

A Pebble Beach



100TH U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

START	LEADERS	HOLE																		RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
8	WOODS	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	1	2	3	4
12	ELLS	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
13	JIMENEZ	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
14	HARRINGTON	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
14	OLAZABAL	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
14	MICKELSON	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
16	FALDO	6	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
15	WESTWOOD	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
15	HUSTON	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
16	CAMPBELL M	7	7	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6

TODAY THRU 17



Diary

FEATURE ARTICLE

Dave Ward, CGCS Olympia Fields

During the week of June 11 through June 18, 2000, I had a golf course superintendent's "chance of a lifetime" to volunteer for the grounds maintenance crew at the 100th U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. The following is a brief diary of my experiences.

Sunday, June 11, 2000

I arrive at the Pebble Beach grounds maintenance building for the 6 p.m. meeting of U.S. Open grounds crew volunteers. In all, 35 superintendents, assistant superintendents and equipment technicians (mechanics) have volunteered for the week to help the 30 grounds keepers of Pebble Beach's maintenance staff. Each volunteer is supplied a uniform, and introduced to a group that includes four superintendents from Australia, two from Canada, and a virtual who's who from the United States. The 'supers' from Winged Foot, Oakmont, Riviera and Oak Hill are all there. The grounds maintenance building is much smaller and cramped than I expected. I find out that this is due to the lack of buildable space and the cost of real estate on the Monterey Peninsula.

We are given our roommate assignments and transported to a local prep school dormitory where we stay for the week. My roommate is Scott Hollister, the managing editor of *Golf Course Management*, the national magazine of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Scott has never worked on a golf course and is at the U.S. Open to work on the crew and write a story for the magazine. We are moved in and asleep by 10 p.m.

Monday, June 12, 2000—

First Practice Round

The shuttle to the course picks us up at 4:20 a.m. Coffee and doughnuts are waiting at the shop, which can hardly hold the 65-person staff. The regular Pebble Beach grounds crew seems really calm and confident. (They are used to holding large tournaments every year, along with the occasional U.S. Open or U.S. Amateur.) The volunteer staff seems very excited and a little nervous. Twenty-seven-year-old superintendent Erik Greytok assigns the job responsibilities and warns everyone about safety and etiquette in dealing with the players and the spectators. My morning job for the week is course set-up. Course set-up involves changing the hole locations, fixing ball marks and old sod plugs, fixing pitch marks in the approaches, determining Stimpmeter readings, painting cup edges and blowing debris off the greens. This was a fantastic assignment, because I was on all of the greens every morning with the USGA officials: Tom Meeks, director of rules and competition, and Tim Moraghan, director of championship agronomy. I share the set-up responsibilities with Paul Ramina, the superintendent at Riviera Country Club, host of the Los Angeles Nissan Open, and Rick Peepers, the everyday cup-changer at Pebble Beach. My function is to fix ball marks, pitch marks and old plugs, and be the last off the green making sure everything is ready.

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After our morning jobs, the crew is free to watch golf, but the main crew activity seems to be eating and sleeping. Through the whole event, food is always available (more on that later) and the eight sleeping couches always in use.

Pebble Beach is an awesome course that adjectives and TV images do not adequately describe. Holes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17 and 18 are all on the ocean, with dramatic views. The greens are small, averaging 2,800 square feet, and for the champi-

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onship, as firm as a cement floor. I think the eighth hole is one of the best I've ever seen.

The crew is reassembled at 2:30 p.m. for afternoon jobs. My p.m. assignment is ball mark repair. The objective is to make the ball mark disappear by pulling a small plug of soil out of the middle of the mark, pulling in the turf around it, and then rolling it flat. The job is made difficult due to the dry, firm green surfaces. We are instructed to go on to the greens while the players are putting (the players expect it) and not to talk to the players unless they talk to us. Some are very talkative (Sergio Garcia, Jean Van de Velde); some are very down-to-business (Tiger Woods, Nick Faldo). None complain.

Work is finished after dark. I volunteer to water the practice tee after ball mark repair and I miss the last shuttle to the dormitory. A very tired mechanic gives me a ride back to the dorm. I take a quick shower and am in bed by 10:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 13, 2000

The shuttle arrives at 4:20 a.m. The morning is foggy but the skies clear by 8 a.m. Veteran Pebble Beach grounds crew members predict afternoon fog before the end of the week, due to the high temperatures inland. Afternoon temperatures on the peninsula are 75 degrees, a heat wave for the natives!

