



THE NATIONALS RELY ON EARTH NETWORKS TO AID IN MAKING WEATHER RELATED GAME DAY DECISIONS

Located along the Anacostia River in the Navy Yard neighborhood of Washington, DC, Nationals Park, home to the Washington Nationals, seats 41,546 and features 79 suites on three levels. It is groomed to perfection before game day and much care is taken to guarantee the diamond is in pristine condition. The man behind the immaculate condition of the grounds is John Turnour, Head Groundskeeper at Washington Nationals. In addition to making sure the field is ready for the first pitch, he monitors weather conditions to ensure safety on and off the field.

GET IT RIGHT. PLAY IT SAFE.

Staying on top of weather conditions for a stadium that is mostly outdoors with tens of thousands of paying patrons while optimizing player and fan safety and minimizing interruptions to the game is no easy feat. “Our plan is to always go into each day knowing we’re going to play at 7:05 or 1:05 p.m. or whatever time that game is,” Turnour said. “That is our plan to always stay on schedule. Unfortunately, weather is very unpredictable and forecasts are forecasts. . . . At times it can be a very difficult situation to be in as far as making those decisions. . . . But the plan is always to play the game.” Postponing games is costly and creates scheduling issues and makes for unhappy fans but safety is always the best policy. “If it’s severe weather, obviously, the safety of our fans is our number one priority,” he said and if needed, upper management is prepared to postpone, delay or deploy their evacuation plans, but they rely on severe weather intelligence in order to make these critical decisions.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES IN FULL SWING

OVERVIEW

When it’s time to play ball, head groundskeeper John Turnour looks to Earth Networks team of meteorologists to deliver the accurate weather information he needs to smoothly manage operations on game day.

CHALLENGES

Managing grounds and monitoring severe weather for a large stadium that seats 41,546 paying patrons means that optimizing player and fan safety while minimizing interruptions to the game is hard work that takes more than just having eyes on the sky.

SOLUTION

A combination of tailored game day forecasts, 24/7 meteorological expert consultation and a web-based weather visualization tool complete with mobile alerts of impending weather help facilitate high-pressure weather related operational decisions.

RESULTS

Severe weather intelligence that is accurate and enhances operational decisions to optimize safety on and off the field and minimize game day interruptions.

Continued on page 2

24/7 METEOROLOGICAL EXPERTISE IN ACTION

Turnour turns to Earth Networks meteorological staff of experts to deliver tailored pre-game, game time and post-game forecasts for Nationals Park that includes critical information on the likelihood of hazardous weather events and details on incoming precipitation down to the timing of when it is projected to start. “We’re getting the real-time rain rates, so we’re able to, with the dense network of weather stations around DC, see the rain as it approaches and gauge generally if it’s enough to create a problem that would do certain things to the field,” said Mark Hoekzema, Earth Networks’ chief meteorologist. In addition to tailored forecasts, Earth Networks also equips Turnour with a web-based weather visualization application that gives him access to real-time weather information including radar and rainfall rate information. This combination of web-based weather visualization and consultation with Earth Networks meteorological staff provides a comprehensive solution complete with text and email alerts that are issued directly to Turnour’s mobile device when severe weather is within a 20 and 10 mile radius of the park.

WHY IT MATTERS

Given everything that is at stake, Turnour’s high pressure responsibility of advising management is important and has many implications. “You want to make sure that you’re taking that forecast you’re getting and interpreting that forecast and delivering that message accurately,” Turnour said. “And be very honest with the forecast and the potential situations we could be in.” Earth Networks is committed to arming Turnour with the critical information he needs to allow management to make the best decision on game day that will guarantee safety on and off the field and minimize interruptions. “I’ve personally had my stomach in a knot trying to figure out if the rain’s going to stop at a certain time because of a major televised game and things like that,” Hoekzema said. “I know my guys, they love baseball and they love forecasting weather and they take it all personally. They’ll be agonizing over the radar.”



You want to make sure that you’re taking that forecast you’re getting and interpreting that forecast and delivering that message accurately.



John Turnour, Head Groundskeeper at Washington Nationals

