TECHNOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY,



By Luke Headley,
DragonRidge's Golf Course Superintendent

In the fall of 2022, I had the opportunity to play DragonRidge with my Director of Agronomy from TPC Summerlin, Dale Hahn, as guests of former DragonRidge Superintendent Rick Friedemann, who spent more than 12 years helping shape the golf course and property. As I entered the gate, I was in awe of the pure beauty of the surrounding landscape, the spectacular homes, and the architecture of the community. Standing on the 5th tee box, I remember saying, "You know I think I am going to be a lifer with the Tour but wow, if I ever got the opportunity to be here, I wouldn't hesitate to jump".

The road to becoming Superintendent at DragonRidge was nothing in which I pictured, but the goal was always to work at a premier golf facility and continually push the standard of excellence. Along the way, I was fortunate to gain experience at facilities such as Augusta National, Valhalla, Victoria National, Muirfield Village, Forest Dunes, Desert Mountain, TPC Sawgrass, TPC Las Vegas, and TPC Summerlin. Those opportunities provided exposure to championship-level conditioning standards, construction projects, PGA Tour events, and some of the leading agronomists and turfgrass professionals in the industry.

Those experiences continue to influence the direction and long-term vision for the golf course at DragonRidge today. At DragonRidge, the goal is simple: continue integrating cutting-edge technology, improve aging infrastructure, and elevate the daily playing conditions for our membership while positioning the club for long-term success. None of these projects happen overnight. They require significant planning, collaboration, investment, and support from ownership and club leadership. We are fortunate to have the support of Mr. MacDonald and an entire team committed to continuing to reinvest in the property and member experience.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

This can be difficult to discuss without acknowledging the current water challenges facing Southern Nevada, but our focus is clear: become more efficient, more sustainable, and continue improving the overall golf experience for our members. Over the last year, the club has made significant investments in several key areas.

AND THE FUTURE *of* DragonRidge



INTEGRATION OF CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

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Nano Oxygen System

If you attended one of the recent turf talks with the MGA or WGA, you are already familiar with this system. If not, here is a brief overview.

This water treatment system increases the dissolved oxygen content of our irrigation water, making it significantly higher quality than the reclaimed water we have historically relied upon. The system also treats the water with ozone, providing a chemical-free method of reducing bacteria and pathogens while helping break down contaminants such as iron, manganese, and sulfur commonly found in reclaimed water. As the ozone reacts, it naturally breaks down into oxygen.

The system is also equipped to inject liquid carbon dioxide into carbonic acid, one of the safest acids available (its in your soda!). Unlike harsher acid treatments, this process does not leave behind sulfates or chlorides and helps break down bicarbonates within both the water and soil profile.



This technology should improve overall water quality, turfgrass performance, and long-term soil health while also reducing our already low applications of fungicides, herbicides, and other pesticides. Understand that all products applied at DragonRidge are used responsibly and strictly according to EPA labeling requirements, but this system represents another step toward improving sustainability and environmental stewardship throughout the property.



Future Goals

Technology within the golf industry is evolving rapidly, and we continue to monitor and explore tools that may improve efficiency, consistency, sustainability, and overall course conditions in the future. Some examples include GPS spray rigs, the USGA's G3 Ball for greens data collection, TurfRad moisture sensors, and autonomous mowing equipment. Many of these technologies are still evolving quickly, and while they remain exploratory for DragonRidge today, it is important for us to continue evaluating innovations that could positively impact course conditions and long-term operations over time. We have tested and demoed some of these on our property and want to ensure we are partnering with companies that emphasize results that improve playability and sustainability.

Improving Infrastructure

At the end of 2025, the club replaced the original booster station and freshwater control panels. This investment replaced the original booster and freshwater control panels and now allows both pump stations to communicate with one another. This translates to improved water pressure and irrigation efficiency throughout the golf course as irrigation heads turn on and off during nightly watering programs.

This spring, we took another important step by beginning replacement of the original isolation valves and tap saddles throughout the property. These components are critical pieces of the irrigation system. Much like the vascular system in the human body, the irrigation system is the lifeblood of a high-end golf course. Replacing these aging components will help extend the longevity and reliability of the system for another 20-plus years while supporting future golf course improvements and renovations.



The final major infrastructure improvement this year involves our fairway bunkers, which were last renovated in 2015. This project includes improved drainage, restoration of original bunker shapes and design characteristics, adjustments to bunker orientation in select locations, and removal of bunkers that have no bearing on how the hole plays. With this renovation we will be using a new product called Porous Pave Sand Guard liner, which is a blend of rock and rubber pellets bound with a polymer coating designed for long-term durability and performance. This liner will also no longer show if sand levels get low.

How Does This Improve the Member Experience?
The long-term vision is to gradually move away from extremely lush and soft conditions and instead create a firmer, faster golf course that enhances playability and consistency throughout the property. Firmer conditions translate to increased roll off the tee, smoother putting surfaces, and an element of speed to the game that this property has never seen before.

The future of DragonRidge is bright, with exciting times ahead as the club continues investing in the golf course and overall member experience for years to come to position itself as one of the premier golf experiences in Las Vegas. ■

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