

Desert Mountain, Scottsdale, AZ



Property Details:

Director of Agronomy

Shawn Emerson

Agronomist

Keith Hershberger

Six-Course Complex:

- Renegade (1987)
- Cochise (1988)
- Apache (1990)
- Geronimo (1996)
- Chiricahua (1999)
- Outlaw (2003)

“It’s hard to maintain the conditions of a course if you don’t know how to play it. We want to look at a golf course from a player’s perspective.”

—Shawn Emerson, Director of Agronomy

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Desert Mountain is unlike any golf experience in the world. Carved into the mountainous terrain of the high Sonoran Desert, this 8,000-acre property offers six Jack Nicklaus Signature Courses within a prestigious residential golf community. From major tournaments to private rounds for roughly 2,000 members, Desert Mountain provides the setting for some of America’s most memorable golf experiences.

CHALLENGES:

With elevation changes up to 1,000 feet from the lowest to the highest point, the sprawling property is comprised of numerous microclimates. As rain and wind are captured in various pockets of the mountains, Desert Mountain often has areas of their course that receive heavy rainfall, while nearby areas get no rain at all.

Director of Agronomy Shawn Emerson is charged with establishing highly consistent playing conditions across these microclimates on all six courses that make up Desert Mountain. To help his 180-member crew understand the importance of consistent playing conditions, Shawn requires crew members to play the course themselves. From green speeds and mowing heights to bunker conditions and more, this helps the crew establish a deeper appreciation for how every hole needs to play.

RESULTS:

Over the years, Desert Mountain has installed six Rain Bird irrigation systems on their courses—each a fully-independent system with a dedicated Central Control computer. All systems are designed to help the crew overcome long days and the challenges of a large mountain property with unpredictable microclimates.

Rain Bird® Central Control is the driving force behind Desert Mountain's irrigation. With Rain Bird MI Series™ software, Shawn's crew has the freedom to access Central Control from anywhere with a mobile-connected device, whether they are out on the course or sitting at home. From Rain Bird weather stations to soil moisture sensors, each system collects real-time data that crew members rely on when responding to unpredictable precipitation.

Automated functionality from Rain Bird saves Desert Mountain time and resources as they work to implement the precise irrigation schedules their unique property needs. RainWatch™ automatically adjusts watering schedules based on real-time precipitation in multiple areas, giving Shawn's crew added protection against microclimates. Flo-Manager® maximizes flow while minimizing watering windows, and Temporary Station Adjust allows them to turn off a station for a preset number of days.



With the turn-of-a-screw flexibility on Rain Bird 751 rotors, Shawn's team can quickly switch from full circle to part circle operation. That means they can easily adjust the throw for changing seasons and wind patterns, and accommodate overseeding when needed. Thanks to the Timeless Compatibility™ that only Rain Bird provides, they can upgrade older courses with Rain Bird 751 series rotors, and they never have to worry about digging up old rotors.

With some products that have been in the ground since 1987, Shawn is looking forward to bringing the next generation of Rain Bird to Desert Mountain in future renovations.



“Rain Bird is the leader in the industry in Central Control and automation of our computer. We could not do what we do without that computer. It gives you so much control to make adjustments quickly.”

—Shawn Emerson, Director of Agronomy