

Bay Hill Club



Bay Hill Renovation Brings Modern Vision to Legendary Golf Course

Property Details:

Director of Grounds

Chris Flynn, CGCS

Architect

Arnold Palmer
Design Company

Consultant

A.S. Altum & Associates

Contractor

Leibold Irrigation, Inc.

Rain Bird Distributor

FIS Outdoor

Renovation Date

May-October 2018

Rain Bird Products Used

Cirrus™ Central Control
IC System™
500/550 Series Rotors
751 Rotors
MI Series™ Mobile Controllers

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Bay Hill Club was founded in 1960, but it was the vision of one of golf's greatest legends, Arnold Palmer, that turned the sweeping 270 acres into a world-class facility and one of the PGA Tour's finest golf courses. Located along the shores of the Butler Chain of Lakes outside of Orlando, Florida, the Challenger and Charger links feature 27 holes of tour championship golf, a challenging but revered course for both professionals and amateurs alike.

BAY HILL'S UNIQUE RENOVATION STORY

When Director of Grounds Chris Flynn came to Bay Hill in 2014 he was faced with many challenges, including an old hydraulic irrigation system that provided poor coverage and required constant maintenance and repairs. In 2009 a major renovation had been completed at Bay Hill that included upgrading the control system but did not replace the original pipe network, which dated back to the 1960s. Undersized pipes, bad spacing and low pressure plagued Chris and his crew.



"We have been extremely happy with the installation and performance of our IC System. Its ease of install and use has given us the control we need during the renovation process."

— Chris Flynn, CGCS, Director of Grounds
Bay Hill Club & Lodge

By 2017 it was clear that a major overhaul was needed. Chris describes his approach to selecting an irrigation manufacturer as “totally neutral” as he weighed out all the options of satellites and 2-wire systems from Rain Bird and other manufacturers. Once he learned about the Rain Bird IC System, Chris says, it was the tipping point in his decision to go with Rain Bird. The project began shortly after the 2018 Arnold Palmer Invitational.

“It’s been great working with Rain Bird, and the IC System has been solid as a rock... I’m happy with the project and it’s working perfectly.”

— Tony Altum, President
A.S. Altum & Associates

The new irrigation design features Rain Bird 751 IC Rotors installed as “ins and outs” on the fairways and greens for greater control and flexible water management. In the future they will be able to respond to changing water regulations by turning on only the “ins” to water just the fairways, or leading into tournament time turn off the “ins” to firm up the fairways, while keeping the “outs” on to water the rough. Chris is thrilled with the results: “The distribution uniformity and adjustment features of the 751 series have already yielded improved conditions for us.”

One of Chris’s biggest challenges with the irrigation renovation was the need to balance doing projects while keeping the golf course open. In order to get him up and running quickly, Bay Hill upgraded to Rain Bird Central Control and satellites on the existing system so the IC System could be installed in phases with minimal disruption to the golf course. This “hybrid” system allows Chris and his team to control the Rain Bird satellites and IC System all from one Rain Bird Central Control. “It’s pretty neat”, Chris says, “We had Toro hydraulic and within 24 hours we’re running a Rain Bird system.” Because the IC System is simple to learn and use, the transition was easy, and with MI Series Mobile Controllers (MI) right on their phones, Chris and his team were able to make changes in the field without having to go back to the computer.

RESULTS

Installing a hybrid Rain Bird system is helping Bay Hill transition from an old hydraulic system to the state-of-the-art technology of an IC System – all on a tight schedule while keeping the golf course open. Most importantly, with the individual head control and advanced diagnostics of their new IC System, Chris and his team can now put water exactly where they need it, improving coverage and providing better uniformity across the course. Whether managing the expectations of members or preparing for the next PGA Tournament, the IC System now makes it easier to provide exceptional playing conditions at Bay Hill - as envisioned by the Legend himself.



“Our new IC System helps us promote and achieve the firm fast playing conditions best suited for the game, promotes water conservation and reduced consumption through technology and responsible use while improving overall turf quality and agronomic conditions. We are extremely pleased with the new installation at Bay Hill.”

— Brandon Johnson
Vice President & Sr. Golf Course Architect
Arnold Palmer Design Company



“The Rain Bird IC System is so simple to install and troubleshoot, it makes an installer’s life easy. If I had a golf course, this is the system I would put in.”

— Brandon Johnson
Project Superintendent
Leibold Irrigation, Inc.



“The Rain Bird IC System is extremely user friendly and way easier to work with overall.”

— Alex Hills, Assistant Superintendent
Bay Hill Club & Lodge