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August 2019

CoverLine

eNews & Tips for the Sports Facility Industry

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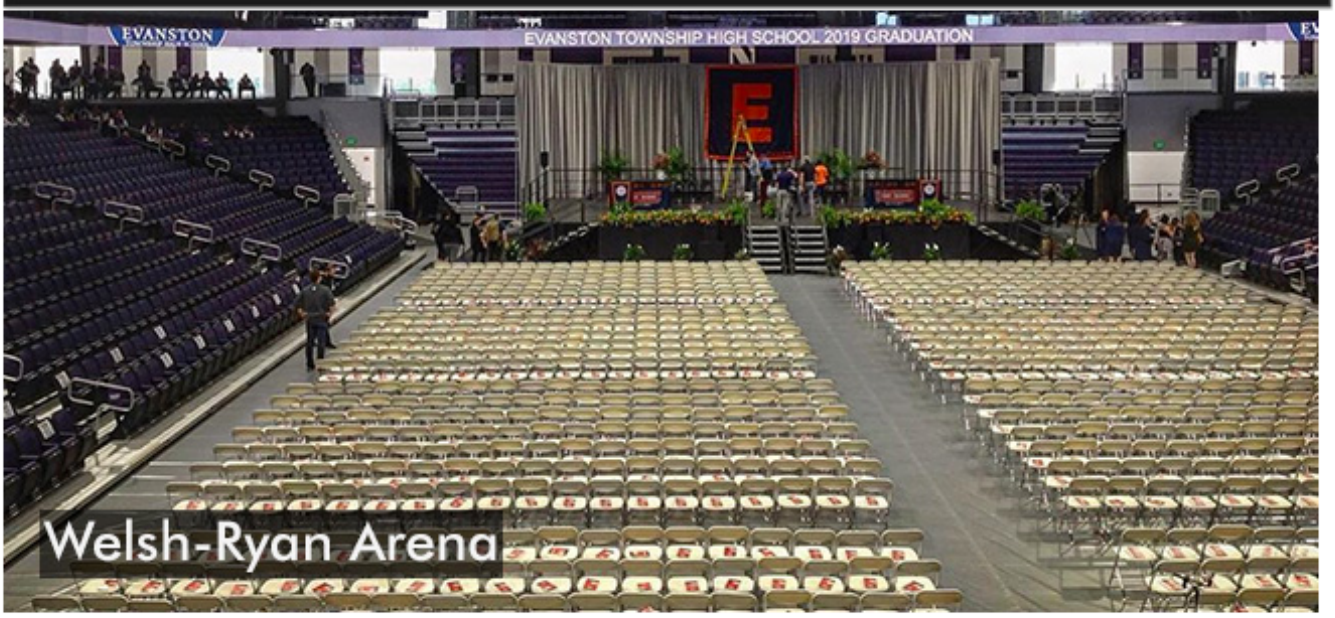
WELSH-RYAN ARENA PUTS SAFETY FIRST



Evanston, IL - Home to four of Northwestern University's Wildcats athletic teams, Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, Illinois put safety first when they decided to invest in new **gym floor covers** last year following an extensive renovation.

Though not the least expensive option, the multi-purpose facility opted for **Ultima 4000 gym floor covers**, considered one of the **industry's leading line of gym floor protection**. Surprisingly, it was a **gym floor cover storage rack** and its range of safety features that tipped the order in Covermaster's favor. The **Master Series Premium CoverMate** sealed the deal for the basketball and volleyball venue, despite a competitor's lower price tag.

The **unique mobile storage rack system** is designed for handling and storing **gym floor tarps**, all with an emphasis on safety. Safety Roller end collars eliminate pinch points to reduce the risk of injury. But what really set the gym floor cover handling system apart was the use of extendable safety outriggers to prevent tipping. With **23,000 square feet of Ultima 4000 gym floor covering** stored on multiple racks, the outriggers are crucial to ensuring the stability of the loaded racks.

Ease of use is another benefit. The **CoverMate** is simply rolled to one end of the gym where a section of **gym floor covering** can be pulled off the roller and set in place. The process is reversed for removing the floor covers after each non-athletic event. **Light weight crank handles** are included with each **storage rack**, but an optional **PowerMate winder** makes it easier to wind up the floor cover sections.

