

CARE AND FEEDING OF BALLFIELDS: A simple guide to taking care of our fields for use by Managers, Coaches, and Parents.

1. Making a wet field ready for play

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread field dry on damp areas. Let it set, then rake it in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dump bags of field dry in piles. Use field dry sparingly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove shallow puddles by sweeping water to adjacent dry areas of the infield. Then spread field dry and rake it in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove shallow puddles by sweeping water into the adjacent outfield grass or foul territory.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove deep puddles by digging a hole in the puddle to concentrate the water, then bail the water into a bucket or wheel barrel, and REMOVE from the field of play. Dump the water into the woods, adjacent creek, etc. Fill the hole with dry dirt from the field stockpile, and treat with field dry as above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweep water into the outfield grass or foul territory. Sweeping water out of the infield also removes infield dirt, making the low spot worse, and creates the dreaded "lip" at the outfield grass.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the field is soaked overall, and walking on it leaves deep footprints, go home and reschedule the game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use excessive amounts of field dry. Field dry is expensive.

2. General field preparation

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level out the home plate area by cutting the high area behind the batter's box with a shovel. Spread the dirt around the infield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in low spots at the batter's box with additional dirt. By doing so home plate will eventually become a mound!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave the orange plugs in the base inserts, and set the bases over the plugs. This is for the safety of the runners and fielders. If the plug does not set down low enough in the insert, clean out the insert. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove and discard the plugs, place the orange plugs in the insert upside down (pointy part should be UP), or let the base stick up so that there is space under the base.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are playing on a field with multiple base inserts to accommodate different base line distances, place an orange plug in the "extra" insert and fill around it with dirt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the plug upside down. Use foam inserts. This is a major safety issue as players can be easily injured by stepping in an improperly filled insert.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the infield and outfield for divots, holes, and obstructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore potentially dangerous field conditions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drag the field regularly. Drag from outside in – starting at the baselines and ending at the pitching area. This creates a crown on the field so that water runs off of the field and doesn't puddle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drag from the middle out. This causes fields to drain poorly by creating a low spot in the middle of the infield.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use string lines to line the fields and measuring tapes to mark distances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyeball it and say it's "good enough".

3. Field "clean up" after the game or practice

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put away the bases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave the bases on the field.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put helmets and catcher's equipment in an equipment box separate from field supplies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put helmets and catcher's equipment in a filthy box.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rake around the bases to level out sliding and heavy play areas. Rake around the outfield/infield line to move loose dirt back from the outfield into the infield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore the field and go home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sure that everything is put away and lock the equipment boxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave boxes unlocked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory any needs (e.g. lime, field dry, measuring tape, tools) and notify the league commissioner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complain when some necessity is not available.

Take pride in our organization and our fields. If you identify something that needs to be improved, take action to improve it. Resources are available, so work through your league commissioner to help to "get it done." The goal of each league responsible for a field is to leave that field in better condition at the end of the season than it was at the beginning of the season. For more information on field care, go to <http://www.ssprocessing.com/howtobook.htm>