My morning and afternoon jobs are the same as Monday. Other volunteers are raking bunkers, fluffing rough (raking up the rough so it stands up in areas that have been trampled down), filling divots and hand-watering fairways and green surrounds. The Pebble Beach crew is doing all of the mowing. The greens are mowed two times in the morning and two

times in the afternoon at 0.10". Fairways, tees and approaches are mowed once in the morning and again in the afternoon. The rough and green banks are mowed at 4" three times during the week. I get back to the dorm at 8 p.m. and to sleep by 9 p.m.

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

I am back on the shuttle at 4:20 a.m. Tim Moraghan brings the championship trophy to the grounds department at 4:30 a.m. to show the crew what the competitors were playing for and for a little inspiration after three hard days. It is a strange feeling to actually hold the trophy. Three of the champions' names inscribed on the trophy stand out: James Foulis, who was Olympia Fields Country Club's first greenkeeper/golf professional and the second U.S. Open champion in 1896; Johnny Farrel, who beat Bobby Jones in a 36-hole playoff at OFCC in 1928; and Payne Stewart, the 1999 champion. After its stop at the grounds building, the trophy is on its way to the 18th green for the Payne Stewart memorial service. My morning job is the same, course set-up. In the afternoon, as we are getting ready to go back out, three of the Pebble Beach owners—including Peter Ueberroth and Clint Eastwood—visit the grounds department to thank the volunteers and crew for their effort.

My afternoon assignment gets switched to mowing greens. This is a little nerve-wracking because now any mistake I make could show up on national television. After a shaky start on the third green (I almost fall into the bunker left of the green), I regain my confidence. I must have performed okay, because I am assigned to greens mowing two more times. It is an exhilarating feeling mowing greens that I have seen so many times on television.

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Thursday, June 15, 2000— Round One

The morning starts clear and I am assigned to my normal job, course set-up. After morning jobs, Paul Ramina and I drive a Cushman Truckster down 17 Mile Drive, the main road through the Monterey Peninsula, for a tour of Cypress Point with superintendent Jeff Marko. The course is totally different from but just as spectacular as Pebble Beach. At 2:30 p.m. the fog begins to roll in. By 4:30 p.m., play is suspended with about one-third of the round left to play. The crew does all of the normal afternoon jobs in the heavy fog.

Starting today, the food operation really kicks in. The barbecue starts at about 10:30 a.m. and goes until dark. Clayton (last name unknown), a longtime Pebble Beach crew member, orders and cooks all of the food. Specialties include tri tip sandwich, which is a marinated brisket served on a garlic roll covered with pepper jack cheese, and a hamburger covered with salsa and jalapeno peppers smothered in cheese. Barbecued shrimp and very spicy chili were also delicious. The crew went through 5,000 ice cream bars. I contribute greatly in this effort!

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A shotgun start to finish the first round is scheduled for 6:30 a.m., so the crew's start time is moved up to 3:30 a.m.

Friday, June 16, 2000— Round Two

The shuttle arrives at 3:20 a.m. It is a very foggy morning, which delays the shotgun start until 9:30 a.m. The course is set up once for the finish of the first round (same tee and hole locations as Thursday), then again for the second round. The delay means some players cannot finish the second round until Saturday and that they will be on the course until dark. This delays afternoon jobs until 7:30 p.m. I am assigned to mowing greens. The last three greens are mowed in complete darkness. I have to wait for the 18th green to be watered before I mow it, so I sit on the sea wall and stare at the dark ocean, listening to the waves crash on the rocks. We finish by 10:30 p.m. and I am in bed by 11 p.m.



Saturday, June 17, 2000— Round Three

Another 6:30 a.m. shotgun means another 3:30 a.m. start and two rounds of course set-up and another late evening. The winds pick up in the afternoon and all of the players are struggling to make pars . . . except Tiger, who is leading by 10 strokes. I am assigned to mow greens in the afternoon and finish after dark again. Most of the volunteer crew goes out to party, but I am too exhausted so I go to bed at 10:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 18, 2000— The Final Round

This morning I "sleep in" until 4 a.m. The week has gone by incredibly fast and I can't believe it is almost over. Rick Peepers finally trusts me enough to actu-

ally let me change a hole location on no. 9 green. From now on, when I look at highlight films of the 2000 U.S. Open, I can say I changed that cup. After the morning job, I walk around the course alone (with the 40,000 other spectators), sucking in the ambiance and trying to put the week in perspective. The experience ranks below my wedding and the birth of my children but right up there with any other experience I've had.

Just as at the 1997 U.S. Senior Open, the grounds crew is invited to walk up the 18th fairway behind the last group and be at the 18th green for the trophy presentation. Tiger Woods comes over and shakes Erik Greytok's

hand and has his picture taken with the grounds crew, and then it is all over. The one-hour, 15-minute ride to the San Jose Airport takes more than three hours and I almost miss the red-eye flight home. It is back to work Monday at Olympia Fields Country Club, exhausted but inspired for 2003!

