

COACHES: Here are the field maintenance instructions that must be followed before and after every game. These procedures apply for all games--week night and weekend--and for both sets of coaches (Home and Visitor). Please show respect for each other by doing your share, and to show your appreciation to us for all the time, money, and hard work that we have put into your fields to make it the best playing surface around for your children.

- The field should be lined by the last team of the evening (weeknights) or day (weekends), and throughout the day as needed.
- If you arrive and find the field unlined, then go to the shed. In there, you will find marking units and bags of chalk. Fill the unit outside the shed. Mark the batter's boxes and foul lines. Return the equipment to the shed at the end of the day/evening. The next step is very important: At this time, water the infield dirt areas, **INCLUDING** the lines you just chalked! If you'll lay down a gentle sprinkling and dampen the chalk, this stuff can last up to a week. Without watering, it won't last a whole game. This will make your job easier and re-chalking faster for all.
- **WATERING INSTRUCTIONS:** The Conditioner sits on top of the special home plate and mound clay/bricks that we installed. For the optimum playing conditions, **ALL** infield-skinned areas (home plate area, pitcher's mound, and between 1st to 3rd bases) should be dampened **BEFORE AND AFTER** every game. You will notice that it takes on a light pink color when dry, changing to a dark color when wet. The batter's boxes and mound will show almost no wear whatsoever by the end of the game if this procedure is closely followed. The hose--with connector and sprayer--lies along the 3rd base fence. Please lift the hose **OVER** the dirt when bringing it to/from the fence. Remember, there is only 1/2 inch of infield conditioner lying on the dirt. If the hose is dragged back and forth, then the material will simply get scraped off the dirt and into the grass. Please use a gentle rain-like setting to water the mound and home plate areas. When you water the skinned area of the infield, along the base paths and between the bases, stand at the edge of the grass and water all of the dirt areas with a higher-pressure setting so it will go further.
- **AFTER THE GAME:** Chalk, if necessary, for the next game. How do you know if it's necessary? Can you see the lines around the batter's box? Are you the last game of the day? When you smooth out the mound and batter's box areas, use the flat edge of the rake, **NOT THE TOO THE D SIDE**. We do not want to damage the material under the surface! Use this same method around the bases, in the sliding areas. This will keep the Infield Conditioner on **TOP** of the crummy red dirt, and will prevent it from getting mixed under

throughout the season. This stuff will last for TWO years if properly cared for. It won't even make it through the season if not. After the smoothing, go ahead and gently water all skinned (dirt) areas. Watering takes place before and after each game, and at the end of each playing day.

- **WHEN TO RAKE/ WHEN TO DRAG:** We're trying to get away from the concept of raking. Raking is destructive to the playing surface. If you rake the wrong way, it develops "lips" at the grass edges, which require large reconstructive efforts to remedy. There are screen drags. The narrower 36" drags should be pulled from the home plate area down the base paths toward 1st and 3rd bases. The 36" or the 72" screen drags should be used for the skinned/base areas. Engrave this in your mind: If you ALWAYS pull in the direction of the base paths, and never toward a grass edge, then the "lipping" problem of dirt buildup at the edge of the infield will be greatly reduced.

Coaches, please use this information to educate yourself AND your generous parents who help out after the game. I know that you'll be great about following these procedures, but even a few parents--with the best of intentions--can undo what we have tried so hard to master. Please make sure they understand the proper steps toward good field maintenance. Ultimately, our number one goal is to provide the safest playing surface possible to ensure maximum injury reduction, along with having great eye-appeal.

After reading these steps, you may feel that there is simply not enough time to complete them between games. **We have tested these procedures ourselves, and the entire process can be accomplished within 10 minutes. If each team will field a head or assistant to prep the field, and allow the parents/ dugout coaches to gather the team's belongings, then this field work can be completed quickly. If you need to address your team after the game, have your assistant do the prep-work.**

Please remember to do these mandatory procedures. Also, remember our caveat that any team's failure to help prep a field will draw league and/or team sanctions. Let us know if you have any questions, or if you need "on-the-job" training. We're always accessible and willing to teach those who are willing to learn! Thank you--in advance--for helping out.

Michael Eckert
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Board of Directors
Fields and Maintenance