



Field Maintenance Tips from an Expert

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Spring means the start of the much-anticipated outdoor sports season. Whether it is rectangle fields for soccer or lacrosse or diamonds for baseball or softball; athletes and teams are itching to get back out on the field. With spring sports right around the corner, are your facilities ready for game and tournament play? And if so, do you know how to maintain these playing surfaces throughout the season? I sat down with a local expert to ask all these questions.

Jordan Gretzlock, Director of Grounds, for the local Brewers' High-A Affiliate Wisconsin Timber Rattlers shared with me some of his recommendations when it comes to field maintenance that you can use this season.

Q: Coming off winter, what are the best ways to get both your in-field and outfield prepared for the season?

A: When temperatures get above 40, we utilize grow blankets for the in-field and sidelines. The blankets allow light through while also helping to trap heat and speed up the process of dormancy. In the outfield, we apply black or green sand to melt the snow and draw more heat to the soil.

Q: How often do you recommend cutting your outfield grass each week?

A: We cut every day at 1 inch. At the professional level, consistency is very important and ball speed is directly affected by the height of cutting. During tournament season, mowing before or after the tournament is recommended along with occasionally seeding high trafficked areas and dragging the infield often to prevent material build up around the bases.

Q: How often do you recommend watering your grass and/or clay infield?

A: When the team is in town, we water the clay to create a consistent moisture profile for both batting practice and the game. Depending on the weather, the grass is usually irrigated daily during the summer and watered every other day in the spring and fall depending on the temperatures.

Q: What are some 'must have' tools to have on hand for field maintenance?

A: Rakes (Spread/Level materials), Tamps (Compact clay on the mound and plate), Drags (Levels the conditioner and clay on the skin), and Edger (Define edges between grass and clay/ helps remove overgrowth). Though mound and plate tarps are often more costly, they are very valuable to help keep moisture consistent. Each season, have a conversation with your program leadership to support tournament and game revenues being budgeted for field repair and equipment needs.