

A 17-YEAR SAGA

Our Water is Gray, but Our Grass Is Green

Our water source at Winter Pines Golf Club since 1984 has been 100 percent reclaimed water, and our main line is connected directly to the Winter Park Estates Treatment Plant approximately two miles away. We are connected from the city's 24-inch mainline by a 15-inch line and then a 10-inch line that runs to the center of the golf course and connects to the course's 6-inch mainline pipe. We share this reclaimed water source with Interlachen C.C. and several of the city's park and recreation areas.

The pump station is located at the treatment plant and maintained by the city. We have 120 psi static pressure in the pipe 24 hours a day which delivers 60 psi at the sprinkler heads. The city maintains the main line and we take care of all other lines on the property. We have no back-up system, so we are dependent on the city for having the system up and going all the time, which is part of the contract. They have been excellent at supplying us with water for the past 17 years.

We have a contract to use around 150,000 gallons a day and to pay for the electricity

to pump it to us. However, we are not required to pump the water if we don't need it on rainy days, and we can exceed that amount if we are in dry period or have to water in pesticide or fertilizer applications.

The overall water quality has been good, but we usually make 1-2 applications of gypsum during dry periods to combat some of the high sodium and bicarbonates in the water until we get some good rains to help flush them out of the root zone. A little extra spiking and slicing also helps minimize any water quality problems on our weaker greens.

Our control system consists of nine Griswold 24-station satellite panels located around the course. To aid in cold and weather protection, each one is mounted inside a separate locked cabinet, which helps provide insulation from heat and cold. We also have Griswold electric valves in the ground which control anywhere from one to five heads each, depending on their location. We don't have a central controller, so each satellite is adjusted daily to meet the conditions or shut off manually when it rains. A normal night irrigation cycle takes six to eight hours to complete.

Inspection of green and tee head operation is usually done twice per week by using a syringe cycle to check proper head rotation and nozzle performance. Fairway heads are checked while syringing off the dew ahead of the fairway mower on certain holes with heavy growth. Any repair work is done by me or the assistant superintendent.

We like to use Rainbird 51D impact sprinklers on the greens and tees so if we need to syringe a localized dry spot, we can just hold the impact arm and aim the head. It saves dragging a hose when time is a factor on a busy public course. We don't have a lot of quick coupler valves anyway.

Most of the fairways have double-row coverage with Rainbird 81B, Thompson 188s or Legacy G90s. We have part circle Rainbird 47Ds and Legacy G95 part circle heads along lake banks, property lines and at the clubhouse area.

The fertigation system was taken out when the old pump was removed and we hooked up to the city's reclaimed water line. All foliar fertilizers, wetting agents and growth regulators are applied with our Smithco 160 Spray Star. Primo (PGR) is used on some of our wetter fairways and the driving range during the summer. Wetting agents are applied as needed on greens, tees and fairways to help moisture penetration along with frequent slicing of chronic problem areas.

As with any older system, we are constantly tweaking the design by moving or adding heads to get better, more efficient coverage to help grow healthier turf.

Joe Ondo, CGCS

Joe Ondo, CGCS is superintendent, Winter Pines GC; 407-657-7565; fax 407-671-3420.

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