

Shunpike Field



Field Grooming Instruction Manual

June 2013

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| Part I: | Pre-Game Grooming Steps |
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PLEASE ADHERE TO ALL GROOMING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES AS LAID OUT BY THE CHATHAM BASEBALL CLUB. INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS ON THE PROPER TECHNIQUE FOR FIELD GROOMING CAN BE FOUND ON THE CLUB WEBSITE AT WWW.CHATHAMBASEBALL.COM

This manual lays out the procedures for preparing shunpike field for game play. The suggested order of completing these steps is designed to prevent the need to repeat certain procedures. However, you modify this process as conditions warrant. While the Chatham Dept. of Public Works (DPW) will groom the field on weekdays, you may need to “clean up” some areas even for weeknight games. The field will generally NOT be groomed on Saturday/Sunday.

The instructions are broken down into three sections:

- Part One briefly outlines the steps to be taken to prepare the field and identifies which are optional (or “full field”) and which are “required” (if time or available manpower prohibits a full-field preparation).
- Part Two covers the procedure for required post-game grooming.
- Part Three goes through each step of the full-field preparation process in detail.

Important Contact Information:

Rec Department:	Jack Conway*	jconway@chathamtownship.org	(201) 738-8980
Rec Department:	Carol Nauta	cnauta@chathamborough.org	(973) 879-6025
CBC (lights issues):	Bill Karpowic	billkarpowic@comcast.net	(201) 572-6449
CBC (field issues):	Bob Papa	bobpapa@optonline.net	
CBC (president):	Anthony Gruppuso	agruppuso@bracheichler.com	(908) 451-5749

* Jack Conway should be the primary contact if there are issues with the lights.

The last team to leave shunpike each night should call Bob Conway once the field and parking lot is cleared, if the game is completed substantially earlier than 9:30pm, to have the lights shut off.

Please take care of our fields by following the post-game grooming procedures following each game. This will ensure the fields remain in top shape day-to-day and for years to come.

A final note: full pre-game procedures CAN be performed by one person in roughly 60-90 minutes (although it is a lot of work!). Obviously, having multiple volunteers makes things quicker and easier. If more than one person is available, the steps that can be performed concurrently are noted in the instructions. All equipment can be found in the shed behind home plate. **Please return all equipment to the sheds after the game.**

PART ONE:

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION HIGHLIGHTS

Follow these steps if you have multiple people involved in the pre-game grooming, or if you are solo but have a lot of time on your hands! Detailed instructions for each step can be found in Part Three of this manual.

- Step 1: Remove all tarps from the bases, mound, and home plate area and store off-field
- Step 2: Remove all bases (if necessary) and place in outfield grass
- Step 3: Rake and tamp pitchers mound, per CBC website instructions
- Step 4: Rake home plate area and tamp batters boxes, per CBC website instructions
- Step 5: Heavily rake all sliding zones before and after each base
- Step 6: Sweep the infield lip **from** the grass **toward** the infield dirt
- Step 7: Sweep the base platforms clear of all loose dirt to ensure good contact with the bases
- Step 8: Drag the infield, base paths, and home plate area with the carpet drag mats
Be very careful NOT to drag any dirt into the grass areas
- Step 9: Line the batters boxes using the template in the shed, if applicable
Please do not paint the template; use a spike to draw the outline in the dirt/clay
- Step 10: Line the foul lines
- Step 11: Replace the bases
- Step 12: Lightly water the field, if necessary

Steps 3-7 can be performed in any order and are not dependent on any prior steps. If you have multiple people involved, split these tasks up to complete them as expeditiously as possible. Steps 8-12 **must be** completed in order, only after each previous step has been completed.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR WET FIELDS:

If the dirt/clay areas are excessively wet, it may be necessary to incorporate a drying agent (“Diamond Dry”, “Rain Out”, “Diamond Pro”, etc). *Please refer to the CBC website for information on the proper use of these agents.* Please use drying agents sparingly. A good rule of thumb is that one cup should be sufficient to dry an area the size of both batters boxes. Drying agents are NOT very good for the playing surface, so please use sparingly. For drying small areas, such as the mound or batters box, simply spread a small amount of drying agent on the surface and rake vigorously. Raking is critical to spreading the drying agent around and getting it below the surface, as well as increasing the soil exposure to the sun and wind. Wet tarps should NOT be dumped on the field. If there is lots of standing water, use the ShopVac in the shed to vacuum up the water on the tarp before removing it.

