Can you identify this sports turf problem?

Problem: Huge wrinkles in artificial turf and displaced infill material
Turfgrass Area: Baseball infield
Location: League City, Texas
Grass Variety: Artificial infill type turf

Answer to John Mascaro’s Photo Quiz on Page 36

John Mascaro is President of Turf-Tec International
The huge wrinkles in this artificial turf infield and displaced infill material were a result of Hurricane Ike. The hurricane made landfall as a strong Category 2 in Galveston County, TX during the early morning hours September 13, 2008. The eye came within 5 miles of the Big League Dreams Sports Park. Between the hurricane and the passing front the next day, more than 15 inches of rain fell on the complex. The drainage system for the artificial turf infields as well as the natural grass outfields are entirely dependent on electric pumps that move the water from the six baseball/softball fields to a retention pond. Due to the fact that there was no electricity during the storm the water had no where to go so it backed up through the drainage system, which caused the artificial turf to float up in several spots. When the pumps were working again and pumped the water out, the artificial turf settled back down but the stretching caused wrinkles.

The sports turf manager came up with an ingenious plan to make a giant carpet stretcher by taking a 4 x 4-foot sheet of three-quarter inch plywood and screwing twelve lag bolts through it. The wrinkles were then pulled out with a front-end loader. Overall, the complex fared quite well with only superficial damage and was opened back up for play just 7 days later.

Photo submitted by Mike Estlinbaum, Director of Maintenance at the Big League Dreams Sports Park in League City, TX.