

FIELD MAINTENANCE

Base Paths

It is best to maintain as much of the base paths by hand as possible. Use a drag that is narrower than the width of the base paths. Make sure that the drag does not overlap the grass area to prevent the formation of a “lip” or ridge at the edge of the grass.

Prior to raking the base path, remove any white chalk material with a shovel. This will keep the clay more stable and not cause a hump, or raised area, down in the middle of the baseline. Rakes should also be used on the base paths. When raking the base paths, do not rake across the path, but go up and down the baseline. Raking across the path can cause a low spot to develop down the middle of the path.

Weeds in the base paths should be removed by hand. When raking the base paths, **do not rake across the path**. Rake up and down along the length of the path.

Infield Skin

Infield Skin are the areas on a field composed of clay, such as base paths, pitcher’s mound and home plate area. These areas are composed of infield mix, also called infield clay.

The following is a suggested method to properly maintain the skinned areas of the infield:

- Rake excess dirt from underneath each base area to make it level.
- Remove any debris, including grass clippings, rocks, weeds, etc.
- Water the skinned area to allow the infield to be nail dragged. If the skinned area is already moist, this step can be skipped.
- Nail drag the infield.
- Add soil conditioner and spread with a rake.
- Screen or drag the infield.
- Water infield as needed to ensure desired moisture levels.

While maintaining the infield, the drags should be kept at least 6 inches away from the grass so that the loose dirt does not get into the grass thus forming a “lip,” or ridge, in the grass edge. A regular rake should be used along the grass edge. Should dirt get into the grass edge, a stiff brush broom should be used to “sweep out” the dirt back onto the skinned area, removing any grass clippings that may be swept onto the skinned area in the process.

Anytime a “lip” begins to develop where the grass and dirt area meet, use a water hose to wash the dirt out of the grass and back onto the skinned area.

To drag the infield skinned area, make a spiraling circle with the drag mat from the infield grass line to the outfield grass, starting at the third base foul line, across the skinned area to the first

base foul line. This circular spiral should measure 9-10 ft. in diameter. **Start from the outside and work towards the pitcher's mound.**

Edging the field should be done on a bi-weekly basis during the growing season. This will greatly reduce built-up edges. Always use a string line when edging the turf.

Pitcher's Mound, Home Plate and Bullpen Areas

During every game, damage occurs to the pitcher's mound and home plate areas. Regular, proper maintenance will reduce time and money needed to rebuild and renovate these areas. It is also critical to maintain these areas properly to reduce the potential for injury.

The following is a suggested method to properly maintain the pitcher's mound and home plate areas on the field and in the bullpen areas:

1. Sweep debris material from the landing area and table of the mound. This allows the packing clay to be exposed. The landing area is the location on which the pitcher steps to pivot and throw. The table is the area at the top of the mound, measuring 36 inches by 5 feet.
2. Tamp any uneven packing clay level prior to watering.
3. Using a small roller can provide consistency in the mound and home plate areas.
4. Lightly moisten the clay to ensure new packing clay will bind to the existing clay.
5. Scuff-up, or loosen, damaged areas with a shovel.
6. Add new packing clay to the damaged areas.
7. Tamp newly installed packing clay into the ground.
8. Rake down the newly repaired areas.
9. Rake all debris from the pitcher's mound.
10. Add soil conditioner (if needed.)
11. Water the entire pitcher's mound.
12. Allow the mound to dry; however, do not allow the packing clay to dry too much to the point of cracking.
13. Once the pitcher's mound is completely prepared for the game, cover it with a tarp to maintain a proper moisture level. Repeat this process for the home plate, mound and in the bullpen areas.

In some cases, clay bricks are used to establish a firm throwing area. These bricks are a very acceptable material because they have not been hardened by heat, like bricks used in construction.

Daily Field Maintenance Checklist

Daily Routine before Practice:	✓
Remove tarps	
Water skinned areas and baselines	
Install the bases	

Daily Routine after Practice and Games:	✓
Remove the bases and cover the base anchor sleeves	
Drag the skinned areas and baselines	
Recondition the mound, home plate area, cover with tarps	
Recondition the bull pen mound and home plate area	
Replace and tamp any loose divots in turf areas	
Dispose of trash in and around field and bleacher areas	

Daily Routine after Practice and Games:	✓
Remove the bases and cover the base anchor sleeves	
Drag the skinned areas and baselines	
Recondition the mound, home plate area, cover with tarps	
Recondition the bull pen mound and home plate area	
Replace and tamp any loose divots in turf areas	
Dispose of trash in and around field and bleacher areas	

Day of Game Routine:	✓
Remove tarpaulins	
Mow the grass	
Scarify the skinned areas with a spiker	
Drag the skinned areas smooth	
Water the infield area	
Sweep and clean dugouts	
Set the chalk lines and mark officially	
Paint or wash bases, pitching plate and home plate	
Check the operation of the field lights and scoreboard	
Prepare the press box and operation of the p.a. system	
Check the operation in the concession stand	
Dispose of trash found in and around field and bleacher areas	

Field Tools, Equipment, and Materials Checklist

Tools, Equipment, and Materials	#	✓
Push Chalker	1	
Base hole covers	3	
Batter's box outline frame	1	
Push broom	1	
Drag	1	
Edge cutting shovel	1	
Outfield Line marker	1	
Garden Rake	1	
Infield rakes	3	
Garden Shovel	1	
String line	1	
Tamp	1	
Tarpaulins	2	
Watering equipment - hoses, nozzles	1	
Wheelbarrow	1	
Materials		
Line marking material bags	3	
Mound clay bags	2	
Infield Mix pile	1	
Charged Tractor Battery (charger in clubhouse)	1	
Other Tractor Maintenance / Supplies	1	