

A scenic view of a golf course. In the foreground, a large, calm pond reflects the sky and surrounding greenery. Reeds and tall grasses grow along the water's edge. In the middle ground, a lush green golf course is being watered by a large, multi-armed sprinkler system, creating a misty spray of water. A sand trap is visible on the right side of the green. In the background, there are rolling hills with scattered trees and a few buildings under a clear blue sky.

Championship  
conditions,  
come rain  
or shine



How irrigation is helping keep Celtic Manor Resort and St Andrews links in perfect playing condition for this year's top tournaments, writes Jenny Hughes



**No sooner has Louis Oosthuizen lifted the Open Championship Claret Jug 2010 at the Old Course than the golfing world switches its gaze to Celtic Manor Resort and the Ryder Cup...**

But, weather-wise, preparations at the Usk Valley resort in south Wales couldn't be in starker contrast to the recent hard work carried out at The Home of Golf. While St Andrews Links Director of Greenkeeping, Gordon Moir, and crew were battling heavy downpours in the run-up to the tournament, Celtic Manor Director of Golf Courses and Estate Management, Jim McKenzie, is currently dealing with the effects of a three-month drought.

Come rain or shine, however, both courses rely on Toro Irrigation products to keep their surfaces in championship condition. And, boy, is it shining at Celtic Manor at the moment, making irrigation a crucial part of Jim's preparations!

"We've recently experienced an unprecedented period of drought," he revealed.

"April, May and June have been very dry, so irrigation has been

really important. The Twenty Ten course that will host the Ryder Cup uses a hybrid irrigation system, but basically everything above ground is Toro in terms of sprinklers and solenoids. The sprinklers on the fairways have served us particularly well as they're coping with some strong winds at present, plus we've been impressed with the minimal maintenance that has been required."

The Twenty Ten and the Montgomerie course feature a mixture of 835S, 810G and 725 Series sprinklers as part of the hybrid systems.

Moreover, Celtic Manor Resort's original course, the Roman Road, uses a system controlled by its SitePro central control system – one of the most widely used systems in the golf course industry.

"The full system on The Roman Road course works really well and has seen us through some major events too, like the Celtic Manor Wales Open 2005, 2006 and 2007 and the 2005 and 2006 All Star Cup celebrity tournament," Jim adds.

And, while the St Andrews Links greenkeeping team enjoyed a brief moment's respite and a well-earned beer after the 150th anniversary

Open Championship on The Old Course, the hard work never stops at this most prestigious of courses – least of all for the Irrigation system now the weather is on the up.

At St Andrews Links, the five Course Managers responsible for the seven courses – including the Old Course – have been working

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**Jim McKenzie**

with the Toro SitePro system for 10 years.

Says Gordon of the system: "Our Course Managers find the SitePro controller very straightforward to use, plus it offers huge flexibility with regards quantities of water being applied to different areas within various time windows."

On six of the seven courses, the pipework is actually linked together

as one unit, yet through SitePro each of the four Course Managers has complete control of his system – something Gordon says is particularly useful.

“Each Course Manager can determine their exact requirement irrespective of what the other three are planning. We can even access it and make alterations to a programme through our home computers, so if weather conditions should change after we have left for the day, we can make adjustments accordingly.”

Features like the remote control operations using the handheld radios are also popular with the team.

“This is great for washing-in products after application to a specific area or checking out a sprinkler that you suspect may not be getting an electronic signal. Other great features are station testing, the weather station and T.Map, which is a handy tool to use in other situations such as producing a plan of a specific area for staff or committees.”

Opened in June 2008, The Castle Course also benefits from a recently introduced 855S Series sprinklers with TruJectory adjustable trajectory.

“These have proved very efficient in the wind, which is a constant presence on the courses and so, since 2008, we have replaced a number of sprinklers on our other courses with the 855S Series ones to help overcome the challenges the wind presents us with.”

In conclusion, Gordon states: “The versatility and control the Toro system gives you, together with the ease with which you can customise your programmes to suit every situation, is ideal for us.

“It can also have a positive effect in conserving water – something we feel is important from an environmental point-of-view as well as helping us maintain the courses with the correct grass species and fast, firm surfaces we aim for.”



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