

Spring sports' headache: water

By Floyd Perry

Today many major athletic conferences require a full infield tarp to save weekend series and the team's travel expenses from being washed away. That's fine for the big boys but what about the rest of us, in parks and recreation and high school? How do we create an opportunity to play after some serious rain and how do we dry a field once the game has started?

There are a couple of ways that might help but they're not diesel fuel, gasoline, sawdust, or helicopters. Over the past fifteen years, since I've been traveling the country educating groundskeepers and viewing more than 18,000 athletic facilities, many turf managers have created some easy to use and inexpensive means to solve the "down water" problem. Farmers and construction personnel have used some of the methods for years as their workday is very valuable to the success of the end product. As groundskeepers, many of us are using time-tested means from other industries on our clay infield surfaces with the same rate of success to the end product: playing the game!

Two parts of the water removal issue are: a) elimination of standing water in large and small puddle sizes and then, b) the drying of saturated or moist clay surfaces so the game can begin or continue after the majority of the water has been eliminated.

Let's begin the water removal problem before the season starts and before the rain falls by incorporating calcined clay (MVP, a coarse particle calcined clay) into the top four to six inches with a RotaDairon machine, for example, which creates a superior blend at one ton per 1000 square feet. By accomplishing this task during October, November or December, you will be able to see the highs and lows of the playing surface and areas that may need extra attention during your preseason window.

Second move

The second part of your preseason infield preparation is the drilling of a series of French drains or drilling and filling in areas that you know are low from previous season's thunder showers. Both of these techniques use MVP, which creates a test tube wicking action from surface to subsurface in a relatively short timeframe.

One gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds and will percolate vertically if the clay soil affords that ability. A 1 1/2-inch layer of clay over these openings allows for quality infield performance and successful daily dragging and repair. Both techniques also work very well on outfield turf surfaces that are compacted and hold water.



Avoid using sawdust!



Sponge to absorb surface water

The third part of your preliminary clay preparation work is laser leveling your surface to create a percentage pitch for water runoff. Laser leveling has some super effects for short-term performance but as the daily dragging and raking take place, the grade is eliminated or altered due to surface reshaping.

As the season is about to start, the key to your rainy day attack is to be prepared for the worst, but be ready for anything. A couple of little tricks that have proved successful for coaches, team members and groundskeepers are in the accompanying pictures. Try everything once then settle in on what works best for you on your fields, under your weather conditions and with your staff's equipment and supplies.

A. Have Turface ready to go and in a location that is close to the playing site. Both calcined MVP and QuickDry are necessary for all conditions of moisture.

B. Have your small tools (blow pack, sponge, sump pump, leaf rakes) in storage and gassed up and ready for a thunder buster.

C. Have your grooming vehicles ready in case the water removal process takes place after the scheduled workday. One 3-wheeler with the correct rear attachment is worth five staff members with leaf rakes.



Thirty-gallon hand pump and Smart Cart

Where Technology Meets Environment

Athletic Fields • LawnScape™ • GolfGrass™ • SafTurf™ • RubbaMulch™ • Pour & Play™

SPRINTURF Synthetic Turf Systems (877)686-8873 www.sprinturf.com

Circle 139 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-139

Problems with drainage?
Increase Safety, Playability, and Wear Tolerance of Turf with...

QwikDRAIN SYSTEMS

- Increase aeration and drainage with a narrow slot "trench-'n-fill" system at 20" o.c.
- Minimal surface disruption
- Fast, clean, cost effective operation

For a Certified Contractor Nearest You, Call Toll Free
1-888-567-6872
 Division of GreenONE™ Industries
 Revolutionizing Golf & Sports Turf Drainage

Circle 140 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-140

IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE



Power-generated sump pump with 3-inch deep and hose



Sponge roller on mesh biber

Many of these photos only cover parts of the water removal process. Turf managers across the country have tricks that work for them their respective areas that may not work elsewhere. Attempt to communicate with your neighbors. Don't be afraid to ask questions and don't be limited to just one or two ways to "skin a cat."

Rainwater is tough but today's progressive turf managers are leading the charge to solve "our biggest maintenance headache."

Floyd Perry, Jr., is president of Grounds Maintenance Services in Orlando. He received the STMA's Dick Ericson Award in January, which honors a sports turf manager who positively impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership. He can be reached at 407-903-1220. ■



Blow-pack to move surface water

THE GAME MUST GO ON.



No more wet, muddy or frozen fields, EVER. Whether you play on grass or artificial turf, the Airfield drainage system is for you. Our system not only drains better, it also installs faster, lasts longer and costs less. With millions of square feet installed all over the country, our prestigious list of clientele, and airfield's "best in the business" warranty and insurance coverage, choosing Airfield is always a smart choice.

405.359.3775
airfieldsystems.com



Circle 141 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-141

It's so easy
to save a
lot of time



TERRA SPIKE® XF

deep spiking and deep aeration

eXtremely Fast



Wiedenmann
North America, LLC
Savannah, GA
Phone (912) 790-3004
Toll free (866) 790 3004
Fax (912) 790-3005
office@terraspike.com
www.terraspike.com

Circle 142 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-142



Kifco

Water-Reels

1. **Water-Reels** operate unattended, shut off automatically, and require minimal labor. They can water on a curve to match the outfield of a baseball diamond or water a football field down the centerline in a single pass. They can be easily transported from field to field by hand or with a small tractor.

