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BY DESIGN



Excellence in Golf Design from the American Society of Golf Course Architects

Nature's gift to golf

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A world of firsts at Adare Manor

The golf course at Adare Manor in Limerick, Ireland, will reopen in 2017. Stacie Zinn Roberts and Sabrina J. Russo find out more about the project, and discover how Profile Products has contributed to its success.

In Limerick, Ireland, there is a golf course rejuvenation underway, the likes of which the Emerald Isle has not seen before. Tom Fazio, ASGCA, and ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf, ASGCA, of Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc., renovated the course at historic Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Course—originally designed by ASGCA Past President Robert Trent Jones, Sr.—with the goal of hosting world-class golf events. Rumors of a Ryder Cup bid for the landmark property are backed up by infrastructure and design methods that ensure the highest level of playability when the course opens later this year.

The construction methods included hydraulically applied mulch on fairways that held contours in place and protected fragile grass seed during the harsh Irish winter. Infrastructure was built into the course with the intention to make televised golf matches an integrated part of the layout, as opposed to an afterthought. Buried television-cables and wide roadways rather than cart paths were designed to accommodate trucks moving grandstands and TV towers. Massive

drainage systems and greens constructed with a rootzone blend of sand and Profile Porous Ceramics were strategically designed to keep greens fast, firm and dry in even the wettest Irish weather. Iconic Adare Manor is poised to become the most technologically-advanced golf course facility in Ireland.

When J.P. McManus, known for world-class golf projects such as Sandy Lane in Barbados, purchased Adare Manor from its previous owner, Tom Kane, in 2015, he already had

“From day one, Mr. McManus said he would play the Pro-Am here,” says Marzolf. “The course is set up for hosting large gallery events so part of our design was to lay out locations for skyboxes, grandstands, and seating.”

Large-scale tournaments require a great deal of infrastructure to support their operation, but Fazio and Marzolf were meticulous in their planning to ensure that Adare’s layout could accommodate seating, corporate pavilions, and access

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big plans for the future of the course. McManus’s goals demanded the creation of a course that could host the JP McManus Pro-Am and other major events and, potentially, the Ryder Cup itself. Adare Manor was already the number one parkland golf course in Ireland, when the Fazio team was brought in to redefine it.

roads for semi trucks. While cutting-edge fiber optic and underground electrical wiring certainly establish a seamless and elegant solution to hosting large, televised events, a tournament is only as good as the course where it is played.

Fazio’s design for Adare Manor retains the original routing of the RTJ





Photos: Adare Manor

course, but virtually nothing else of the former design remains. Every inch of soil was turned over and recontoured, redesigned, reimagined. But it took more than just creativity to make the beauty of the course functional. Innovative products and unprecedented construction methods were key.

According to Marzolf, when Mr. McManus purchased Adare Manor he knew he wanted to create something remarkable. A resident of County Limerick himself, he dreamed of bringing well-paying jobs and an exciting new way of life to the place he'd come to love. To elevate the already-renowned Adare Manor, whose castle-like manor house was built in 1832, McManus knew that he had to overcome the obstacles created by the volatility of playing a game outdoors in Ireland's changeable weather. According to Marzolf, McManus "wanted to have no rough, low cut turf, no fescue, no tall grass. Mr. McManus had some goals for the presentation of the property that were fast and firm and a well-drained golf course."

The largest project built in Europe this year, Adare Manor's renovation is one of the most extensive in the history of Irish golf. With an annual



rainfall of 55 inches, the weather in Limerick was an unavoidable factor in the construction of the golf course. In the near-constant mist and rain of Ireland, a well-draining course is a unique design challenge. In order to create optimal playing conditions, the entire course was sand-capped and graded to drain quickly so that it would stay fast and firm, no matter the weather. The new design incorporates 77,000 meters of drainage spread over just 150 acres of land—that's one drain every 15 feet.

"This is the most drainage Fazio Golf Course Designers has ever put into a course," Marzolf says.

The entire course was seeded with cool-season grass varieties. Tees and fairways were seeded with perennial ryegrass. Greens are Pure Distinction bentgrass. The course is designed with no rough, with Augusta-style fairways 'shaved down' to the edges.

To hold the grass seed in place, the seed was applied through a hydroseeder using Flexterra® High Performance-Flexible Growth Medium™ from Profile Products to promote germination on fairway and semi rough areas. Over 120 tons of Hydromulch 2000 wood fiber hydraulic mulch, also from Profile Products, were used to keep the seed



Hydromulch from Profile Products helped the Fazio team get to a playable golf course faster, by holding the seed in place until it was ready to germinate

in place and stabilize slopes in the outer rough areas.

“We knew that we’d be seeding through the fall and winter time, so the decision was made to use a hydromulch to protect the seed,” says Marzolf. “We might be doing some seeding during the dormant part of the year, and we thought the Profile product might hold the seed in place on top of the sand cap, reduce the erosion and allow us to have a better-finished grade.”

The Flexterra was mixed in a tank and sprayed across 135 acres, coating and nourishing the seed through germination. Flexterra is comprised of a wood pulp that adheres to the surface it lands on, and appears green in color to indicate where it has been applied.

The process worked.

“We never lost grade anywhere, it was an amazing thing to see. It saved us a lot of time and helped us get to a playable golf course faster by holding the seed in place until it was ready to germinate in the conditions here in Ireland,” Marzolf notes. Although the

course is set to open this summer, it’s actually been playable since this past spring, aided by the hydromulch that held the seed and soil in place.

“It’s been a great product,” he continues. “We never had any erosion anywhere on the site, which is kind of hard to believe. I never thought I’d be saying that in my life! The hydromulch is great. It holds the grade. No washouts, no repairs. On 135 acres of applied area, we might have had 10,000 square feet of minor, minor touch ups.”

On greens, Fazio’s design includes 570 tons of Profile Porous Ceramic soil amendment blended into the sand root zone mix at an 85:15 blend (sand to PPC) “to provide a permanent improvement to the root zone, improving infiltration rates, water and air porosity percentages, and water and nutrient retention,” explains Gavin Kelly, who is based in Ireland and consulted on the Adare Manor project for Profile Products.

The greens mix was extended 120 feet beyond the greens in all directions in an 8-inch sand cap, Marzolf says, to

increase drainage and playability. This was another design first, established to promote drier conditions in swales and landing areas.

In order to oversee the project’s progress, Marzolf moved to Ireland from his home in Greenville, South Carolina. He spent about 250 nights on site during construction in 2016 and returned for 10-day periods throughout the winter. He says the developer kindly provided a home and vehicle for his use during the project, which was a tremendous help to him, working so far from home.

After 34 years with Fazio Golf Course Designers, Marzolf says he’s surprised to have experienced so many firsts at this, his 84th golf course project. Slated to open in autumn, Adare Manor isn’t so much a renovation as it is a rebuild, the culmination of McManus’s vision and Fazio’s renowned ability to innovate.

Of his experience helping to bring the golf course at Adare Manor to life, Marzolf says: “It’s been a lot of fun and a lot of hard work. It’s been amazing.” ●