

How Do You Do...?

The Question -- How Do You Avoid/Repair "Lips" Along the Baseline?

Answered by Eugene R. Carlson, Sioux City (IA) Explorers

To avoid lips, we take a broom out after every game and brush off the edge of the grass at every spot that is connected to the infield material. Another option would be to take a hose out on your off weeks when you don't have a game and spray the edges.

In the event that our preventive measures are not successful and we need to repair lips along the baseline, we use a sod cutter and cut the grass next to the infield skin. Next, we dig out and remove the excess build up and replace the sod. Then we either roll or tamp the sod back in place.

Answered by Scott Lingle, California Angels, Mesa, AZ

To see if the edges are level, we walk along the edge of the baseline. If one foot tilts to either side, the edges are not level. If that foot leans towards the clay, the clay level is not high enough. To correct this, we simply wet the area, scratch it with a rake, pull some clay to the edge of the turf and tamp until it's level.

If that foot leans towards the turf, our clay level is too high. If this is the case, we adjust a hose to a thin stream and blow off the edges. This removes the clay build up on the turf. It is important to hit 2 to 3 inches from the clay so as not to blow holes or trenches into the clay.

To maintain the edges, we use a leaf rake after every game. (You could also use a hard bristle broom). Then we blow off the edges with the thin stream of water from the hose to prevent build up.

Answered by Robert Nerber, Orchard Park (NY) Central Schools

Our situation up here is rather different in that we only maintain our baseball fields throughout the school year -- Parks & Rec. takes over in the summer.

We've come up with our own homemade hand tools for lip repair, sort of a trowel and pick combination. First we'll pull back the sod and then we actually get down and "shave" the lips by hand. Depending on the weather and how often we actually get out on the field with the machines, we may only need to do this 2-3 times during the season. After the lips have been shaved, we tamp the sod back into place.

Answered by Mark Schimming, City of Wichita (KS) Parks & Rec.

There are a few different ways we handle lips. If a lip has been there awhile, we try to blast it out with high pressure nozzles on a hose. This method works well if you have the time. Naturally, you need enough time to let the soil dry. Another way to get rid of that bad lip is to cut it out entirely with a sod cutter. We cut the sod, roll it, shave the lip with either a shovel or a sod cutter and roll the sod back into place. We will replace the sod if necessary.

Once the lips have been removed, we have three

basic methods of maintenance. After each game, we use either a leaf rake to comb the dirt, a stiff bristle broom to sweep it, or a backpack blower to blow the dirt. We have even used shop vacs with the hose on the exhaust side.

The important thing to remember is, when dragging your fields make sure that you use a circular pattern that varies a little from day to day. Also remember to leave a cushion or space between the drag pattern and the edges and to lift your drag up slowly when leaving the infield.

Answered by Charles Bartlett, Nantucket (MA) Parks & Rec.

We've been pretty lucky here. We really haven't had any problems with lips as yet. Our two Little League fields were just put in last year with the help of Floyd Perry. And -- also thanks to Floyd, our coaches will go out after every practice and game and either rake or sweep the infield to prevent lips. We also have a field that sits about 500 yards from the ocean and there hasn't been a problem due to the constant wind. Getting the coaches involved in maintaining the fields is great preventive medicine.

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