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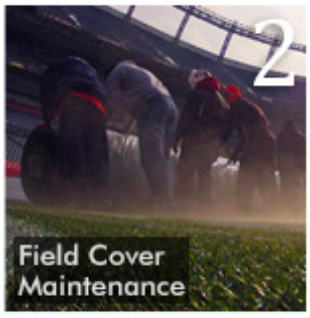
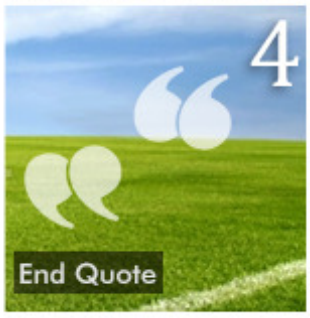
TIPS FROM THE PROS

Ross Kurcab is a *Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM)* and a professional sports field consultant with 30 years' experience as a head turf manager in professional football. He graduated from Colorado State University's Turfgrass Management program and now operates and owns Championship Sports Turf Systems.

A Sports Physical for Your Playing Fields





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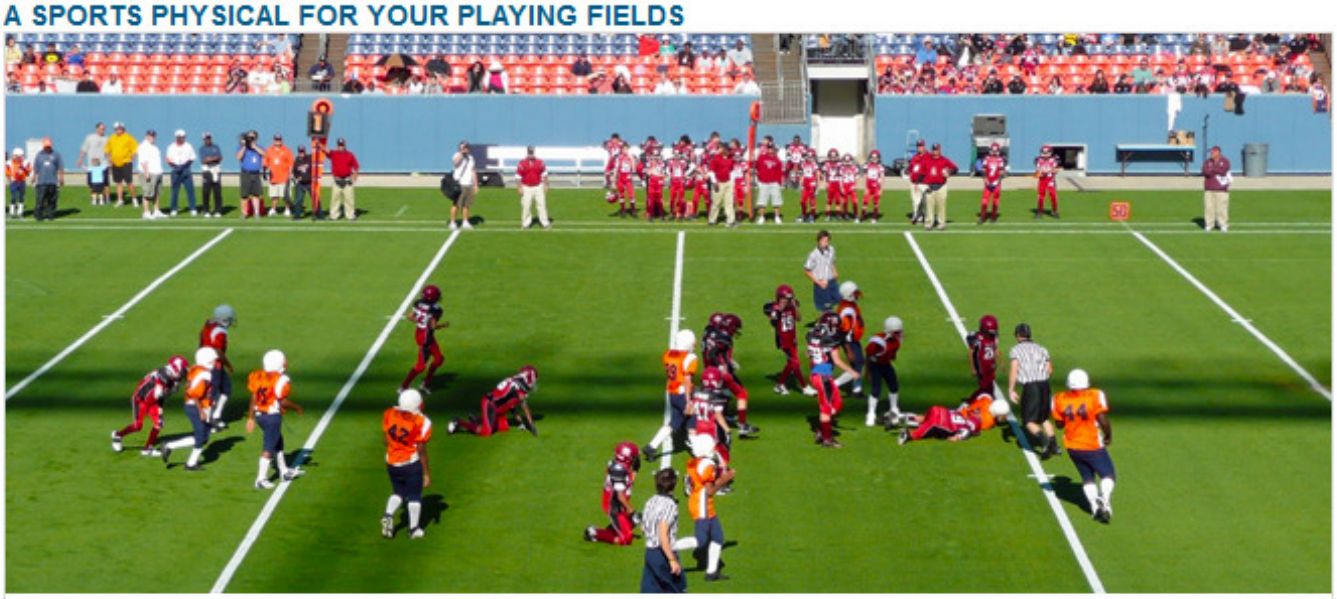
If you have a *question or an article suggestion* for Ross email us at: suggestions@covermaster.com

A SPORTS PHYSICAL FOR YOUR PLAYING FIELDS



©RossKurcab, CSFM

Before you know it, the fall sports seasons will be upon us, well actually upon our playing fields. Soon the athletes will be going to health clinics for their compulsory sports physicals. Most school districts require the athletes to get a check-up, but why don't we give our fields and playing surfaces get an annual or biennial check-up also? The science of medicine is much more developed than the science of sports field safety, and rightly so, but there are some basic principles and generally accepted guidelines in characterizing your playing surfaces before the fall games begin. There are also several good resources to get you going. The idea is to keep things simple and build your documentation program as you learn. The best way to improve your management of a playing surface is to routinely evaluate both objectively and subjectively the conditions of the field. The idea, like with many things, is that if you can measure it, you can better manage it.

