

WENTWORTH TO COMPLETE THE MODERNISATION AND RESTORATION PROJECT ON WEST COURSE AFTER 2009 BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Wentworth's world famous West Course will be closing on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 and work will start to reconstruct and modernise all the greens on the West Course to a USGA specification, replacing the current poa greens with colonial bent grass. This is the next stage of the journey that we started in 2006 under guidance of Ernie Els. Following on from that phase of modernisation and refinement, we will ensure the classic West Course remains an exceptional challenge to both today's amateur and professional golfer. In making this announcement, the following comments have been made:

***Richard Caring, Chairman, Wentworth Club***

"My aim is to further develop and improve the Club to ensure that it continues to build on its historic glory and reputation. This will be a unique year at Wentworth; we will close our West Course for a short period and invest in excess of £4 million to complete the exciting modernisation and refinement project that started in 2005, we will then re-open exclusively for members later in the year.

Professional golf tournaments have played a huge part in the history of Wentworth and with these changes we know we will be able to present a fitting test in the future whilst providing our members year-round access to one of the top three parkland courses in the world."

***George O'Grady, Chief Executive, The European Tour***

"The BMW PGA Championship is deservedly recognised as the Players' Flagship event on The European Tour International Schedule and we are delighted that Wentworth Club will shortly embark on a substantive project to upgrade all 18 greens on the West Course.

This major undertaking re-emphasises the commitment of Richard Caring, our host for a Championship of the highest quality this week, despite the economic uncertainty prevalent at this time.

We commend Wentworth Club for their decision to further develop the course changes suggested by Ernie Els and already implemented by Julian Small, Chris Kennedy and the greenkeeping team. We look forward to The European Tour's long and close partnership with Wentworth Club being strengthened from 2010 with a Championship of enhanced status and prestige and one of which we can all be proud."

***Ernie Els***

"Everyone at the Club felt there was a need to build new greens and in the end it came down to timing. With the World Matchplay moving to Spain, the calendar is clear for the work to begin, so all 18 greens and green surrounds are going to be re-built to USGA specification. Our other main objective is to bring the greens back to the form, shape and contour more in keeping with architect Harry Colt's original vision. Many of the greens have shrunk over the years and in some cases have become disconnected in relation to the greenside bunkers and green surrounds.

We intend to re-shape and re-contour the greens and make changes to the surrounding areas. We also need to address a few settlement issues here and there and improve overall drainage. I think when the 2010 BMW PGA Championship comes around, the West Course will have among the finest putting surfaces in the world."

***Magnus Wiese, Head of BMW Golfsports Marketing***

"When embarking upon our sponsorship of the PGA Championship in 2005, we recognised the important role Wentworth Club played in the heritage of the tournament. In conjunction with our partners from the European Tour and Wentworth, our aim has been to consistently improve the quality and experience for all participants. Back in February 2006 Wentworth and Ernie Els completed the course refinements to enhance the bunkering and extend some of the holes on the West and we are delighted that, the Club has now taken the decision to modernise and upgrade the greens. We believe this clearly demonstrates their commitment to the future of the BMW PGA Championship."

***Alan Watkins, Club Captain, Wentworth Club***

"The West has been and always will be very special to the members. The management have given a great deal of thought to this project. Overall I believe the members will see the wholesale upgrading of the greens as another illustration of Richard Caring's long-term commitment to the Club and a way of ensuring that it maintains the status as one of the finest golf & country clubs in the world. I am delighted that my Captain's Charity Golf Day will be the inaugural event on the renovated West Course."

***Chris Kennedy, Courses Manager, Wentworth Club***

"This is something we've wanted to do for some time and I'm very pleased that the opportunity has now arisen. We recognise that the Harry Colt greens constructed in 1926 do not perform as well as new USGA specification greens.

Now that we have the chance to address the issue the objective is to produce a USGA specification consistent surface of the highest quality on every green on the West Course. In consultation with the top agronomists from the Sports Turf Research Institute and the European Tour it was decided that colonial bent grass for the greens was the best solution not just for tournament play but for general play too. The colonial bent grass, grown off-site in Lincolnshire, has established well and our turf grower is confident that it will be in great condition when it is lifted in July.

The scope of the project has expanded during the planning phase and we will now be re-turfing all the greens surrounds with a mixture of rye fescue grass and re-seeding all the rough from fairway edge to the tree line with a rye fescue mix. The reason for doing this is to produce a uniform look from tee to green and the introduction of rye grasses will assist us in the management of poa in years ahead.

Working closely with Ernie Els, the 7-time Champion on the West, we have reviewed each green so as to ensure that they become a fitting test for the modern day golfer whilst staying true to Harry Colt's original vision. Now, as the project live date is approaching, we're looking forward to starting the work and we have put together a team of first class contractors who, over twelve to fourteen weeks, are going to complete this project assisted by the Wentworth greenkeeping staff."

***Julian Small, Chief Executive, Wentworth Club***

“We always aim to have exceptional standards of quality here at Wentworth and the West Course is clearly one of our major assets. As soon as we had the opportunity we immediately went into consultation with our partners in the European Tour and experts in the industry to commence the project and we’ve selected the time to do this work very carefully so as to ensure that we can hold the BMW PGA Championship here in 2009. In June we will start the work, carrying it out at the right time of year so as to be as quick and efficient as possible and minimise disruption to our members.

We aim to open the course solely for member and guest play in the latter part of 2009 and we are confident that we will be in a position to have the West Course greens in excellent condition for the 2010 BMW PGA Championship. During the period of closure we will not have any visitor or group play on any of our 3 courses so as to offer exclusive access to our members at all times.”

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