

# Maintaining infields

## ways in Illinois

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### 1

## Attention to daily maintenance the key on Waukegan field:

by Mike Trigg  
Waukegan Park District

■ Attention to detail gives Waukegan's Al Grosche Field its professional look, and helped win the 1989 Beam Clay diamond-of-the-year award. Specific infield care includes daily prep maintenance, edging and renovations.

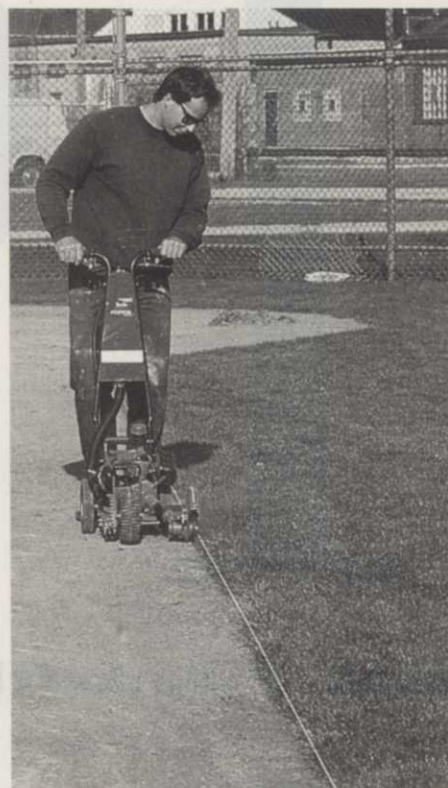
**Daily maintenance** begins by raking back the infield mix into holes and low areas such as those around home plate and the bases. It's important to compact the mix, creating a firm, level surface. The skinned area is dragged daily. Prep crews drag 8 to 12 inches away from the arc edge so as not to push the infield mix into the grass area. After dragging, the grass edges are hand-raked to maintain a smooth transition between the mix and

the grass. Batters' boxes and foul lines are lined with a 2-inch chalk line, using a frame and string for accuracy.

**Edging** the infield grass occurs at the beginning of the baseball season, mid-season, and before major tournaments. Approximately two inches of the turf is trimmed back with a sidewalk edger. Infield mix is added to produce a level surface between the grass and the skinned area.

**Renovations** are scheduled at season's end to repair worn turf areas and remove the "lip" build-up along the arc edge. A sod cutter removes 18 to 24 inches of turf along the arc, along with four inches of underlying soil. New infield mix is added back to the newly-established grass edge and firmly compacted.

The success of any infield renovation is determined by daily maintenance procedures.



Mike Brouillard uses a sidewalk edger to trim about two inches of infield turf.

### 2

## Conversions take the spotlight in Glenview parks:

by Mike Moorman  
Glenview Park District

■ Eleven of Glenview's 46 ballfields have sodded infields, the rest skinned infields.

Park district maintenance crews receive assignment sheets each morning, along with an inspection report/itemized worksheet for each field. Line entries are made on all aspects of field maintenance. Face-to-face meetings are held with each crew member at day's end to make sure there are no missed ideas.

**Skinned fields** used for league play are lined with chalk, and base pegs are exposed for team members to set the bases, each weekday. Non-league-play skinned ballfields are groomed weekly. On weekends, needed equipment is stored on-site so that league members

can groom.

All field prepping is done in the fall. Lips are cut; sod is edged; the arc is measured; and bases are measured to assure they meet league specs. In the spring, fields are cleaned and raked, and any damage repaired. The fields are groomed and new base pegs and pitching rubbers are placed.

**Conversions** to sodded infields are slated for some fields in the fall. This will reduce crew travel time, allow more maintenance of remaining skinned fields, and create a more multi-use park setting. Our crews can now complete the conversion in about three days.

Infields to be converted are measured for area and volume of ballfield mix to be removed. The mix is transferred to another skinned field for topdressing. Approximately 35 to 50 bags of Turface

are applied to the infield prior to field mix removal, improving mix quality in one process.

