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# DREAM JOB FOR NIALL

Niall Flanagan couldn't be happier in his new post

Seconds after our interview had finished, Niall Flanagan headed straight over to a table in the corner to introduce himself to the people sitting there. At first, I thought it was down to the fact they were three attractive ladies but then the penny dropped.

Less than halfway through his second day into a new job as the General Manager of

but, in my role with the Links Trust, I never really got involved with the memberships.

"I kind of missed that, especially after having worked previously at clubs like Wentworth and Nad al Sheba in Dubai, where they both have great memberships. I like that day-to-day involvement with members and I was keen to get back into it.

"Being able to come to Loch Lomond Golf Club, which prides itself on great membership, is an amazing opportunity."

An amazing opportunity indeed, but, with 20 years of

"I'm told that Lyle calls Loch Lomond his diamond and that he constantly wants to polish the diamond," says Flanagan. "That's a fantastic attitude to have and I can also see that the staff, who are the bedrock, are both loyal and very passionate about the club.

"That's right from the locker-room up and, when you have a mixture of people with passion and a good work ethos, then that is a great position to be in."

Since buying the place, Anderson has developed Loch Lomond into one of the top private clubs in the world, the



Loch Lomond Golf Club, Flanagan was relishing the fact he was back among members again, having been denied that opportunity in his old job at the St Andrews Links Trust.

"St Andrews is unique in the fact it's the 'Home of Golf' but it is very much a municipal outlet," he says. "It's great that there are golf clubs in the town

Lyle calls Loch Lomond his diamond and he constantly polishes it

experience in the golf and club industries under his belt, it is not difficult to see why Lyle Anderson, Loch Lomond's American owner, has handed Flanagan the task of heading up a staff of around 170 that is split between the Bonnie Banks and Dundonald down in Ayrshire.

Many members of that staff have worked at Loch Lomond for a number of years now and, within 24 hours of being behind his new desk in the majestic Rossdhu House, Flanagan could see they all share Anderson's huge passion for the place.

superb facilities available to its members having been further enhanced last year with the opening of a fabulous new spa.

"Using his experience of what members expect for their money at the top end of the golf club ladder, Flanagan is determined that the facilities and service at both Loch Lomond and Dundonald just get better and better.

"Over the last six years, I've had a close connection with the Club Managers Association of America," he comments. "I've been over to speak at their



world conference and being able to deal with higher echelons of club managers in the United States certainly helps you understand what club life is all about and the service standards that are required.

"Lyle has always said to me that this is an international club. We want to be right up there on the world stage and you have got to be very, very good to do that.

"We will continually look at ways of improving both facilities and service because, in the eyes of industry, we want to be the best in the



## Niall's Career

**1987-1992** Started as a trainee tournament controller with the PGA South Region.

**1992-1995** Was the Club Administrator at the Wentworth Club.

**1995-1996** Moved to the Celtic Manor Resort in Wales to be Director of Golf.

**1996-2000** Helped with the development of the Nad al Sheba Club in Dubai.

**2000-2007** Held a senior management position on the St Andrews Links Trust.

business at everything we do.”

That includes the staging of golf tournaments and Flanagan is delighted that his new job includes a prominent role in the running of the Barclays Scottish Open.

“Having a tournament background – I started off right at the bottom of the ladder as a trainee tournament controller with the PGA – I wanted to get a taste of that again,” he reveals. “I will be the club’s liaison for running the Scottish Open and I’ll be working very closely with all our partners, including the

European Tour and, of course, Barclays.

“Everyone knows that Scots love golf their golf and, once a year, Loch Lomond Golf Club is delighted to be able to open its doors to let people come and see some of the best players in the world playing a fabulous golf course. What’s better than that?”

While only a few of those people will ever get the chance to play at Loch Lomond themselves, Flanagan is delighted that he has taken on his new role at a time when Dundonald,

its sister course down in Ayrshire, is being made more accessible to the general golfing public.

“Dundonald is a great golf course and visitor golf there is something we certainly hope to develop,” he says. “The company invested a lot of time, money and effort in getting the product right and the next step is a clubhouse. These are exciting times down there as well.”

Bump into Niall Flanagan if you pay a visit and, member or not, he’ll no doubt be straight over to give you a warm handshake!