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Play or Ppd? Hard to predict World Series Weather

BEN WALKER, AP Baseball Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) — [Nolan Ryan](#) kept tracking the storm, aware the radar showed green blobs moving closer and closer to Rangers Ballpark.

Explaining the threat of rain, Big Tex sounded totally in his element.

"There's a disturbance out in West Texas," the Rangers president pointed out before a recent playoff game. "I'm not a meteorologist, but they're talking about the south-to-north line."

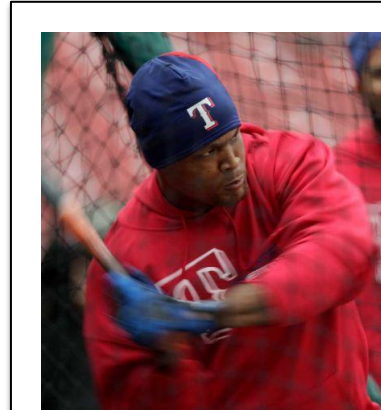
"So does it lose some of its energy?" he said. "I think there's going to be some heat build-up showers, popup showers."

Playfully, someone asked Ryan whether he could do that well in front of a map. Kind of like a real-live weatherman.

"You know, if this job doesn't work out," the CEO, president and part-owner of the Rangers said, "maybe they could use somebody."

With Texas and St. Louis starting up the World Series this week, [Major League Baseball](#) might take the help.

Two hours before Game I Wednesday night at Busch Stadium, it was 47 degrees with intermittent drizzle and a brisk wind. The tarp was down during the afternoon and the teams did not take batting practice on the field. It was supposed to get more chilly as the game progressed.



Texas Rangers' Adrian Beltre hits during practice for Game I of baseball's World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2011, in St. Louis. Photo: Charlie Riedel / AP

Play or Ppd? Talk about October pressure — the barometric kind, that is.

After a season that included more than 50 rainouts, MLB's highest total since 1997, bad weather intruded in the playoffs.

A game at Yankee Stadium was stopped in the second inning and suspended until the following day. A game at Texas was postponed because rain was lingering — too bad for the teams and fans, those showers never came.

Getting it exactly right isn't easy, said Paul Gross, a meteorologist with WDIV-TV in Detroit.

"There is a tremendous amount of weather information on the Internet these days. Everyone has access to it, everyone can try to be a weatherman," said Gross, who has been helping the Tigers with their forecasts since the days when Sparky Anderson was their manager.

"But the average person, without any formal training in meteorology, doesn't understand that things can change very dramatically."

"We have a joke in this business: 'Don't try this at home,'" he said.

No matter, check the stands at any ballpark when the skies turn dark. Fans whip out their cell phones, put the maps in motion and make their own predictions.

Players, too, turn into amateur weathermen. Boston slugger David Ortiz has been known to dial up the radar and study the multicolored blobs and bands that show precipitation.



Workers prepare the infield at Busch Stadium in preparation for Game I of baseball's World Series between the St. Louis Cardinals and the Texas Rangers Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2011, in St. Louis. Photo: Charlie Riedel / AP

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In Michigan, Gross said, the breezes off the Great Lakes can cause sudden shifts. The challenge is trying to plot them, seeing if those oft-invoked "windows" will show up.

During the 2006 World Series, Gross found himself in a room with MLB officials and managers Tony La Russa of the Cardinals and Jim Leyland of the Tigers. Rain was dotting the area and everyone wanted to know whether it would dampen Comerica Park.

"People often ask about scattered showers, whether it will rain on them," he said. "I tell them it's like I'm holding a handful of coins in the living room. If I toss them in the air, I know that they'll definitely come down on the rug. I just can't be sure where."

Keeping people safe at the stadium is the main goal, Gross said. Lightning can pose a particular danger — "Remember, you have electronics on the field for pregame festivities," Gross said.

The Cardinals and Rangers, like many other teams, consult with local meteorologists for forecasts. MLB checks the computer, relying on WeatherBug.com.

"It also looks at other services, too," said Katy Feeney, senior vice president in the commissioner's office.

"They'll also talk to the ground crew, who'll look at their radar. But the meteorologist Major League Baseball uses is WeatherBug."

When it comes to decide whether to postpone or suspend a postseason game, a lot of people are in the room. Club executives, umpires, television officials and MLB representatives can all express opinions — ultimately, baseball makes the call.

Texas starter C.J. Wilson was set to pitch at Busch Stadium for the first time in Game I.



Texas Rangers' Josh Hamilton walks during practice for Game I of baseball's World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2011, in St. Louis. Photo: Matt Slocum / AP



Texas Rangers president Nolan Ryan holds the American League championship trophy after winning Game 6 of baseball's AL championship series against the Detroit Tigers 15-5, Saturday, Oct. 15, 2011, in Arlington, Texas. Texas moves on to the World Series. Photo: Charlie Riedel / AP

"Well, Texas and St. Louis have similar summer climates. It's humid, it's hot," he said. "I haven't really pitched in cold weather too often, but you wear sleeves and put on a jacket in the dugout and that's pretty much all you can do."

Chris Carpenter was ready to start the opener for the Cardinals.

"You deal with weather like this in the beginning of the season. It's no different. Go out and pitch," he said.

"I'm going to be nice and warm anyways because I'll be all warmed up doing my thing, and I'm not concerned about what the weather is doing, unless it's raining and we don't get to play. That's no fun. Hopefully, it doesn't do that."

AP Sports Writer Noah Trister contributed to this report.