

Fill your toolbox



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OK. It's playoff season, and you know I just can't help myself but to write about the game that brings to life possibly the most honest display of strategy, skill and effort presented today on a national stage. Yes, I'm a football fanatic, and it's only my personal opinion.

When we get to the playoffs — whether at the high school, college or professional level — we often hear commentators say, "They have so many tools in the toolbox," to describe the elite teams and why they made it to the championship level.

Those tools vary from team to team. They can include an outstanding offense with a one-in-a-million quarterback, hall-of-fame receivers and unstoppable running backs. They can include an aggressive defense with the ability to read the quarterback and take the ball away.

We can't overlook coaching strategy or team leadership, whether that be of certain players, coaches, or maybe even the ownership or administration. Our toolbox can include home-field advantage and a loud fan base. It can include conditioning and physical preparation, the right cleats, the right electrolyte mix in the water jug, and even experience against a certain offense.

As they work their way through the season, winning teams can rely on different "tools" to match up against the week's opponent.

Teams with fewer tools in the toolbox are more predictable and, thus, easier to plan a strategy to compete against. They are also more dependent on each tool and more at risk when something goes awry, such as a key player getting hurt or rain interfering with a passing game.

No doubt, having one of the best quarterbacks in the NFL is a great "tool" to take to the Super Bowl (and, as a Kansas City Chiefs fan, you know I mean that with the utmost respect and admiration). However, neither Patrick Mahomes nor Tom Brady would have made it to the big game without a full toolbox.

Key to both teams' success is their understanding of their teams and their ability to compensate for each other and adjust their game plan to fit the situation.

Not just for football

As we compete in the beef industry, it's not winner-take-all. Still, our success and our longevity are dependent much the same on having a full toolbox to further our success.

Much like each week brings the Chiefs a different opponent, each year brings a different scenario to cattle producers across the country — drought, plush forage, low grain prices, high grain prices, a changing regulatory environment, trade tiffs, natural disasters, etc.

Long-term success depends on stocking a toolbox with the tools that can be depended upon to match up against whatever opposition we might face. The deeper understanding we have of our own operation and the tools at our disposal, the easier it becomes to compensate and adjust to play our best game.

Last month we focused on many of the "Benchmarks of Success," providing insight on how to get to know your herd and how it stacks up against others in the industry. This month we look at some of the "Tools of Success" you can put in your toolbox. Tools like the Sire Evaluation Search (see "Sorting Gate" on page 34) you can use to your advantage every year, while marketing options and risk protection (page 104) may be something to consider under certain circumstances. As authors Troy Marshall and Tom Field point out, your mindset is one of your most useful tools.

By the time you receive this issue in your mailbox, we'll know who won Super Bowl LV. I hope we're still celebrating in Kansas City. Whatever the outcome, the first tool we should put in our toolbox for next year is a thorough and objective analysis of this season. Go Chiefs! |

TOOLS TO
FILL YOUR TOOLBOX
SUCCEED

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