



In Action

Real Successes in the Field



Presidio Golf Course

Course Overview

- Public golf course, 18 holes
- Brian Netz, CGCS, Golf Course Superintendent
- Located in San Francisco within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- Course Designer: Robert Wood Johnstone
- First established in 1895 on a U.S. Army post
- Prominent names golfing the course include Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Bing Crosby and Arnold Palmer

Regional Climate and Soil Conditions

- Cool temperatures, plus heavy fog
- Clay soil and sub-surface nematode issues

Course Overview

Located at the base of the Golden Gate Bridge, Presidio Golf Course is one of the country's most remarkable golf courses with an extraordinarily rich history.

Built in 1895 to serve the recreational needs of nearby military personnel, Presidio Golf Course

started as a 9-hole course constructed with horse-drawn plows on the Presidio Army post in San Francisco. Its popularity among private club members and high-ranking military personnel prompted its expansion to 18 holes in 1908.

For more than 90 years, the 6,500 yard course remained private. However, in 1989 – after the Army announced plans to close the prestigious club – the course transferred its ownership to the National Park Service. In 1993, the facility re-opened as a national park and public golf course.

Earning a reputation as one of the nation's premier golf courses, Presidio hosts 70,000 rounds of golf annually. Golfers who visit the course enjoy challenging holes lined with centuries-old Eucalyptus and Monterey Pine trees.

The course features seven USGA greens. While *poa* remains a prominent variety on every area of the course, the greens are seeded with bentgrass, and the fairways, tees and roughs feature a ryegrass blend.





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Challenges

In addition to the obvious weather challenges — cool temperatures and dense fog — common in the San Francisco Bay area, Superintendent Brian Netz, CGCS, also faces challenges associated with environmental factors, turf nutrition limitations and high foot traffic.

Seventy thousand rounds of golf each year amounts to serious wear and tear on the tees, fairways and greens at Presidio. However, Netz compensates for high foot traffic by adjusting his mowing height, noting that it does impact green speed.

“We don’t run the height of cut that a lot of places around here can run, due to the climate and the number of rounds we do,” explains Netz. “We would like to provide a better green speed for customers, but it’s just not a wise business decision.”

Netz also contends with sub-surface issues, including an overabundance of nematodes that thrive in the local climate and drainage problems associated with high levels of clay.

“Then, since we’re in a national park, we are limited on the amount of rescue chemistries we can apply to the turf, so it gives us some pretty significant challenges,” says Netz.

Adding to his list of challenges, Netz had difficulty finding a fertilizer that would provide a consistent and even growth for more than 10 days.

“For years, I had been looking for the right fertilizer to put on the greens,” notes Netz. “I’ve been getting this *poa* roller coaster where I get a big flush in fertility, followed up by the end of your fertility cycle where the greens look like they are Starvin’ Marvin.”

Product Used and Benefits

After networking with other superintendents, Netz learned about UMAXX from AGROTAIN International. In a nitrogen category all its own, UMAXX is a stabilized nitrogen product that maximizes nitrogen efficiency, controlling losses due to volatility by keeping nitrogen in the soil in a plant-usable form for when the plant needs it.

“Within a month after putting the product out, I was sold and it has been a steady part of my program ever since,” says Netz. “I liken it to a nitrogen I.V. that the plant can pull from whenever it wants.”

Netz includes a quarter pound of nitrogen in his tank mix every other week. He notes that the turfgrass color on the day of application is the same as it is 14 days later. But the benefits extend beyond color and an end to growth surges.

Because of the consistent growth UMAXX provides, Netz finds that his crew doesn’t have to mow the fairways as often. As a result, he can leverage his crew on other important aspects of the course.

Oftentimes the harshest critics, customers have seen the difference too. “The comments about the greens have increased significantly in the last two years,” says Netz. “I get a lot of compliments about the course in general, so we have come a long way.”