

The 98th PGA Championship, Baltusrol Golf Club, New Jersey



In July 2016, the 98th PGA Championship took place at the Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield Township, New Jersey, west of New York City. The Baltusrol Golf Club is a private 36-hole golf club founded in 1985, featuring both a lower and upper course of 18-holes each. As this was the club's ninth major and second PGA Championship event, a turf protection site access solution was an early priority in the logistical planning.

One of the challenges of the lower course area included access to the golf course for tractor trailers associated with TV broadcasting operations as the existing cart paths were determined inadequate to handle the heavy vehicular traffic. The alternative point of egress was to cross private property. This required an efficient and low impact solution to satisfy the concerns of the property owner.

Matrax Inc., a full service matting manufacturer and contractor, traveled to the project, met with the project team, and developed a cost effective matting solution and work plan that was reviewed, evaluated and accepted. Each mat measures 8 feet x 14 feet, 4.25 inches thick and weighs 1050 lbs. Dura-Base® has an overlapping flange system that is pinned together thereby creating a work surface that equally transfers loading that minimizes impact to the lawn. Matrax provided an effective solution that minimized the inconvenience to the property owner while simultaneously protecting the sensitive turf below, thereby allowing for a more efficient site restoration.

Another site access challenge involved the upper course area which was being used concurrently for hospitality tenting and VIP parking. To access the proposed VIP parking area, it was necessary for guests to cross a fairway. Approximately 3500 vehicles were anticipated to utilize this access road and thus the surface would be subjected to very concentrated loads.

Matrax utilized a single layer of Dura-Base® composite matting in these areas to achieve the goal of an acceptable all-weather walkway for patrons while at the same time protecting the sensitive turf below. Upon completion of any major event, a private club may come under an understandable degree of pressure from its members to restore play to the course as quickly as possible. The use of Matrax turf protection matting allowed for an efficient and timely restoration, getting eager club members back on the course faster while also supporting the PGA Championship with an economical temporary site access solution for their event.