The **Sports Turf Managers Association** (STMA) is a great resource and place to start to get your arms around the issue. On their Athlete and **Sport Field Safety page**, they have free maintenance checklists for different kinds of sports fields you can use to start your own program. Start going through and filling out these reports on a routine basis, ideally every day before use. Set up a system to make sure any issues are dealt with on a timely basis.

A couple of years ago, I partnered with the STMA's SAFE Foundation to produce their series of basic field safety evaluation videos intended to educate field users on some of the basics of field safety. The three videos consist of a **natural grass video**, **a synthetic turf video**, a baseball/softball video and **a general facilities video**, all featuring the author.

Field hardness testing with a Clegg Impact Soil Tester ©RossKurcab, CSFM

Field hardness testing is a good idea and more fields are being tested regularly. Penn State Center for Sports Surface Research has a **very useful video on the subject** to get into a little more detail. They also have several other educational videos on field safety on their **Sports Turf YouTube page**. Dr. Frank Rossi, turfgrass specialist at Cornell University has produced **a very good video presentation** on the topic of sports field safety that includes some practical action items.

Consider this:

We don't let our school busses out without first doing basic safety checks, we don't let the athletes start fall sports without a physical health check-ups, and we shouldn't let the athletes on the field without a basic field check-up in my opinion. Instituting a field quality documentation program will improve every field, in my opinion. Resources will go for well-documented issues. Neglect is not a management plan. If you run a sports facility, you have an obligation to have someone on staff that is well-educated and experienced in these matters. .

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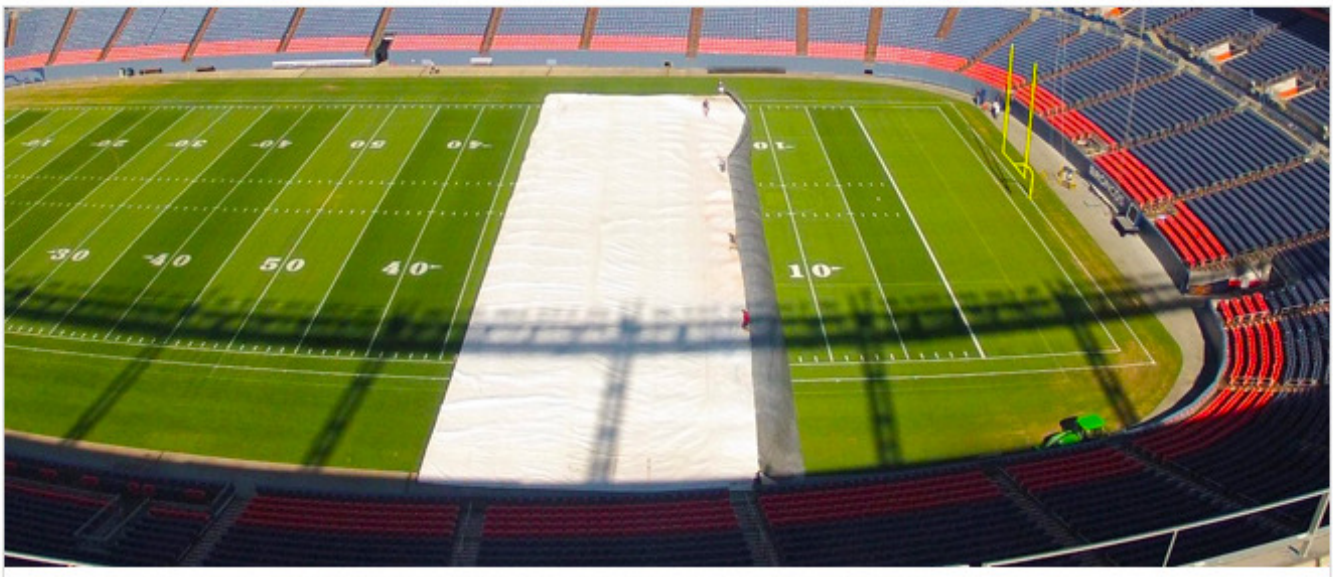
FIELD COVER MAINTENANCE

