Do I Pull the Tarp?
Planning Effective Game-Time Weather Decisions”
Matt Neri and Brad Jakubowski

Game day weather decisions.
Hoping for the best, preparing for the worst.

The 3 C’s
• Communication
• Composure
• Confidence

Today’s Agenda
• Visual and Virtual Clues for Inclement Weather
• Digging Deeper into Radar Data
• Making the Call
  What process do we have in place?
  How do we communicate our concerns?
  How do we put our decisions into action?
• Lightning Safety Policy
• Final Thoughts
Mammatus Sky – Hail may be coming

What can we expect when we see this?
HAZARD...60 MPH WIND GUSTS AND QUARTER SIZE HAIL.
• Doppler radar sends the energy in pulses and listens for any returned signal.
• Signal is measured in decibals DBz
  • Value of 20 dBZ ~ the point at which light rain begins.
  • 60 to 65 dBZ ~ the level where 1" diameter hail can occur.

Base Reflectivity

At increasing distance, the radar is viewing higher and higher in storms and the beam may overshoot the most intense parts.

Composite Reflectivity

Looks at ALL elevation scans in order to create an image.
Echo Tops

- Echo tops can be used to assess the intensity of a storm
- A stronger updraft makes convective wind gusts and large hail more likely
- When several storms are on radar, echo tops can help indicate the more intense storms

Use Echo Tops to see if the storms are growing or decreasing in intensity

Vertically Integrated Liquid (VIL)

- High values of VIL can be an indicator of an updraft's strength
- Taller updrafts tend to have higher values of VIL and are more likely to produce hail

Digital Storm Total Accumulation

- Determine accumulations for the duration of a storm event
- Also discrete accumulations over short time periods

Aids in nighttime tarping decisions
So, How Do We Make the Call?

Game day weather decisions. Hoping for the best, preparing for the worst.

The 3 C’s
• Communication
• Composure
• Confidence

Severe weather preparedness begins with a well-maintained playing surface
• Choose the right infield mix for your situation
• Know your infield conditioners and use them properly
• Maintain a consistent grade to the infield skin
• Surface drainage is key, especially during torrential downpours
Staffing for the tarp

1. Make sure your staff is properly trained
2. Have a preseason test run to ensure that everyone understands their specific job
3. A tarp pull should resemble a military style operation!
4. Always emphasize safety!

What tools do I use to make the best decisions possible?

- Hourly Forecasts – When I wake up in the morning
- Forecast Discussion – Helps with timing of arrival of fronts and significant weather
- Call a local forecaster – more than happy to help and contribute
- Find a radar app that you feel comfortable with – good stuff

While at the stadium...

Before I leave the stadium...

When I wake up in the morning...

Look at my weather radar
Check the Hourly Weather Forecast

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Check the Forecast Discussion

Develop a plan of action
When I am at the Stadium

1. Pull up the radar to make sure that nothing sneaks in the morning
2. Hourly forecasts
3. Forecast discussion

Then...

Develop a plan of action
When I am at the Stadium

4. Call the GM to let him know we will need the labor to potentially pull the tarp
   a. Give the GM your best interpretation of when the labor is needed
   b. The Front office is our tarp crew and they can schedule accordingly

Call Your Local Forecaster

National Weather Service
NWS Miami, FL
Website: www.nws.noaa.gov

National Weather Service Miami FL
Area Forecast Discussion
Update...

Call Your Local Forecaster

National Weather Service
State College, PA Weather Forecast Office
305 Innovation Blvd, Suite 300
State College, PA 16803
814/231-2408
Page Author: CTP Webmaster
Web Master's E-Mail: ctp.webmaster@noaa.gov
Page last modified: Dec 5, 2019 10:45 AM
Develop a plan of action
When I am at the Stadium

5. **Talk with the Crew** – if we have a rain at 2pm we need to expedite everything prior to the potential weather event
   - May need to prioritize certain tasks
     a. Mowing infield grass
     b. Prepping pitcher’s mound and home plate
     c. Line the infield

Develop a plan of action
For when it’s 30 minutes prior to game time

1. Call the GM for a discussion
2. Call the NWS
   - Timing of the storm
   - Duration of the rain
   - Wind
   - Severe threats
   - Lightning
3. Talk with both team Managers
   - Relay information
4. Talk with the Umpires
   - Before the lineups are exchanged

Develop a plan of action
**OR Decide to Start the Game**

Chance to get 3 innings in we usually go for it (normally about 45-minute window)

if the sun is blasting, we will start the game

Many factors to consider:
- Obligation to the Parent Club
- Obligation to the Fans
- Safety vs. Obligations

Facility Severe Weather/Lightning Policy
Does your facility have one?

NCAA policy
“Requires that play be suspended if there is lightning within 8 miles of the stadium.”

MLB/MiLB policy
“Once the lineup cards are exchanged, the umpire-in-chief shall have sole authority when a game shall be called, suspended or resumed on account of weather.”

“Nothing in this rule is intended to affect a club’s ability to suspend or resume any game pursuant to a policy governing severe weather, significant weather threats, and lightning safety that has been filed with the league office prior to the season”

Time for Discussion!

THANK YOU!!

Matt Neri
mneri@statecollegespikes.com

Brad Jakubowski
brj8@psu.edu
Weather Safety for Outdoor Activities

Suspension and resumption of outdoor activities should be planned in advance

SAFE evacuation plans include locating:

1. Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up
2. Substantial buildings with pipe-in plumbing
3. The low ground. Seek cover in clumps of bushes
4. Ingress and Egress Routes

MLB/MILB Weather and Lightning Policy

66

67

68

69