

## VCAA FIELD MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 3 Keys to maintaining beautiful and playable fields:

1. **Maintain proper moisture content of all dirt surfaces**
  - a. too wet, like playing in mud
  - b. too dry, like playing on concrete or in flour
  - c. amount of water to add depends upon existing moisture content and atmospheric conditions
  - d. **NEVER** add “kitty litter”, D.G. (decomposed granite), or any similar drying agent to special infield dirt mixes on Field 1 (“Corona Clay with Angel Dust”) or Senior field (“Beam Clay Pro Premium”).
2. Keep all infield **dirt off of all adjacent grass** (any dirt which gets on the grass must be swept with stiff push broom or raked with large fan leaf rake back off of grass back onto dirt) **to prevent “lips” from forming.**
3. Keep infield skin, base paths and catcher’s/batter’s boxes **level** and maintain proper **slope** to mounds with proper “dragging” and “raking” of dirt and filling in holes.

Your team’s maintenance responsibilities take **precedence** over pre-game warm up or post-game remarks or snack. Please do not have your post-game team meeting or distribute snacks until all maintenance is done first.

### HOW TO:

#### 1. Maintain the Base Paths

1. Use a large rake (or the **small** steel mat drag) in a pattern “up and down” the base path, NOT “across” the base path. (Raking across the path will cause a low spot to develop down the middle of the path).
2. If using the small steel mat drag, stay in the middle of the base path, at least 6 inches away from the grass on each side. Then use the large rake to rake the remaining 6 inches adjacent to the grass on both the “fair” and “foul” sides of the base path.
3. Use the stiff bristle push broom or plastic leaf rake to sweep/rake dirt off of the grass on both the “fair” and “foul” sides of the base path, back onto the dirt.

#### 2. Maintain the Infield “Skin”

1. Drag the infield (using steel mat drag or oversized black bristle broom).
  - A. When “dragging” the infield, keep the large black bristled broom and steel mat drag **at least 6” away from, and ALWAYS OFF of, all grass at all times.**
  - B. Drag in various patterns (“sideways” across the infield; spiral circle from the infield grass line to the outfield grass, starting at second base toward your foul line. This circular spiral should measure 9-10 ft. in diameter). If using tractor to drag, go **slow.**
  - C. Vary where you enter and exit the field with the drag to eliminate build up of dirt, typically behind 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases.

2. Use a wide rake to smooth the dirt immediately adjacent to the grass on both the “infield” and “outfield” sides of the infield “skin”, again making sure that the dirt is kept off the grass.
  3. Use the stiff bristle push broom or plastic leaf rake to sweep/rake dirt off of the grass on both the “infield” and “outfield” sides of the infield “skin”, back onto the dirt, to prevent a “lip” from forming.
- 3. Maintain the Pitcher’s Mound/Circle, Bullpen, Batter’s and Catcher’s boxes/Circle**
1. Repair holes at pitcher’s rubber, landing area, batter’s boxes, and catcher’s box of both field and bullpens
    - a. Lightly water holes  
Water is the glue to the dirt, causing it to bond and harden. Without water, all you are doing is pushing dry dirt around that will easily be pushed out of the hole you are trying to fill.
    - b. Push dirt back into holes
    - c. Use rake to pull dirt from perimeter of mound toward center of mound.
    - d. Tamp dirt down with tamp or end of rake
    - e. Lightly water dirt
  2. Use rake or small mat drag on home plate “circle” area. If using small mat drag, go in circular pattern, making sure to stay 6 inches away from adjacent dirt, and rake the remaining 6 inches.
  3. Use the stiff bristle push broom or plastic leaf rake to sweep/rake dirt off of the grass around the perimeter of the mound and catcher’s area back onto the dirt, to prevent a “lip” from forming.

#### Special Considerations for Practices

Whenever possible, keep tarp/carpets on field during practice. You can take batting practice or infield with the carpets on the mound and batter’s and catcher’s boxes, which will minimize the “wear and tear” and maintenance necessary in those areas.

Whenever possible, have your pitchers practice in the bullpens as opposed to on the field mound.

#### COMMON MAINTENANCE ISSUES:

1. If a “lip” begins to develop anywhere the grass and dirt area meet, use hose to wash the dirt out of the grass and back onto the adjacent dirt area.

#### ASSIGNING MAINTENANCE DUTIES:

##### Line Up/Roster Maintenance Responsibilities

At **Major** and **Senior** levels, it is suggested that field maintenance responsibilities be assigned to players with coaches supervising to make sure it is done correctly.

(It is suggested that each player be assigned one of these duties from the very first practice and shown how to do it. That way, the player will do the same thing, and know what to

do, after every practice/game. Of course, if a player is missing, then someone (possibly a coach) has to assume that player's duties. In the alternative, during the season, a coach can assign these duties either by order in line up or by alphabetical order of roster):

1. Rake (with large aluminum rake) or Drag (with small mat drag) the baseline on our side of field, including raking 6 inches closest to grass on both sides of base paths.
2. Rake (with plastic fan leaf rake) or Broom (with stiff bristle push broom) dirt off "fair" side of baseline and infield side of "skin" on our side of the field
3. Rake (with plastic fan leaf rake) or Broom (with stiff bristle push broom) dirt off "foul" side of baseline and outfield side of "skin" on our side of the field
4. Drag our side of infield with large mat drag or large black bristle "broom" drag
5. Rake 6" of dirt "skin" on infield and outfield sides of our side of field
6. If visitor team, repair holes in batter's and catcher's boxes and drag home plate circle and sweep/rake dirt off of grass around home plate circle. If home team, repair holes in mound and sweep/rake dirt off of grass around pitcher's circle.
7. Same as # 6
8. Water our side of infield and base paths and give water to pitcher's mound and home plate circle as needed
9. Maintain your side of field bullpen mound and plate
10. Pick up trash (all the way down to every straw wrapper!) in dugout and stands and then help where needed
11. Same as # 10
12. Help where needed

Thank you for your help. A few minutes of maintenance by everyone, every time a field is used will keep our fields beautiful and in top playing condition this season and for seasons to come, and will help save VCAA money.

If you have any questions about field maintenance, please feel free to contact:  
Jack Briscoe 818.430.6575 or by e-mail at [jjbwork@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjbwork@sbcglobal.net)

## **“SHARED” GAME RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Before Game:**

#### **Visitor Team:**

Chalk Batter’s boxes and foul lines and set bases

### **After Game:**

#### **Both Teams:**

1. Clean own dugout and stands
2. Perform maintenance to your side/half of the field:
  - a. Baselines
  - b. Infield Skin
  - c. Your own Bullpen mound and plate area

#### **Visitor Team**

1. Maintenance to Batter’s and Catcher’s boxes

#### **Home Team**

1. Maintenance to Pitcher’s mound

### **\*\*\*LAST PRACTICE/GAME OF THE DAY**

“Cover” (with tarp/carpets) pitcher’s mound and batter’s and catcher’s boxes

## **“SHARED” PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITIES**

\*\*\*All teams which have the last practice of the day, **whether their last rotation is actually on the field or not**, are responsible for all “After Game” responsibilities, including all required maintenance to the:

1. Baselines
2. Infield Skin
3. Pitcher’s Mound and Circle
4. Batter’s/Catcher’s boxes and Circle
5. Both Bullpen mound and plate areas
6. Water all dirt surfaces
7. “Cover” (with tarp/carpets) pitcher’s mound and batter’s and catcher’s boxes