Don't wait until you really need them before cleaning and repairing your field cover(s). ©RossKurcab, CSFM

JAugust is a good month to inspect, clean and make any needed repairs to your rain/snow field covers. Field covers all over the US have had quite a workout this spring and early summer, along with the field managers. With football and other fall sports about to start, now is a good time to make sure your field covers are ready to go.

The first thing to do is find a time and space to do the work. You will need a large enough area to unroll and unfold the cover with room to spare. You want a clean surface, especially if you are doing the work on a concrete or asphalt parking lot which can harbor oils and greases from cars. Often, the best place to do the work is on the playing surface of the facility, it's clean and also large enough. On a baseball or softball field, use the outfield grass, not the skinned areas.

If your surface is natural grass, plan the work in such a way as to prevent any potential heat build-up under the covers when deployed, either in cool, cloudy conditions or early morning. You also will generally experience lighter winds in the early morning hours, making the work safer and much easier.



Find a space with enough room to deploy and flip over your field cover. ©RossKurcab, CSFM

Unfurl the field cover fully and pull the edges well to get as many wrinkles as possible off the cover. If the tarp still has water in it from the last use, use leaf blowers and squeegees to get as much water as you can off. A dry-cleaning works much better on a dry tarp. Anchor the tarp appropriately for any winds as you work. As you work, take pictures of any damaged areas or other issues you may find for your records. Once the cover is rolled back up, it's hard to show others the damage.

Cleaning:

A wet clean of your field covers is more difficult than 'dry-cleaning' and usually not needed in routine cleanings. The better field covers have a surface coating to facilitate sliding snow and other debris off the cover. If you can get it dry enough, even paint from logos and lines will come off with a dry clean in my experience. If you plan to use any cleaning products on your field cover, check with the manufacturer to make sure it is OK and won't affect your warrantee. Wet

cleaning is more difficult because ideally you would need have the field cover on a well-sloped ground to facilitate draining the dirty water off the field cover. Where will all this dirty water end up and how will you clean that? Besides, you'll eventually get a good wet-clean next time you deploy the covers and get some good rain on it anyway.

Keeping your field covers clean and under repair will extend the life of the cover ©RossKurcab, CSFM

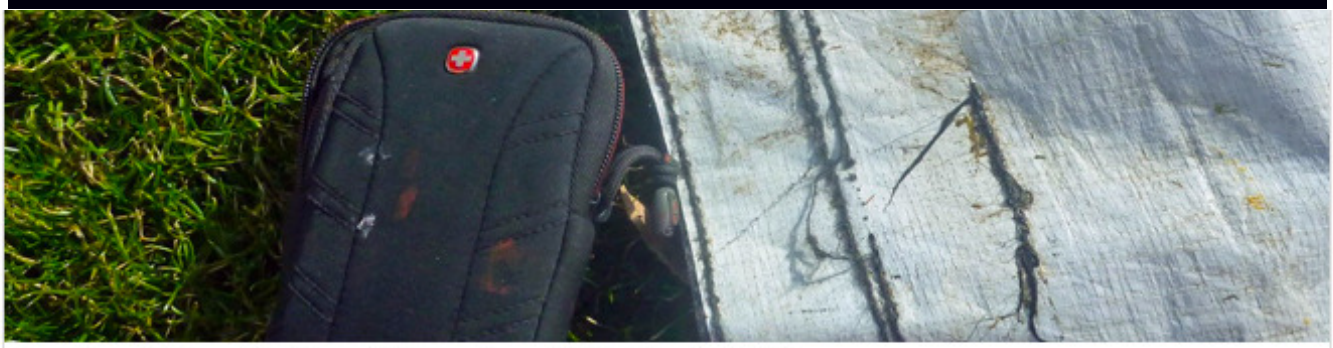
With a dry-cleaning, the first step is to get out with stiff-broomed push-brooms and loosen any dried and stuck debris (infield mix, soil, grass debris, field paint etc.). If there is a lot of debris, make piles and spot clean with a shovel/broom team. After loosening any debris, a strong leaf blower can be used to carefully blow the loosened debris off to one side, or ideally onto a smooth hard surface for removal and disposal. Sweeping a large tarp by hand entirely is difficult as even small, unavoidable wrinkles will trap debris. After removing the loosened debris, you can pull the tarp over itself and flip it upside down to drop any remaining debris, provided you have enough room, and a clean surface. Spot clean any greases or oils off with a manufacturer-approved cleaner and method. Usually, a light soapy solution and a soft cloth will suffice. Never scrub off your field cover's protective coating.

