

MARCH 2013

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American dream

How did TPC Scottsdale prepare for the biggest spectator golf event in the world last month? BIGGA member Jason Brooks sent off his CV and found himself on the support team for the Phoenix Open in Arizona – here he describes a fascinating few months on both a personal and professional level



TPC SCOTTSDALE

I've been Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for eight years, and through BIGGA I have met great friends from across the UK and overseas who share my passion for the profession.

I've been on the support team at The Open Championship and the PGA Championship – and these occasions left me wanting more, to experience an extended period of tournament preparation somewhere special. I decided I was going to make a real effort to secure a position somewhere that would add to my professional skills and open new doors for me in my career.

The Dream Begins

My Greens Chairman was very supportive, so I sent my CV to a list of people including Golf Clubs, Senior Vice President of Agronomy for the PGA Tour. He got me in touch with Jeff Plett, Director of Golf Course Maintenance at TPC Scottsdale. We had a great chat, he understood he would like me to spend five months of the winter there and the dream of joining the team at the Waste Management Phoenix Open was becoming real.

The vision didn't quite materialise until Mike O'Keefe who told me all about the Ohio State University (OSU) programme, and me joining this world-famous programme would allow him to complete my move to Scottsdale as an intern. Besides helping me out with the highly complex visa application process, he explained other aspects such as safety and taxes.

Good Morning Scottsdale

There are two courses at TPC Scottsdale, the Stadium course (which has held the Phoenix Open since 1987) and the Champions course. Both have an incredible 4,000 rounds played annually. The summer temperatures are brutal, with average highs of over 100.

The entire course is Bermuda grass until the start of October when the huge overseeding process begins to turn the course from warm season grasses to cool season grasses for the winter. It is a huge undertaking – the course is closed for two weeks during which the Bermuda will be verticut, sodded then the debris collected before the overseeding can begin. Apart from the greens a perennial ryegrass/ fescue mixture is used for all the other

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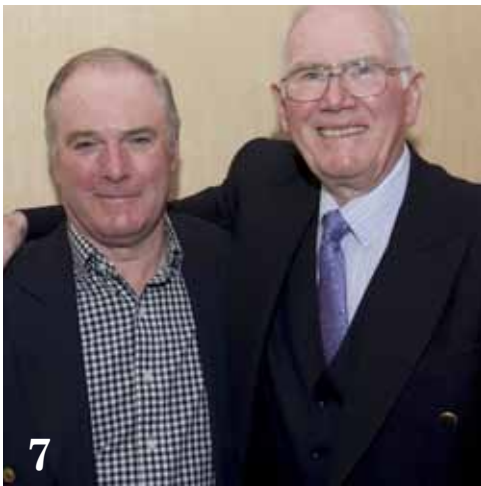
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EXCLUSIVE SURVEY

WHAT BRITAIN'S GREENKEEPERS



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Cover image of The Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale, 16th aerial shot, courtesy of Jeff Plotts of the PGA Tour



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