

Turf Report

Presidio Golf Course, San Francisco, California

Golf Course Manager

Anna McGrath
Arnold Palmer Golf Management Company
Orlando, Florida

General Contractor

Links Construction, Inc.
Port St. Lucie, Florida

Superintendent

Kevin Hutchins
San Francisco, California

Turf Supplier and Installation Contractor

West Coast Turf
Palm Desert, California



In just 10 days, West Coast Turf delivered and installed nearly three acres of its Dominant Plus bentgrass sod on the Presidio Golf Course's 18 greens. Washed big-rolls were used for fast installation and quick establishment.



D: Productions, Inc. Murphy/Scully

Dominant Plus Bentgrass Gives Presidio PGA-Quality Greens

Teeing up at the historic Presidio Golf Course in San Francisco has long been considered a premier experience. But by 1999, all the prestigious course's pure poa annua greens were wilting under the attack of nematodes. Instead of fighting back with environmentally harsh chemicals, Presidio's management hired West Coast Turf to reclaim all 18 greens with nematode-resistant Dominant Plus bentgrass. In just 10 days and without closing the course, the Presidio greens were well on their way to surpassing their former glory.

Poa Greens Surrender to Nematodes

Located just south of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Presidio is among the country's oldest and most beautiful military posts. Golf has been played on the base since 1895 and been enjoyed by presidents and generals alike. Decommissioned in the 1980s, the Presidio and its golf course are now owned by the National Park Service and open to the public.

"Between the views of the city, the ocean breeze, and the beauty and performance of the course, golfers expect a great experience here," said Kevin Hutchins, the course's superintendent.

Like many golf courses in Northern California, the Presidio has cultivated rather than fought the native poa annua grass. Unfortunately, the Bay Area's mild, moist climate makes the poa susceptible to nematodes.

"By August of '99, our pure stands of poa greens were significantly affected," said Hutchins. "We could no longer position the course as a premium place to play golf."

Dominant Plus at a Glance

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Name | Dominant Plus bentgrass |
| Uses | Golf course greens |
| Color | Dark green |
| Texture | Very fine |
| Performance | True ball roll and fast speeds |
| Disease resistance | Improved |
| Mowing height | 1/8" — 1/4" |
| Cold tolerance | Improved |
| Heat tolerance | Improved |
| Drought tolerance | Improved |
| Shade tolerance | Moderate |
| USDA zones | 1 to 6 |



D: Productions, Inc. Murphy/Scully

Dominant Plus creates a beautiful and high-performing putting surface on the Presidio's 11th green.

Dominant Plus Provides Ground Support

Finding a remedy would present a unique challenge. The use of chemicals doesn't fit within the National Park Service's environmental stipulations nor with the golf course's commitment to environmentally sound maintenance practices. Even if it had, the owners and management questioned how chemically treated greens would look and perform.

"Golfers will forgive so much, but you've got to have great greens," said Hutchins.

After cultural and organic approaches failed, the owners and management considered replacing the greens with a nematode-resistant grass. Hutchins believed it could be done quickly and with little disruption. "And I believed that, with improved grass, we could reopen with a great publicity campaign and increase our marketability," he said.

The search began for a high-performance greens-quality grass that would resist nematodes, handle cool temperatures and coastal climate, yet also perform well in summer heat. The search ended with West Coast Turf's Dominant Plus bentgrass. Dominant Plus is a blend of SR1020, which has improved heat tolerance, fine blades and high shoot density; SR1019, for cold tolerance and disease resistance; and SR1119 which has very uniform color and texture. The result is a beautiful, very dense, upright and low-growing bentgrass with a wide adaptation to temperature and tolerance of close mowing. Dominant Plus offers fast speeds and a true ball roll for a superior putting green.

All 18 Greens Retaken in 10 Days

The renovation began in November '99 and the course remained open with temporary greens on fairways. That meant stripping had to be done manually by Hutchins and his in-house crew for the least disturbance. In their wake came Links Construction with prep and grading. Links would remove as much of the soil, poa and nematodes as possible and add 80,000 pounds of soil amendments to improve soil biology.

West Coast Turf jumped in behind Links. At 2 a.m. every workday, the crews harvested the bentgrass fresh for the morning deliveries. They cut the sod into 42" x 30' strips, called big-rolls, which cover a much greater area than regular-size sod for a fast installation. With fewer seams to grow in, big-rolls also give an immediate smooth surface. The sod was then washed of soil, to reduce sod-to-soil incompatibility and quicken establishment, and loaded onto refrigerated trucks for delivery.

Working seven days a week and under light towers at night, the crews finished the three-acre job in 10 days. Hutchins was pleased. "West Coast Turf did a phenomenal job," he said. "Their guys were as impressive as I've seen. Laying sod on a green is an art."

Once finished, the superior greens were covered with tarps to increase the winter soil temperature until establishment three months later.

"Replacing our poa with Dominant Plus bentgrass was a huge success," said Hutchins. "In the spring we invited everyone to test our new PGA tour-style playing conditions. And we've proven that nematodes can be addressed in a positive way."

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