

# 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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