



PROFILE NOZZLE CASE STUDY TACOMA COUNTRY AND GOLF CLUB

JOEL KACHMAREK, SUPERINTENDENT

Joel hosts a popular blog where he and other golf superintendents discuss topics of interest. Joel's blog can be seen at www.tacomaturf.com.



Joel Kachmarek and Boo.

DEALING WITH DONUTS AND DRY SPELLS IN THE NORTHWEST

Golf course superintendents in the Pacific Northwest have it easy.

With all the rain the region gets, they never worry about irrigation, droughts or water restrictions, right?

Not so, says Joel Kachmarek, GCSA, superintendent of the venerable Tacoma Country and Golf Club in Lakewood, WA.

"From July to September we'll have 70 to 90 straight days without rain...I mean zero.....so we need to irrigate nightly. In fact, we use about 30 million gallons annually and a third of that in July and August.

"Additionally, we're concerned about labor productivity and energy savings....so an efficient irrigation system is critical," he says.

OLDEST PRIVATE CLUB WEST OF MISSISSIPPI

Tacoma Country and Golf Club was founded in 1894 and is the oldest private country club west of the Mississippi. The facility was relocated to its present site in 1905, near the shore of American Lake, just south of Puget Sound. The course is distinguished by towering Douglas fir, Garry oaks and a layout designed by Vernon Macan and the late John Harbottle III.

"Over the last couple years we've had our share of irrigation issues," says Kachmarek.

DONUTS IN 15- TO 20-FOOT RANGE

"Soft areas were appearing around the heads and when we adjusted the sprinklers to cut back on the watering, we ended up with donuts in the 15- to 20-foot range.

"Then the nozzles started clogging up. With older courses, you're going to have mainlines and metal fittings that are 60 to 70 years old. They flake and rusty particles plug up the heads, especially in the short range nozzles. Even plastic particles show up. The crew was spending too much time cleaning out the nozzles, along with hand watering the donuts. It was a no-win situation."

A graduate of Oregon State University's Horticulture/Turfgrass Management program, Kachmarek joined the Tacoma club in 1993 as an assistant superintendent, left briefly to work at a course in Bremerton, then returned to Tacoma in 1999 as head superintendent.

He has an unabashed love for his course and decided he had to find a solution fast before the problems got worse.

"I'd heard about Profile nozzles several years ago and finally decided to run a test."

SAW RESULTS IN DAYS

"We initially ordered 50 Profile nozzles last year and saw results within days. The Profile nozzles improved distribution uniformity practically overnight. The soggy spots disappeared and the donuts greened up. The clogging nightmare was over too – uninterrupted streams of water irrigated the turf evenly and consistently.

"By the end of the first week, we decided to switch over the entire course in phases," he said.

"The Profile nozzles have not only improved the appearance of the course, but they save us labor. We no longer need to hand water and can use the crew's time more productively.

"In 2011 we installed 200 Profile nozzles and in 2012 we are putting in another 500....before our dry season sets in. Next year we will add an additional 500. By phasing in the installation, we can budget for the improvements each season."

EXCELLENT DISTRIBUTION UNIFORMITY

"With the Underhill nozzles operating at the correct pressure, 70 psi, we have excellent distribution which translates into better playability, consistency and minimal hand watering.

"The Tacoma Country and Golf Club has very high standards and our members expect fast, firm, aesthetic playing surfaces year-round.

"It's not unusual to see golfers on the course during the winter months. What's a little rain when you're from Seattle?"



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"The clogging nightmare was over too – uninterrupted streams of water irrigated the turf evenly and consistently. By the end of the first week, we decided to switch over the entire course to Profile."