PART ONE (cont'd):

REQUIRED PRE-GAME PREPARATION HIGHLIGHTS

Follow these steps if you have limited time or only one person doing the grooming.

- Step 1: Remove all tarps
- Step 2: Rake and tamp pitchers mound, per CBC website instructions
- Step 3: Rake home plate area and tamp batters boxes, per CBC website instructions
- Step 4: Line the batters boxes using the template in the shed, if applicable
Please do not paint the template; use a spike to draw the outline in the dirt/clay
- Step 5: Line the foul lines
- Step 6: Replace the bases

SPECIAL NOTE FOR WET FIELDS:

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PART TWO:

POST-GAME GROOMING PROCEDURES

Please enlist volunteers to speed the post-game grooming process. If you draft a child to help, please be observant to ensure they are not raking dirt into the grass areas. The objective is to leave the field in **better** shape than you found it in!

NOTE: If there is a game after you, it is obviously not necessary to tarp the field or remove the bases. Please be courteous and rake and tamp the pitchers mound and batters boxes, and drag the infield with the dragging carpets.

Step 1: Remove the bases and replace in the shed

Step 2: Rake and tamp the pitchers mound

Pay particular attention to the area in front of the rubber and the landing zone

Fill in any holes with excess dirt/clay and tamp firmly into place

Step 3: Rake the home plate area and tamp the batters boxes

Fill in any holes where the players "dig in" and tamp firmly into place

Step 4: Rake the sliding zones before and after each base

Step 5: Drag the infield, base paths, and home plate area with the carpet drag mats

Be very careful NOT to drag any dirt into the grass areas

Step 6: IF NECESSARY, lightly water the mound, home plate area, and base areas

Watering before putting the tarps down will help the water soak into the soil

Please water whenever the mound, bases, and home plate area are too hard

Step 7: Replace the tarps on the mound, home plate area, and base areas

Please return ALL equipment to the shed when finished, and be sure to lock the shed.

NOTE: During the week, Chatham Department of Public Works (DPW) will groom the field. If you are the last game on the field at night, it is still important to rake the infield and replace the tarps in the event of overnight rain, and it is ALWAYS important to repair the pitchers mound and batters boxes. Even though DPW will be handling grooming the following day, please make sure there are no significant holes or divots in the infield dirt as well.

PART THREE

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION DETAILS

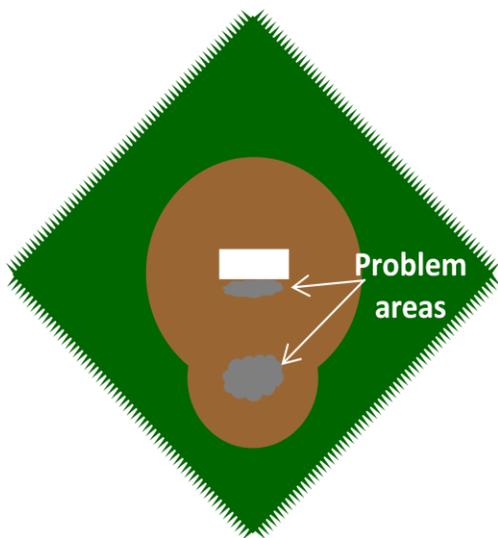
Please visit www.chathambaseball.com to watch detailed videos on the proper technique for field grooming. While hopefully all of that information is incorporated here, the videos are a very clear, easy way to visualize the process.

ALWAYS RAKE THE DIRT/CLAY AWAY FROM THE GRASS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE DIRT/CLAY FROM SPILLING INTO THE GRASS AREAS.

Step 1: Remove all tarps from the bases, mound, and home plate area and store off-field
The tarps should be folded up and stored off the field of play, either behind the dugouts or in the on-deck cages.

Step 2: Remove all bases (if necessary) and place in outfield grass
The point is to get them out of the way so that the infield and base areas can be groomed.