Repairs:

Inspect the entire cover with detail as you clean it. Look for any rips, tears or cuts. Inspect any enclosure seams used to attach the pieces of a multi-piece tarp system. It is important to clean and repair your enclosures, whether Velcro, zippered or other. Small tears and cuts can be easily repaired with a **specialty tarp repair patch tape** designed for such a use. Don't use duct tape or other tapes, they won't work. Use a patch tape that will stretch without tearing, won't gum-up and come loose in heat nor pull off in the bitter cold, and is absolutely water-tight. It is very strong and will usually last for years in my experience, even with tarp inflation an appropriate snow-removal. Make sure you clean and dry the surface before applying repair tape and it's a good idea to keep a supply on hand, in your tarp colors, for any potential quick-spot repairs during the season.

Patch tape after several years of hard use still holding strong. ©RossKurcab, CSFM

Rips and tears along the edges and/or enclosures (Velcro or zippered) may require stitching for best repair. The best way to repair a torn seem or edge is by contracting through a local tent/awning repair service. They will need a rolling sewing machine where the machine moves and the material stays put and capable of handling the heavy load of a typical field cover material. A typical stationary sewing machine will not work. Check with your field cover manufacturer to make sure you are using the correct method, stitch and thread.



Inspect any stitching and enclosures-Velcro or zippered. ©RossKurcab, CSFM

Check any grommets you may have along the edges of you field cover(s). You can buy a grommet installation/repair kit at most hardware stores, just make sure you get the higher-quality, stronger grommets. If the damaged grommet has not torn the fabric, you can replace the grommet using the same hole. If the damaged hole is torn, punch a new one at least 6-inches away from the damaged spot. Install a new grommet and patch-repair the old hole. Again, check with your field cover manufacturer before doing any repairs.

Some tears just can't be repaired sufficiently and in these cases you may want to look into an insurance claim for replacement.

Inspect the rigid drums or **inflatable tarp roller** used to roll up and deploy the field cover. This is the time for any repairs, cleaning and labeling which end of the drum ends up where when the rolled up cover is set in the 'ready' position. An example might be "Tarp #2, north end". This can save you from an embarrassing moment should the rolled-up cover be set out incorrectly on the field and your Velcro enclosures don't match up.

When you have finished, flip the tarp over and repeat the process on the other side. Finally, flip the clean and repaired tarp over once again to the desired color, fold if necessary and roll up onto the drum.

Be safe with your tarps!

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RESOURCES OF THE MONTH

The National Corn Growers Association has regional **4-inch soil temperature maps** for the entire US updated daily. Useful data when planning seasonal items like fall seedings or overseedings.

Just because the kids are headed back to school doesn't mean summer is over. Learn about heat illness and how to measure wet bulb globe temperature, why it's important, and even get recommendations on a few units you can buy to monitor conditions for safe work and play during the hot times of the year.. **The Kori Stringer Institute has a page about WBGT here.**

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END QUOTE:

"I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars"

Walt Whitman - Song of Myself

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TEMPORARY FLOORING KEEPS DIRT SURFACE UNDER WRAPS

Oshkosh, WI - The Sunnyview Expo Center in Oshkosh, Wisconsin is a hub of activity, drawing thousands of visitors to events that can range from fishing shows and 4H gatherings to musical concerts and the much-anticipated Winnebago County Fair.

Encompassing close to 100 acres, the center operates both indoor and outdoor spaces and among them is a dirt surface that needed **temporary event flooring** to increase its functionality. Twelve sections of **MasterShield Vinyl event flooring** proved to be the best option, customized with extra UV protection to withstand longer periods of sun exposure.

