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Jim Croxton

BIGGA General Manager

Tracey Maddison
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

BIGGA Learning & Development Manager

Sami Strutt
sami@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us

BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York,
YO61 1UF
info@bigga.co.uk
www.bigga.org.uk
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

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Production

Design & Brand Executive
Tom Campbell

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 513
tom@bigga.co.uk



Editorial

Communications Executive
Steve Castle

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 510
steve.castle@bigga.co.uk



Advertising

Business Development Manager
Jill Rodham

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 519
Fax – 01347 833802
jill@bigga.co.uk

Printing

Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
Tel – 01778 391000 | Fax – 01778 394269

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Rose blooms as The Open looms

Justin Rose’s serene march to the US Open title was a fabulous story on so many levels; the fulfilling of precocious teenage promise, redemption following the traumatic 21 missed cuts that blighted the start of his professional career, overcoming the huge crowd favourite and the imperious Hogan-esque ball striking down the stretch.

For the Merion Golf Club Superintendent it was also a career defining triumph. The weather did its worst, which seems to be the case so often these days – particularly in the days leading up to the start of the tournament. But Matt Shaffer and his team presented their classic golf course beautifully and it tested the world’s best players to the absolute limit. When the rains came down various commentators opined that the course would be defenceless and that the winning score would be double digits below par, in the end though the sub 7,000 yard challenge defeated all comers. Watching Rose strategically plot his way round to become the first English winner for 43 years and make it the third British triumph in four years was a huge thrill.

The golfing circus now moves on to Muirfield where Course Manager Colin Irvine and his regular and volunteer teams will prepare another world-class layout, the best in many people’s eyes, for a superb field of players. I hope the weather is substantially kinder for Colin but that we do get a good coastal breeze to make it a true Open test.

Either way the BIGGA Open Support Team are ready to play their part in the ongoing success of The Open Championship. I look forward to seeing many of you at Muirfield during the week.

As I write this column the interview stage for the fiercely contested 2013 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year has begun.

We look forward to welcoming the successful finalists to BIGGA House in September when one will be crowned the 25th recipient of the title. Our thanks go to Toro for their superb and loyal support of this key aspirational opportunity for BIGGA members. A quick glance at the Roll of Honour for the last 24 years shows what a fantastic career boost the Award and the associated educational opportunities that the winner receives can be. May I wish all the candidates luck in the process.

In this month’s edition we take a look at Frilford Heath Golf Club, venue for the 2013 BIGGA National Championship. The Red Course will play host to European Tour



Justin Rose (Getty Images)

qualifying a week prior to our event and it will be fascinating to see how greenkeeping’s finest compare. There are many excellent players in our ranks and I’m really keen that our National Championship becomes a ‘must play’ event to all those low handicappers in the membership. To that end we have reduced the entry fee this year and substantially increased the prizes on offer for the leading players. I know that Sid Arrowsmith MG is very much looking forward to welcoming all competitors to Frilford Heath in October so I hope you are able to take up the opportunity.

Elsewhere in these pages we unveil a new look to Around the Green which I hope meets with your approval, our reader survey highlighted the importance of this ‘grassroots’ element to our magazine but also raised a number of valid points in terms of style and presentation. As we strive to make this publication the most relevant and informative of the bewildering array of titles that serve our industry it is clear that we must listen to your views. Please feel free to feedback to us any comments you may have on the recent changes or any other area.



Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton,
BIGGA CEO