Kifco/800-452-7017

For information, circle 054 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5905-054>



New Hunter rotors

2. **Hunter Industries** has new, taller pop-up rotary sprinklers are the perfect choice for field managers who are now keeping their mow heights higher to promote stronger turf growth, especially throughout higher-temperature regions. Notable features include Hunter's **ProTech** safety system, with a small exposed cushioned rubber cover and boot to keep play areas safe.

Hunter Industries/760-744-5240

For information, circle 055 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5905-055>

Keep your bases loaded

...with **FieldSaver™** Protective Rain Covers and **FenceMate™** Wind and Privacy Screens.

Only from **CoverSports USA**



FieldSaver™ mesh protects during batting practice



FenceCrown™ tops chain link fences



Use **FieldSaver™** over real grass or artificial turf

FenceMate™ screens the wind



Custom numbered and colored outfield distance banner



SafeFoam™ padding in 4 colors protects players

COVER SPORTS USA
A Division of Memphis Manufacturing

Your All-American Advantage

5744 Woodland Ave., Phila., PA 19143
800.445.6680 Fax: 215.724.8706

www.coversports.com
email: sales@coversports.com

GSA Contract # GS-07F-6052P

© 2006 CoverSports USA

Circle 143 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-143



800.837.8062
www.mulemix.com
saf@mulemix.com

Call for a distributor near you.

- ◆ Infield Mixes
- ◆ Mar Mound Clay
- ◆ Field Conditioners
- ◆ Warning Track
- ◆ Infield Topdressings
- ◆ Drying Agents
- ◆ Field Accessories

SportsTurf
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION
Experts on the Field Partners in the Game



Circle 144 on reply card or www.oners.ims.ca/5905-144

**YOUR "ONE-STOP SOURCE"
FOR AMERICA'S LEADING
BASEBALL SURFACES & SUPPLIES**



THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE
... SINCE 1922

A SUPPLIER TO EVERY MLB TEAM,
OVER 150 MINOR LEAGUE TEAMS,
OVER 700 COLLEGES, PLUS THOUSANDS
OF TOWNS & SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE.
SPECIAL MIXES FOR INFIELDS,
PITCHER'S MOUNDS & HOME PLATE AREAS.

REGIONAL INFIELD MIXES AND
RED WARNING TRACKS FOR
EVERY STATE & CLIMATE FROM
BULK PLANTS NATIONWIDE!

PLUS INFIELD CONDITIONERS:

IF TOO HARD AND POORLY DRAINING!

Pro's Choice

THE REDDER, LESS DUSTY, MORE UNIFORM
INFIELD CONDITIONER & DRYING AGENT
FOR CONSISTENT INFIELD CUSHION
IN WET OR DRY WEATHER!

DIAMOND PRO

IMPROVES DRAINAGE & ENHANCES COLOR!

IF TOO SOFT & DUSTY!

STABILIZER® & HILLTOPPER®

FOR FIRM, YET RESILIENT, PLAYING SURFACES

TO QUICKLY DRY INFIELDS!

The Original & Most Absorbent is Now

NEW & IMPROVED GRANULAR

DIAMOND-DRY.



OVER 200 OTHER INFIELD PRODUCTS!

3 Grades & 6 Colors!

FENCEGUARD

Protective Safety Covers
for Chain Link Fence

WALL PADDING • WINDSCREEN • RAIL PADDING
TAMPERS • DRAG MATS • RAKES
HOLLYWOOD® BASES • FIELD MARKING MACHINES
BATTING PRACTICE COVERS • RAIN COVERS
PERMA-MOUND™ PADS • MOUND BRICKS
SAFE "T" MATT™ BATTER'S BOX PADS
TYPAR® GEOTEXTILES & TURF BLANKETS
ON-DECK CIRCLES WITH TEAM LOGOS
PERMANENT FOUL LINES & MUCH MORE!

FREE INSTRUCTIONS & BROCHURES

www.BEAMCLAY.COM

800-247-BEAM

908-637-4191 / FAX 908-637-8421

PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION

KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, NJ 07838

"The best infield mix I've ever used."

— GEORGE TOMA

Circle 145 on reply card or

www.oners.ims.ca/5905-145

IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE



Big Gun sprinkler

3

3. Now there's a better way to irrigate athletic fields, while keeping sprinklers off the playing field, the Quick Coupling Big Gun System. Because of the tremendous distance of throw of Big Gun sprinklers, the field can often be covered from the sides. A quick twist is all it takes to attach a Big Gun and key to a valve. The system can also be equipped for semi-automatic operation, requiring a minimum of time and labor.

LR Nelson

For information, circle 057 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5905-057>

Sport Series rotors

4

4. Irritrol's Sport Series rotors come with an adjustable part-circle and unidirectional full-circle head with a 5-inch pop-up, allowing for interference-free operation in tall grass and a choice of seven nozzle sizes to get those hard-to-reach areas. With a standard rubber cover, automatic arc return and a water-lubricated gear drive, each rotor is protected against debris and vandals, while giving enhanced reliability for fast and convenient installation.

Irritrol Systems

For information, circle 071 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5905-071>



Underground hose reel

5

5. Reelcraft Industries offers a new underground hose reel to enhance existing irrigation systems and aid hand watering. The reel permanently stores the hose underground so it can be quickly retrieved to hand-water drought-stressed areas. When finished, the hose retracts back into the ground, out-of-sight and out of the way.

Reelcraft/800-444-3134

For information, circle 056 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5905-056>