



## Rave Reviews for Rain Bird IC System

Zaragoza, Spain: Close to Zaragoza, Aragon's capital city in northeastern Spain, Golf Los Lagos first opened in 1997 as a nine-hole course. When its ownership changed three years later, the decision was made to expand the course with **Ramón Espinosa** designing the current 18-hole layout, which became operational in 2002.

In recent years, the greatest challenge was maintaining the course at a level which members expected. The earlier irrigation system, installed 23 years ago in 2001 when the course was expanded, remained operational, due to the efforts of the greenkeeping team until 2023, when the system and field controllers became obsolete.

The poor availability of spare parts, particularly antenna replacements which no longer existed, meant not being able to communicate with individual controllers or having the freedom to update something as simple as irrigation times.



*The third hole at Golf Los Lagos with wetlands on the right.*

Long sections of cable had been replaced previously and the team cleverly reused electric plates between controllers to enable irrigation across the entire course. Erosion of old PVC piping and custom-made metal joints also caused problems, resulting in some staff permanently working on repairing burst pipes and leaks.

Head Greenkeeper **Miguel Monguilod** said: "Irrigation consultant, **Kiko Allo**, perfectly understood our needs and supported us with the decision to renovate, which we knew was needed, but then became much more urgent at a time when the rate of breakdowns began to exceed the rate of repairs.

"We always knew what the benefits of correct irrigation on the course would be, but it is a complicated decision, assessing the different qualities that competing systems offer.

"I visited other courses to learn about their experiences and systems and so we have taken advice from some of the best in our country. In the end, considering what we learned from other clubs, our own experience with Rain Bird rotors and the centralised computer system were key to making our decision.

"With a new Rain Bird IC System with CirrusPRO Central Control software and the 1200 Rain Bird rotors we have installed, we expect an improvement in grass quality.

"Beyond the improvement in playability, we expect there will be significant savings in water usage, in electricity, from being able to water in less time, in not having to buy expensive spare parts and lastly, saving many staff hours previously spent on repairs. "

The project was completed in April 2024 by contractor Green Natur with support from the Rain Bird Global Sales Plan (GSP) team who completed on-boarding and remote access set-up to enable the course to use the system from any device.

Rain Bird 702 Series rotors were installed for reliable full-circle coverage, with 752 Series rotors delivering full and part-circle versatility and easy arc adjustment.

The main irrigation pipe was installed using a traditional trench, but elsewhere Green Natur's trenchless machinery meant that any damage to the course was much less than had been expected, resulting in limited scarring on the course.

One of the most important considerations for the club during installation was ensuring that as few holes as possible were closed so that members could keep enjoying the majority of the course, making communication between the contractor and club members essential.

Installation followed the planned schedule without any major incidents and although final adjustments proved to be more complicated than planned, those have now all been completed.

Monguilod said: "From the beginning, Rain Bird answered all our questions and made several visits to the club to show us how all the different rotors and computer system worked. Furthermore, they have shown us great support when faced with questions or incidents.

"Due to the proximity of the Pyrenees, we have the privilege of being in a wetland geographical location and our water comes directly from a natural aquifer so is not treated in any way before being used for course irrigation. It does have high levels of calcium, lime and salinity but has not caused us any problems with the turf so far.

"There are no current restrictions on the amount of water that can be used to irrigate the golf course but the club is very conscious of making water use as efficient as possible and the new irrigation system has been installed with this in mind.

"In other parts of Spain, especially along the coast and the south where there are wastewater and salt-water treatment plants, there are limitations on the amounts of water that can be used, but we are privileged in the north of Spain and are prepared in case it is necessary to make cuts.

"It is still early to evaluate the full results of renovation but although the last few months have been very intense, the impact on playability and course aesthetics can already be felt.

"Our greenkeeping team now has more time to work on other parts of the course and members are beginning to see the results of that and our investment in renovation. Our renovation experience has been good so far and we are available to share that with any other club that is considering renovation and needs help."

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