



Making better on a budget

Your irrigation system is one of the most important tools but also can be your biggest headache if it is not up to scratch. If it's doing OK then fertiliser application, grass seed sowing and other maintenance practices can be utilised to their full potential. However, if your club can't afford a new irrigation system within the next few years, you can still improve your existing system without emptying the club's bank account!

Let's look at just three options that can save money and make improvements.

Pumps

First your irrigation pump station. Most old pumps simply turn on (that is, from zero to full speed in half a second) and off. This sudden full speed and then sudden full stop can cause shockwaves through your pipe system and likely causing frequent pipe blow-outs. A variable speed drive (VSD) dropped onto a pump will control the pump's frequency and provide soft

start and soft stop, meaning the pump will slowly accelerate and decelerate, thus reducing those shockwaves and save you money in kilowatts as you can operate the pump at a lower pressure.

Pipes

Your irrigation pipes are hugely important. If the diameters are too small, all the pressure generated by the pump will be chewed up in friction, known as headloss.

Wherever you have had lots of blowouts, replace your old PVC pipes with new black PE (polyethylene) pipes. Your mainline pipes should normally be 90mm diameter or bigger; greens - 63mm or 50mm; and tees 50mm or even 32mm because your flow rates are often so much lower

Sprinklers

These can make or break your irrigation system. Does each sprinkler produce a nice 'curtain' of droplets across the entire throw length, or is most of the water landing near the end of the throw? If it's the latter then your sprinkler's flow rate is too high, or your water pressure is too low. You can reduce the size of the nozzles in your sprinklers to reduce the flow rate and lead to an increase in water pressure. If you need new sprinklers but can't afford a golf head (flat top) then you can install a sports rotor instead. The Rain Bird Falcon 6504 is an industry favourite at an economic price and has a well-proven track record.

Rigby Taylor Ltd is the officially appointed UK distributor for Rain Bird Golf irrigation.

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