

Competing with Mother Nature and Father Time

By Floyd Perry

Daily, as sports field managers and progressive groundskeepers, we are beaten by two players that we have very little control over, that we don't have under contract: Mother Nature and Father Time. No matter how good a grip we have over our working conditions, those two folks jump up and bite us daily. Whether it's an ice storm on our frozen Bermuda field during January (winter kill) or an extra-inning, rain-delay doubleheader on June 30 (over-time and over budget), we seem to lose

even if we did our quality planning.

There's no way I'm going to solve these two problems, but I am going to encourage a few ideas to save extra steps and extra hours.

Sometimes we go about doing our job the same way everyday — nothing new, nothing lost. But heading into the 21st century, let's create some new thinking. Let's create some innovative ways to become more efficient with our staff, equipment and supplies. Let's do some things that no one ever tried before to compete with Mother Nature

and slow down Father Time.

As sports field managers and grounds personnel, we understand we are not going to beat those two folks all the time; we just want a fighting chance to keep up with them.

Be innovative and creative in your job. Efficiency is one of your tickets to success in the next 100 years.

Floyd Perry, sportsTurf's 1997 Manager of the Year, owns Grounds Maintenance Services, Orlando, Fla.

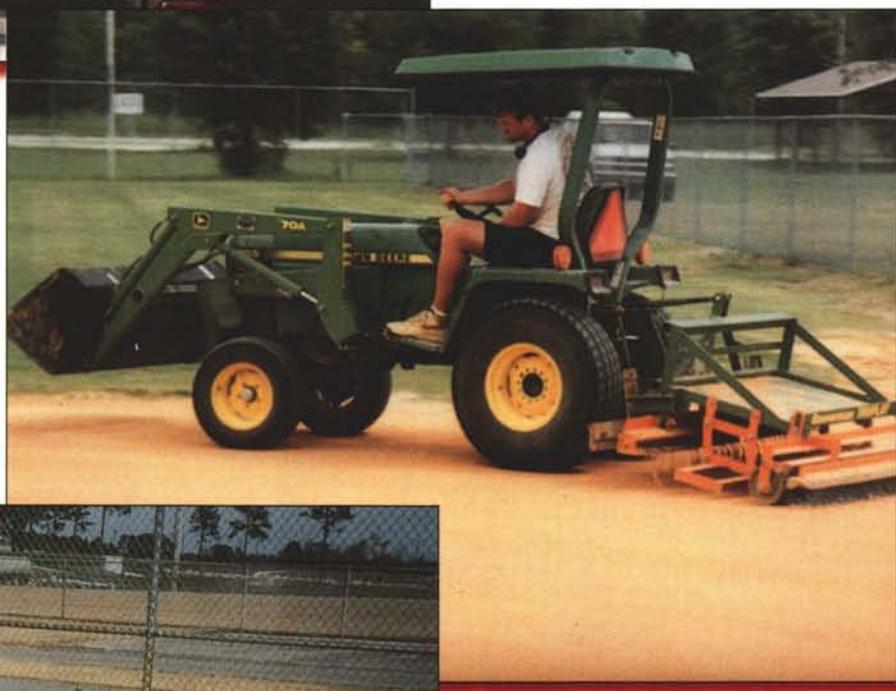


Create dual opportunities with your equipment to eliminate time and manpower — like an out-front seeder/spreader with a rear spiker. Photos courtesy: Floyd Perry.



Be innovative with homemade equipment wagons that save steps, labor and duplication of responsibilities. "Neat and efficient" means to transport tools and still have the bed open.

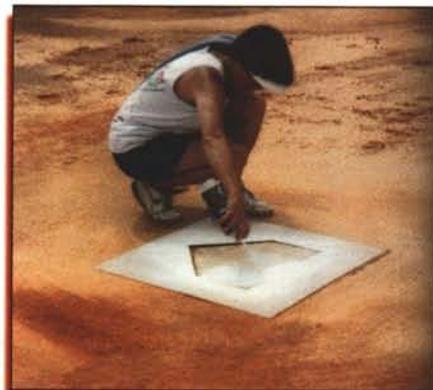
Create or use groomers that do two, three or four tasks at the same time. Four-in-one groomers are a trend on multi-purpose diamonds.



Eliminate certain traditions and create easier means of doing a trivial task — like removing water from turf and clay with a movable sump pump.



Rig up your work vehicles to achieve the ultimate in flexibility. Bring smiles to your staff with innovative designs.



Use larger and lighter tools to do repetitive tasks. Create a picture of success for your taxpaying customer.

Q: What do all of these teams have in common?

- Oakland A's
- Arizona Diamondbacks
- University of Texas Longhorns
- San Diego Chargers
- University of Southern California Trojans
- California Angels
- Arizona State University Sun Devils
- San Francisco 49'ers
- San Diego State University Aztecs
- San Francisco Giants
- San Diego Padres
- Los Angeles Dodgers
- Oakland Raiders
- Arizona Cardinals

A: They are at "HOME" on West Coast Turf!

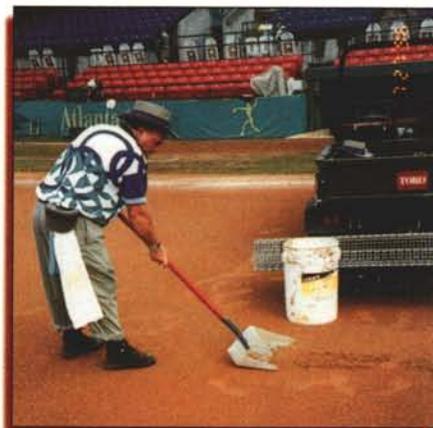


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