The **heavy-duty, 27-ounce material** is designed to stand up to the rigors of tables and chairs, high heels, and staging equipment. Each 33x100-foot section is easily rolled out, overlapped with a neighboring section, and then taped for a hazard-free portable walkway. After each event, the **outdoor event flooring** is cleaned and rolled on to corrugated PVC pipe for storage.

MasterShield Vinyl concert flooring is fire retardant, waterproof, and rot and mildew resistant. Easily maintained by facility staff, a **temporary concert tarp** is an economical way to increase your venue's versatility while protecting its surfaces from damage.

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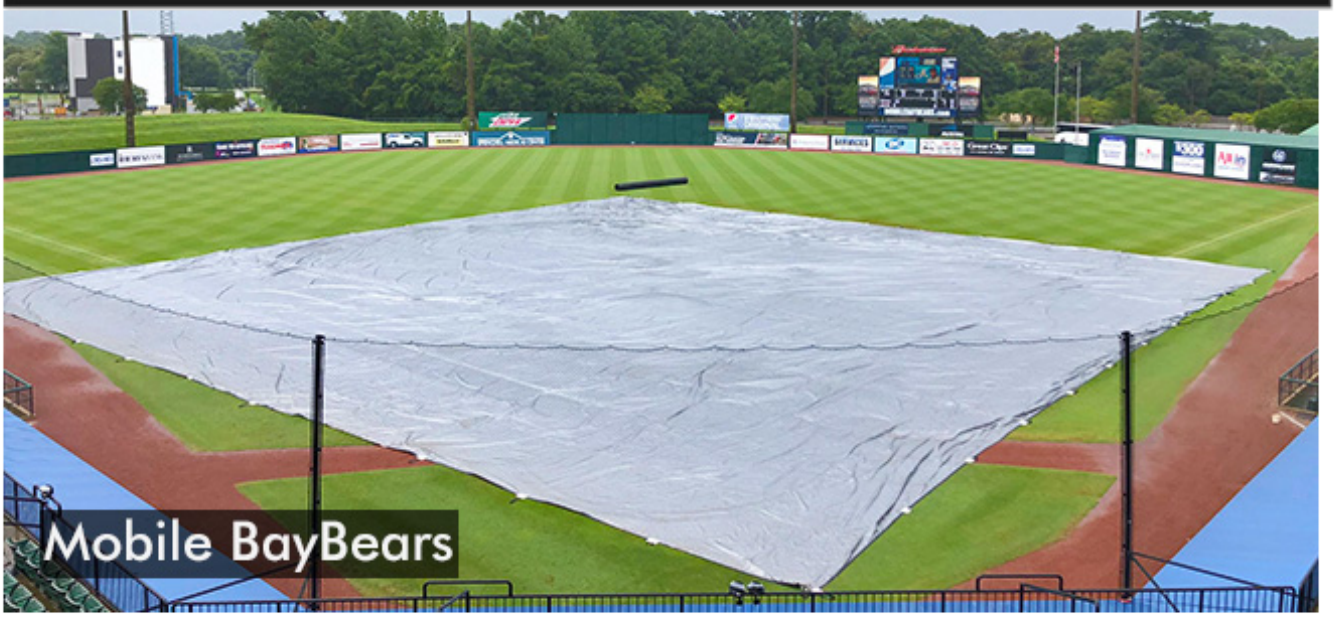

Mobile, AL - A rush order saved the day for the Mobile BayBears minor league baseball team in Mobile, Alabama this summer. Just days before their Fourth of July home game, the club was in desperate need of a new **baseball field tarp**.

It's not the norm to have an **infield tarp** ready to go at a moment's notice. Fortunately, luck was on the team's side when the franchise contacted Covermaster on June 28, which just also happened to be a Friday. A **Raincover Premier baseball field cover** was in stock, boxed and waiting for a new home. At 170x170 feet with handles spaced 15 feet apart on all four sides, the durable yet **lightweight infield cover** was the perfect option for the last-minute request.

Everything fell into place, said Covermaster Regional Representative Gerry Hackett. There was just enough time on the Friday afternoon to pull the cover from the plant and have it picked up by a local shipping broker that same day. The new **baseball infield tarp** arrived on the following Tuesday in time to protect the field from any threat of rain.

