

2005 Play Ball Minnesota

Youth Baseball & Softball Conference

Ball Field Improvement and Maintenance

Best Practices & Tips

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Philosophy regarding ball fields: Everyone's attitude toward the ballpark should be the same as our City & State parks. Pride, respect and a passion that it's hallowed ground.

Know that upkeep and improvements never stops, a goal would be that your ball fields get a little better each year.

PRACTICES:

- ❑ Know your field – low spots in infield, outfield, how does it take water? Notice when drag touches grass, ag lime is raked into grass.
- ❑ Use proper dragging techniques – alternate-dragging patterns, never touch grass.
- ❑ Always end where you started dragging so that you do not create a low spot.
- ❑ Drag slowly and stay at least 6 inches from grass.
- ❑ Use an aluminum finishing rakes along grass.
- ❑ Infield grass, skin, outfield is sloped and kept so no water stands on field.
- ❑ Nail drag first to loosen the top 12 to 1 inch of ag lime.
- ❑ Teach players or whoever uses the field the proper raking; drag techniques (baselines, mound, home plate & infield).
- ❑ Assign players (appropriate age) maintenance job to do after every game or practice.
- ❑ After a rain what do you have to do in order the play? Nothing?
- ❑ Water is most important maintenance tool.
- ❑ Warning track – how are you going to keep weeds out? Blade drag, roundup (Tink Larson, Waseca – no warning track).
- ❑ Along 3 & 4 foot fence down first and third base sides use garden rake, held by a person sitting on the back of golf cart. Helps keep weeds out and freshens ag lime – roundup.
- ❑ Who cuts your grass? Type of mower – reelmaster.
 - Pattern – Up and down parallel to right field foul line.
 - Up and down parallel to left field foul line.
 - Second base to centerfield – back and forth.

Foul pole to foul pole – back and forth.

- ❑ 3 sets of bases – paint.
- ❑ Much of the field maintenance should be done in the fall so field is ready to go in the spring.
- ❑ Be sure your scoreboard faces grandstand and does not run along fence line.
- ❑ Like a tall foul poles, 40 feet high, optic yellow.

TIPS:

- ❑ Replace ag lime in high use areas (front of second base, front of first base) before dragging infield.
- ❑ During or right after a rain, mark with a stick in the ag lime the low areas to be filled with ag lime.
- ❑ Large (fire hose type) outlet behind mound.
- ❑ Type of tarps – wind weighted baseball tarps are great – no stakes, sandbags, cement pails, etc.
- ❑ Tarp on the grass in front of mound to keep dry.
- ❑ 10 inch stakes at the edge of all grass areas to attach string to keep edges straight and consistent.
- ❑ Use the right equipment:
 - mini chalker
 - 6 inch push edger
 - many aluminum finishing rakes
 - blade edger
 - mats for BP hitters
 - portable BP mound
 - golf cart to drag field and hauling.
- ❑ New field? Do it right the first time – do your homework – check out many ballparks.
- ❑ Is your ballpark fan friendly? Grandstand – chicken wire, area without screen – great seats no matter where you sit.
- ❑ Think about areas that people can take care of – Sculpture garden, Cubbie Bobblehead Ballpark.
- ❑ To reduce maintenance and save time, use artificial turf in areas like coach's boxes, on deck circles.
- ❑ Primo in paint.
- ❑ Chunk sod replacement.
- ❑ Home made pitching board.
- ❑ Using aerovator to add calcine clay to infield skin.
- ❑ Local clay source.
- ❑ Kombi line painter.
- ❑ Clover = sign of low nitrogen.
- ❑ Join Sports Turf Managers Association.
- ❑ Traffic cones for traffic and batting practice management.
- ❑ Equipment calibration help at www.toro.com/calibrate.