History of Golf Course Irrigation—
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Moist-O-Matic in 1962, it branched out to become one of the leaders in the irrigation market.

Since the early 1960s, Toro has been manufacturing and marketing large-radius, gear-driven, valve-in-head, pop-up sprinklers. Within the past decade, Toro introduced a fully computerized irrigation system for turfgrass on golf courses and athletic fields. Toro remains the only manufacturer of turf maintenance equipment that also owns an irrigation division.

Later Years

Since the 1950s, the irrigation industry has grown primarily due to the introduction of the electrically activated valve. It allowed turf managers to efficiently irrigate for specific time periods without having to depend upon the hiring of an irrigation crew. When the transistor was developed in the 1960s, this eliminated the use of tubes in radio controlled units and resulted in more flexibility in controllers. Then in the 1970s, the central computer controller was designed. These are in common use on golf courses, parks and athletic fields.

Today, computerized water management systems are available to all turf managers. These systems may be combined with weather stations, which allow the turfgrass to be irrigated in conjunction with the evapotranspiration of the site. The use of reclaimed water and fertigation technology continue to be introduced and improved upon as a less expensive method of irrigating golf courses. Irrigation has played a major role in enabling golf course architects and superintendents to elevate the sport of golf to its current state.

(Editors Note: Dr. Kent W. Kurtz has been a professor of turf grass science at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona for more than 30 years. This article was reprinted with permission from the author.)