Raincover Premier offers superior performance and easy handling without the extra weight of comparable infield tarps. As the industry standard, each **full infield tarp** features vinyl-reinforced handles with center grommets at 15-foot spacings. Optional storage covers are available to protect against sun damage when stored alongside the field.

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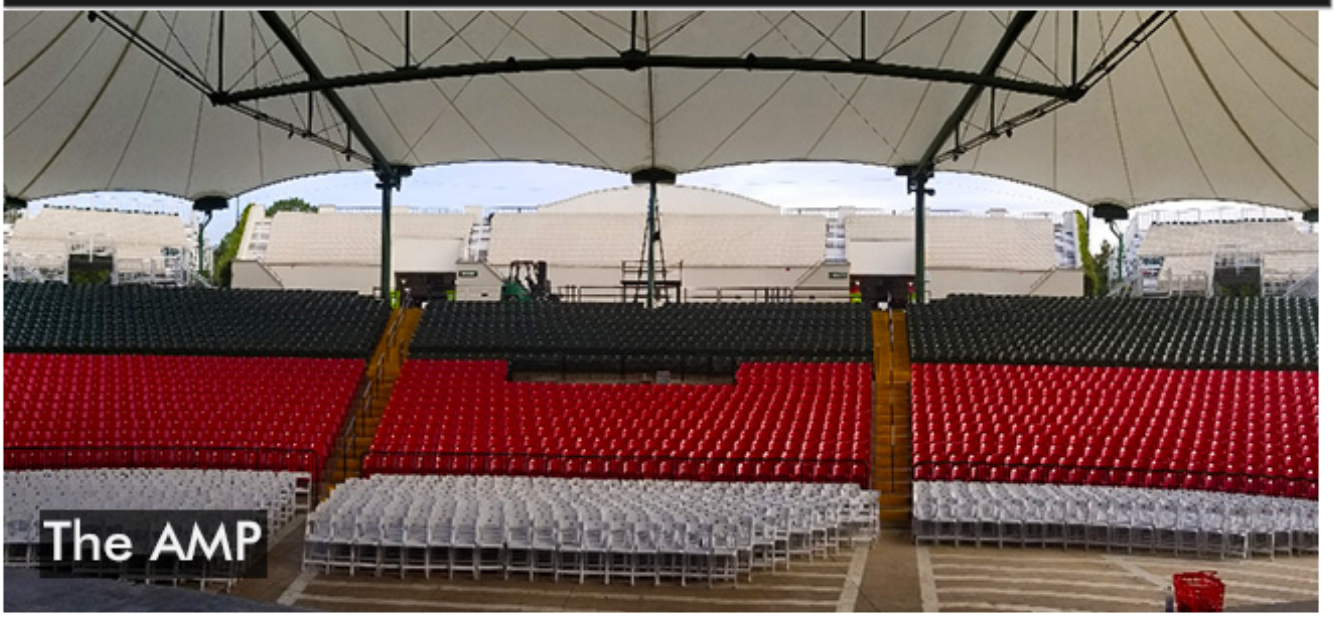

St. Augustine, FL - **Stadium seat covers** are popular with indoor sports facilities, often used to control seating, cut down on maintenance and clean-up, and even generate revenue through sponsorship. Now the trend is shifting outdoors, specifically at The Amp (formerly the St. Augustine Amphitheatre) in northeastern Florida, where **bleacher seat covers** are covering sections of seating not under the protective sun sails of the main seating areas.

Built in 1965 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine, the facility underwent an $8.7-million renovation in the early 2000s and can now seat more than 4,000 spectators. Today, it's ranked as the No. 3 amphitheatre in the world, drawing visitors to a wide range of musical performances.

Twelve sections of **custom tan-colored stadium seat covers** arrived in June, crafted from a vinyl-coated mesh fabric that allows air to pass through and prevent billowing on windy days. Varying in size from 40x36 feet to 15x12 feet, the sections cover specific seating areas at the back of the amphitheatre.

Custom bleacher seat covers make it easy to match seating capacity to special events. Whether you want to give the impression of a full house or simply control access to unassigned seats, custom covers offer a cost-effective option.
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