

How Do You Do...?

The Question -- How Do You Overcome Crisis Situations to Keep Fields in Play?

Answered by *Sal M. Genito, III, Manager, Landscape Services, University of California-Davis*

Wet weather is a challenge every sports turf manager deals with as part of the normal duties and responsibilities of the job. To be successful, one must plan for the worst and be prepared to act whenever necessary. Fields that have been well tended and managed hold up much better than those that have not. The key to keeping any field in good condition is as follows: 1) Maintain proper drainage through either aeration or other means, 2) Keep nutrition levels high, 3) Tarp baseball and softball fields, especially the mound and home plate areas, 4) Communicate with coaches - ask for assistance to minimize wear patterns, 5) Keep plenty of field drying agents on hand, 6) Monitor weather changes and humidity levels for disease activity and make preventive applications if necessary, 7) Last, but not least, try to convince your organization to adopt a field-closed policy. This is one of the best ways to not only protect fields and save money, it also protects the safety of field participants who will have a greater chance on injury due to poor footing caused by wet weather.

Answered by *Connie Rudolph, Groundskeeper, Midway Stadium (MN)*

In this business, a crisis situation usually involves water - lots of it. In order to keep the field in play, I first try to get as much time on my side as possible to let Mother Nature do her job, and then I spring into action.

On the skinned areas, I use a combination of rollers (to push the water around evenly) and Turface to dry the standing water.

On the mound, I also use Turface if I don't have dry clay available, but I make sure to remove it the next day because the clay doesn't pack well with Turface in it.

If there is standing water in the grass areas, the rollers also work well there.

Ideally, if conditions are terrible, the game shouldn't be played, but there are times when the show must go on and then we have to deal with it.

Submitted anonymously

This spectacular method for drying a mound in a crisis, must play, situation is filled with cautions. The photo was supplied by a sports turf

manager who does not recommend this method and who wishes to have no name connection with it. In this situation,

the super soggy mound was doused with gasoline, then set on fire. Obviously, the application of gasoline to the field in itself raises environmental questions. Then factor in the possibility of the fire escaping into the surrounding turf and causing short-term and perhaps long-term damage. It's also



possible that the fire could "sap the life" from the mound clay. There is an injury risk for the crew members

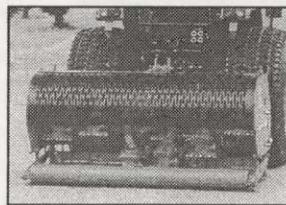
assisting

with this process if the fire flares up too high or gets out of hand. In the situation pictured, a sudden gust of wind did cause the fire to flare up, resulting in some short-term injury to the turf at one side of the mound. The game was played as scheduled.

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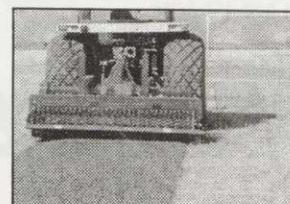
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