

**Press release**

**TWO AWARDS IN ONE**

**Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award introduces Young category for 2016**

This year Toro’s Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards will become two awards in one; offering, for the first time, a second category, for students aged 20 years and under.

The introduction of the Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award will “level the playing field for younger students”, says David Cole, managing director of award sponsor and UK distributor of Toro, Lely Turfcare. The new award will run alongside the long-standing Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award.

“The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award is now in its 27th year and has been very successful,” explains David. “We have seen well over 750 student greenkeepers interviewed on a local level and over 200 in the finals, but we were finding the younger students were not progressing as far as they potentially could under the old competition format, coming up as they were against more experienced candidates. The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award remains open for all greenkeeping students studying for eligible qualifications in the UK, and we hope this new category allows the younger students their chance to shine.”

Further changes to the competition format this year, which is also sponsored by US turfcare specialists Toro, are that students can put themselves forwards for the awards, with college tutors, assessors or employers endorsing their application. Also for the first time, applications will only take place online.

Sami Strutt, head of member development at the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA), the award organisers, says: “These changes enhance what was already an incredibly successful formula. The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award is acknowledged as the highlight in the student greenkeeper’s calendar and we were keen to open up the event to allow more students, wherever they are on the career ladder, the opportunity to expand their experience, enhance their professional development and increase their skills and knowledge.”

Those eligible to enter include any greenkeeping student undertaking a Level 2 Work-based Diploma (Greenkeeper/SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf Management), Level 3 Work-based Diploma (Greenkeeper/SVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Management), Level 2 Diploma/National Certificate (NC) or Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma (SD).

The prize for the winner of the Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year is a five-night trip to the Continue to Learn programme at BTME in Harrogate, with four days of education, accommodation, travel and expenses, plus a Toro training voucher for a course of their choice. While the runner up will receive a three-night trip to the same event, again with education, accommodation, travel, expenses and a Toro training voucher for a course of their choice. The prizes for the Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award winner, endorser and runner up remain unchanged, with the winner heading to the States on an all-expenses-paid study trip of a lifetime. All award finalists will also receive a year’s complimentary BIGGA membership.

The deadline for online applications is 20 May 2016. Regional interviews will take place between 4 and 15 July, with the National Finals held on 19 and 20 September 2016. To enter go online to [www.bigga.org.uk/education/toro-student-greenkeeper-of-the-year-award](http://www.bigga.org.uk/education/toro-student-greenkeeper-of-the-year-award/) where you can also find full details, prize information and terms and conditions.

ENDS

**Notes to editors:** Toro turf products are distributed throughout mainland UK by Lely Turfcare, 1 Station Road, St Neots PE19 1QH. Call 01480 226800, email turfcare.uk@lely.com or visit [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com) / [www.lelyturfcare.co.uk](http://www.lelyturfcare.co.uk) for further details. And in Ireland by Lely Ireland Limited, Kilboggin, Nurney, Co. Kildare. Call 00 353 (0)45 526170 or email [turfcaresales.ie@lely.com](mailto:turfcaresales.ie@lely.com).

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award is administered by the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) who are based at BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. Call 01347 833800 (option 3), email Communications Executive Karl Hansell at karl@bigga.co.uk or visit [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) for further details.

**Image caption:** Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award winner 2015 Stephen Thorne, second from right, shakes hands with Barry Beckett, senior marketing manager from The Toro Company, and Stephen’s tutor at Myerscough College Nick Lush, second from left, shakes hands with David Cole, managing director at Lely Turfcare.

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