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## Umpire saves the day!



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**A** storm with 84-mph winds and blowing rain forced a two-hour, 12-minute rain delay before the July 19 game at Busch Stadium. Later Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa praised the work done to get the field ready to play. "You have to give a high-five to [umpire crew chief] Joe West," he told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "He knew exactly what needed to be done. He told the grounds crew exactly how they needed to prepare the plate for the game."

I found this interesting. Although LaRussa in the same interview said, "We have a terrific staff," the manager is crediting an umpire with knowing how to repair the home plate area after a storm so severe it shredded parts of the field tarp and demolished the FOX studio (good shot, Mother Nature!)? I called the head turf manager at Busch a few times to get his reaction but we never connected.

The newspaper reported that after a meeting between the umpires, grounds crew, and the Cards' general manager determined the game could be played, "the grounds crew cleared the field and spent about 15 minutes fixing the drenched home plate area, easily the worst part of the field." This was some storm; reports said 30 people suffered injuries at the ballpark and five were taken to the hospital. The storm tore through the new park, flooding the dugouts and some clubhouse areas. The paper credited "Cardinals personnel" with containing the flooding. I guess Joe West wasn't available.

### Welshans honored by KAFMO

The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO) presented its 2006 Fowler Founders Award to Jim Welshans at the 10th annual Athletic Field Conference. KAFMO is the Pennsylvania chapter of STMA.

Welshans is a founding father of KAFMO and a Penn State Cooperative Extension educator. He served as the organization's treasurer for 10 years. The award named in honor of Don Fowler, a retired PSU extension agent who is credited with organizing the group who formed KAFMO in 1994. The award itself is one of Fowler's worn-out workboots that has been bronzed. It is given to an individual the KAFMO Board recognizes for his or her dedication not only to KAFMO but also for doing something to make a difference in the sports turf industry of Pennsylvania.

Welshans is going strong after 37 years with Penn State Extension, still providing recommendations to hundreds of turf managers in the state's Capital Region. He also volunteers annually for the grounds crew at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, a crew that is headed up by Don Fowler and staffed by KAFMO members. Congratulations Jim, you deserve the recognition.

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