Next, we apply pulverized topsoil to the area, grooming in a slight crown for drainage. We fertilize at 1 lb./1000 sq.ft. and then lay sod. We irrigate if necessary.

**Sodded infields** receive general scheduled park maintenance, including mowing, weed control and garbage collection.

Specific maintenance is scheduled during the fall. Turf at points of high wear—home plate, the pitcher's area and the bases—is removed with a sod cutter. They are backfilled with topsoil, firmed, leveled and new sod laid. Fencing protects these areas until the sod is established.

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## 3

## Teamwork emphasized in Northbrook Parks District:

by Mike McBride  
Northbrook Park District

■ For every baseball/softball program, everyone must understand that he or she is on the same team: coaches, users, maintenance crews. We have 23 baseball/softball fields, serving players from T-ball through adult mixed leagues.

Pre-spring preparation takes place in the fall; all edgings are done, ball mix is worked in, and infields are re-sodded. In spring, only some edging and infield tuning are needed.

Skinned infields are a mix of 80 percent clay and 20 percent sand. They are crowned for drainage. Turf areas are perennial ryegrass mixes.

All of the Little League fields are grassed, with maintained basepaths, mounds and pitcher's boxes. Softball fields are entirely skinned.

Fields are dragged and lined every day, even for practices. The main field, located downtown, has moveable bases that are set for each game. All other fields use Hollywood bases, set by coaches.

Fields are aerated as play schedules allow. All fields are maintained to regulation, with pro-type basepaths, mounds and

batters' boxes.

The main field is used for Little League, softball and baseball. It has three pitcher's mounds in an hourglass-shaped skinned area, with sufficient room to be "legal" for all three levels. Even after the pitcher releases the ball, his foot never touches the grass.

None of the fields are irrigated; hand watering is used as needed. This year, a stabilizer will be tried for dust control.

A six-person crew handles ballfield maintenance. Crews work Monday through Saturday. After 11 years of working toward it, there are no Sunday games this year. Each crew member works 10-hour shifts, four days a week. Wednesday and Thursday are the "double-crew" days.

—Mike Trigg is parks supervisor for the Waukegan Park District. He is president of the Sports Turf Managers Association's Midwest chapter. Mike Moorman is maintenance supervisor for the Glenview Park District. Mike McBride is athletic field/signs supervisor for the Northbrook Park District. All three are STMA national and Midwest chapter members.



Al Liebert cuts sod during field renovation along the arc edge.

### Advice from Uncle Sam:

## How to apply for a small business loan

■ There are seven steps you must take if you are applying for a small business loan, according to the Small Business Administration.

Here they are:

**1)** Prepare a written business plan for your business. Describe your experience, and management capabilities of owners and/or managers in writing; personal resumés are acceptable.

**2)** Prepare the following financial information:

- financial statements for the past three fiscal years, or period of time the business has been in operation;

- current business balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement, not more than 90 days old at time of submission;

- aging of accounts receivable and accounts payable;

- copies of corresponding income tax

returns for prior three years, or time business has been in operation.

(All financial statements should include the balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement.)

**3)** Prepare a detailed projection of earnings and expenses for a one-year period if the business has not been in operation at least two years. Include a narrative explanation of your basis for the projections.

**4)** Prepare an estimate of the total amount that you need, and break it down to show amounts estimated for land, buildings, leasehold improvements, equipment, inventory, operating expenses, etc.

**5)** Prepare a list of collateral to be offered as security for the loan, with your estimate of their individual present values. Include an itemized list of currently-owned equipment and/or equipment to

be acquired with the loan proceeds (serial number, model and cost value).

**6)** Prepare a current personal financial statement for each owner or partner or stock-holder owning 20 percent or more of the business. (Do not include business assets and liabilities in these statements.)

**7)** Take this material when you see your banker. Ask for a bank loan; if refused, ask the bank to make the loan under the SBA's Loan Guaranty Plan or to participate with the SPA in a loan.

If the bank is willing to grant you an SBA guaranty loan, the banker will provide you an application. Return the completed forms to your commercial lender, who will in turn forward them to the SBA with a cover letter. The bank will deal directly with the SBA from this point out.