

# Inside The Ropes

By Teresa Conway

**For many of us, the closest we ever get to great golf events like the British Open is on our sofa in front of the TV. But for one Eastern alumnus, the view is a lot closer. In fact, he's rubbing elbows with some of the greatest golfers in the world.**



Vik Maykowskyj on the job at the 2007 British Open

"My selection was a total surprise," says Vik Maykowskyj on becoming a marshal for the British Open.

Surprising and rare.

"To the best of my knowledge, there are only two Americans who have had the opportunity to hold this honor," says Maykowskyj. "The other American is Maj. Gen. Bill Brandenburg; he is currently commuting to the Open from Hawaii."

So just how did Maykowskyj, who earned a history degree from Eastern back in 1966, get in such exclusive company?

It all started when a longtime British friend asked him to come to Scotland.

"My friend Tweedie Brown invited me to the Open at St. Andrews in July 2005," says Maykowskyj. "Tweedie and I have a history that goes back to NATO days when we both served in the Armed Forces (Northern Headquarters Army Group) at a NATO facility (Rheindahlen) near Munchengladbach, West Germany. Subsequently, we became acquainted as golf friends in the mid-'80s while he was visiting the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. We kept up a friendship and

visited one another almost on an annual basis."

So naturally Maykowskyj took Brown up on the offer and flew off to Scotland to watch the British Open. It was only when he arrived that he learned why he'd been invited – to serve as a marshal. Brown told Maykowskyj they had to go out the next day (the first day of practice) to "train with the lads for marshaling duties." Maykowskyj's jaw dropped to the floor.

He'd been nominated and accepted by Her Majesty's Forces Sports Control Selection Board for the position of British Open marshal.

Three years into his service, he's still pinching himself.

"I still don't believe my good fortune and the unhesitating acceptance by the other marshals and tournament support personnel including members of the Royal and Ancient," says Maykowskyj. "There is a waiting list; the honor is competed for by members of the British Army from all corps and regiments and in my case, they made me an honorary member to cement eligibility."

Maykowskyj is just one of 40 people holding the coveted position. His job description: maintain a pleasant demeanor,





St. Andrews, site of the 2005 British Open



Maykowskyj with friend and fellow marshal Tweedie Brown



Maykowskyj snaps a photo of golf pro Phil Mickelson during a practice round at St. Andrews in 2005

support the Royal and Ancient Officials and interact with potential “streakers.” The serious side of the job is to provide total security for the world’s top golfers so that they can play without having to worry about any interference or threat to their safety. Marshals must also walk the entire course twice a day for seven days. All that walking adds up to about 70 miles. But it’s worth every step.

“We accompany the top 10 pairings and provide additional marshaling support while walking with the players through four days of practice and tournament golf,” says Maykowskyj. “This year, my good fortune allowed me the opportunity to walk with Padraig Harrington on the first and last day of the tournament to include the four play-off holes with Sergio Garcia. Mr. Harrington ultimately won the playoff holes and

thus became the Open champion. I was with him every step of the way, inside the ropes, through the many thousands of cheering spectators lining the fairways and greens – it was a tremendous privilege.”

When he’s not witnessing golf history, Maykowskyj is living in Alexandria, Va., and working in Chevy Chase, Md., where he does consulting for the Departments of Defense and State. It’s a job that allows him little time to golf. But Maykowskyj’s OK with that, knowing that every summer he has a front-row seat to some of the best golf in the world. **E**

(The 2008 British Open will be held during the third week of July at Birkdale, England.)