



Rain Bird IC System at Royal Venue

Luxembourg: Grand Ducal is a typical 1930s, classically designed golf course located a short distance from Luxembourg airport and set in densely wooded, tree-lined parkland.

Built on land contributed by Her Royal Highness Charlotte Grand Duchess of Luxembourg in 1934, construction began in 1935 based on the plans of Major JC Symonds, inspired by Tom Simpson.

Association Sportive Golf-Club Grand-Ducal was founded in April the following year, the Grand Duchess authorised the club to fly her colours (orange and blue), and the course was officially opened in 1935.



The first hole at Grand Ducal.

During World War II, the Association was dissolved during German occupation, resuming activity in October 1944 to restore nine holes damaged during Allied Forces manoeuvres. By 1948 the 18-hole course was back in perfect condition.

Almost 80 years on, the club called in agronomic consultant Alejandro Reyes from Turfgrass Agronomy and Services to carry out a comprehensive audit of the course irrigation system.

Head Greenkeeper Leslie Cain explained: “The audit revealed what we knew; how poor the system design was, with just 45% coverage. The club accepted recommendations for a completely new system and hydraulic engineer Luis Doncel from Imaginieur designed and specified our new system requirements.”

Terideal were appointed as contractors to install the Rain Bird IC System with CirrusPRO Central Control software and the 1000 new 702, 752 and 952 Series rotors, starting in October 2023 and completing in April 2024.

Doncel said: “As sustainable water management specialists, our objective is making water use on every golf course as efficient as possible to achieve the best playing surfaces.

“At Golf Club Grand Ducal, we wanted to maximise playability in the summer months when there is less rain, so designing a hard-line irrigation system meant that we could guarantee coverage would be good across the course.

“Rain Bird IC System manages the amount of water applied by each rotor so avoiding areas becoming too wet or too dry. Another important improvement was back-to-back installation on greens enabling greens and greens surrounds to be watered differently, reflecting the differing requirements of turf varieties and soil composition.”

Cain added: “Rain Bird had been recommended to us on several occasions previously and were my preferred choice and I also knew two Luxembourg courses with Rain Bird systems.

“Having the Rain Bird IC System with one cable suited our requirements, especially being a course with so many trees. With the old system, the frequent thunderstorms we get here would go through the cables in the ground. We had far too few sprinklers and what we had were in the wrong places.

“There are now five-to-seven rotors on our tees where before we had just two, we’ve three lines on fairways replacing the previous single line and we installed over 1,000 rotors in total, doubling our previous 500. And the rotors are very well-designed, too.

“Terideal did a really good job, especially during the wet winter weather and they completed all the system set-up on time. Luis came on site four or five times to check progress and to make sure the project went smoothly.”

Cain manages a 10-strong greenkeeping team and outlines the benefits that the club expects the new system will deliver:

“Having the new system means a lot less work, trying to make the system work – that’s the biggest benefit; not having to come in at 4 am, hand-watering or watering late at night.

“With Rain Watch technology, the automatic rainfall measurement and 3 mm cut-off will completely eliminate over-watering and maximise water efficiency. Because it’s been the wettest winter and spring on record, we’ve had rain almost every day and not a single warm night so we are hardly using it at the moment.

“However, we’re testing it out and learning its full capabilities. One of the younger members of my team is our irrigation technician. He went to the British Turf Management Exhibition (BTME), attending Rain Bird’s irrigation training and he’ll will be working with me, operating the new CirrusPRO software. We’re currently upgrading our poor internet connectivity which will then enable us to use CirrusPRO on mobiles.

“My advice to other clubs like us looking at system renovation is to do what we did here – start the process with an irrigation specialist and system designer who will first carry out a thorough audit of the system you have and then pinpoint exactly what you need for your course.”

Patrick Fromowicz, Golf Director at Grand Ducal, added: “I was very pleased with this project. From start to finish it went very smoothly, considering the wet winter we had. “

*Rain Bird is an Executive Member of the Asian Golf Industry Federation.

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