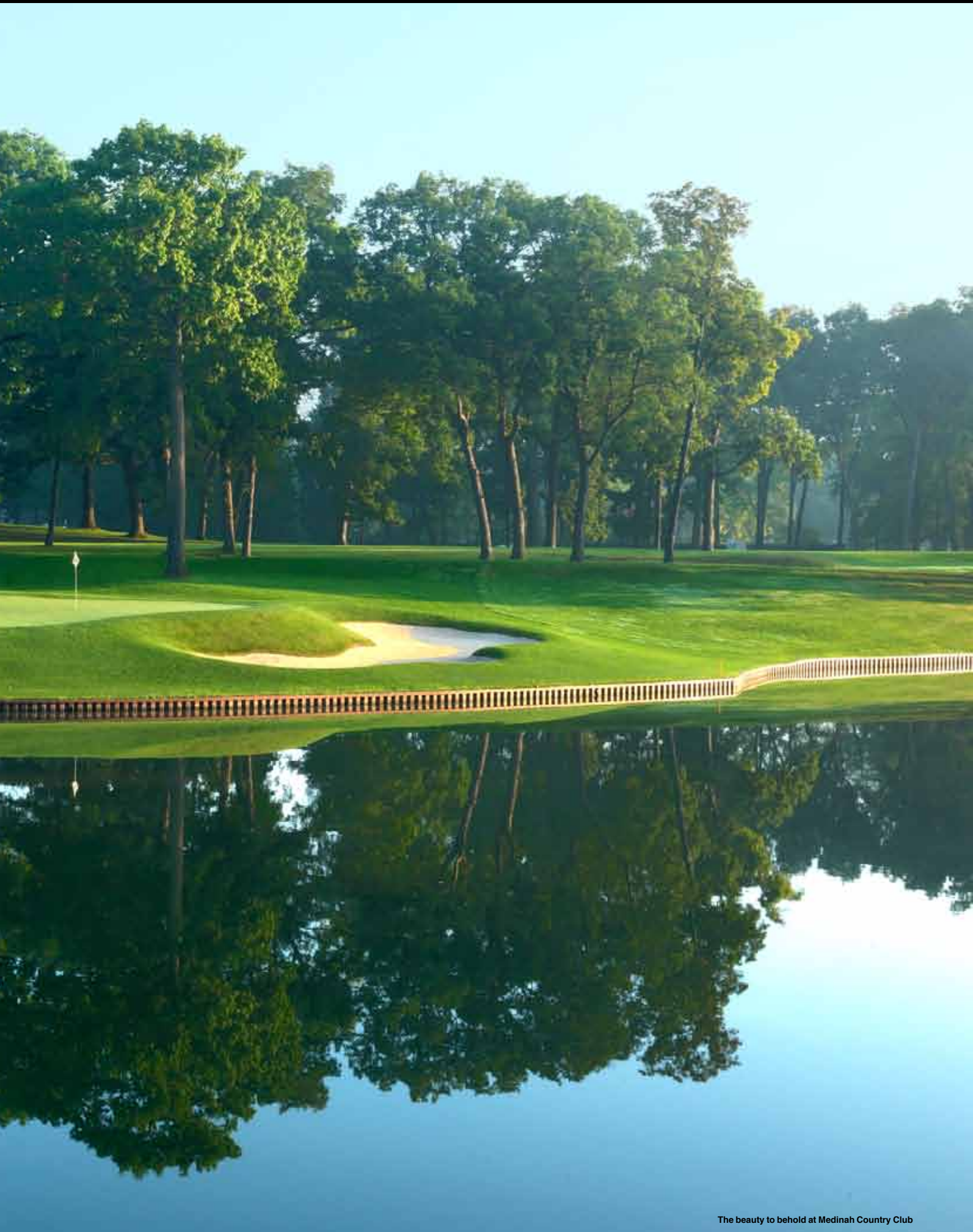


- The greens are USGA Spec with 100% Creeping Bent of 007 and SR1119 and the tees are also a sand-based construction with a USGA rootzone, also 100% Creeping Bent.
- Greens preparation will involve light topdressing once a week up to ten days before the event with mowing six days a week and rolling five days a week.
- Curtis bases his fertilizer on a solid agronomic philosophy of soil testing and mixing his fertilizer from bulk purchased liquid nutrients, adjusting according to environmental conditions. He also uses an organic fertilizer based on chicken manure for his granular programme.
- Medinah has a significant fleet of equipment including a couple of TruTurf rollers and items from Toro.









The beauty to behold at Medinah Country Club