Step 3: Rake and tamp pitchers mound, per CBC website instructions
The objective is to fill in any holes and keep the mound firm. Most often, holes will occur against the front of the rubber where the pitcher “digs in” and several feet in front of the rubber where the pitcher repeatedly lands with the front foot. Use a shovel to churn up the dirt around the edges of any holes or damaged areas. Use the flat shovel to scrape away any dirt that has built up along the side of the rubber, as well. Tamp these areas down and then pull in excess dirt from the sides of the mound to fill in the holes. Then re-tamp the fresh dirt. When tamping, be firm but there is no need to “pound” the tamping tool into the ground. Using a small amount of water will often facilitate the patching process. Be careful not to over-water, particularly before a game. Rake the mound thoroughly, being careful to always rake from the edge in toward the end of the mound, and never push the dirt from the mound into the grass.



PART THREE (cont'd)

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION DETAILS

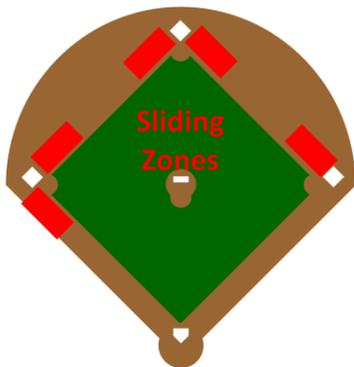
Step 4: Rake home plate area and tamp batters boxes, per CBC website instructions

As with the pitchers mound, you want to fill any holes. These will most often occur toward the back of the batters boxes (especially on the right side) and where the catchers normally crouch. Use a shovel to churn up the soil around the edges of any holes or damaged areas. Pull excess dirt in from the surrounding areas and then tamp the dirt firmly. Repeat as necessary.

Then vigorously rake the entire home plate area, being careful to always rake from the edge in toward home plate, and never push dirt into the grass. It is also a good idea to push excess dirt into the sliding zone on the third base side of home plate, especially if the dirt is very hard. It is a good idea to rake this area thoroughly to soften the sliding zone. Do not create a soft spot that right handed batters will not be able to maintain solid footing in, however.

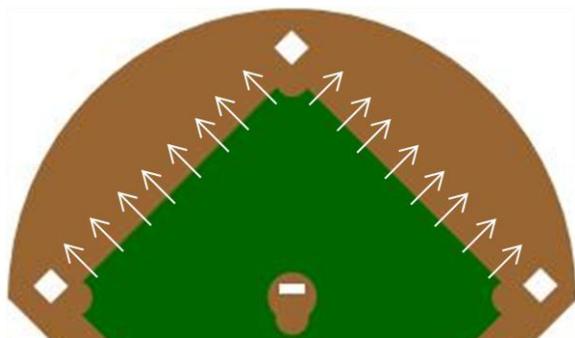
Step 5: Heavily rake all sliding zones before and after each base

The clay on shunpike, in particular, can become very hard if there is not regular rain or watering reaching the field. You want to rake the sliding zones vigorously to break up soil and improve the safety of the sliding zones. The sliding zones are on the 2nd base side of first base, both sides of 2nd base, and both sides of 3rd base. Use the heavy, rigid metal rakes—not the flexible “leaf rakes”. Be careful not to rake any dirt into the grass areas.



Step 6: Sweep the infield lip from the grass toward the infield dirt

Using one of the long push brooms, push the dirt away from the lip of the infield grass into the infield. The purpose of this step is to eliminate the lip and reduce the number of bad hops by balls that hit the edge of the infield grass. **It is VERY IMPORTANT that you push from the very edge of the grass toward the outfield.** You only need to sweep the first foot or so of infield dirt. This will create a little ridge of dirt about a foot or so off the grass, which will be smoothed over in a later step by dragging the infield.

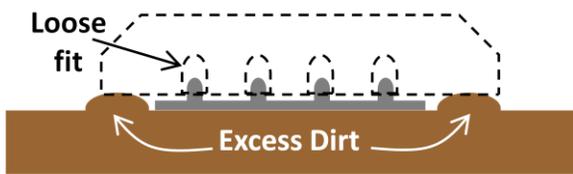


PART THREE (cont'd)

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION DETAILS

Step 7: Sweep the base platforms clear of all loose dirt to ensure good contact with bases
Frequently, dirt will build up on the base platforms and prevent the little stubs in the platforms from forming a tight fit with the grooves on the bottom of the bases. Sweep away all of this excess dirt to ensure good contact between the base and platform.

Additionally, it may be necessary to use the flat shovel to scrape away dirt that has accumulated around the perimeter of the base platform. This excess dirt becomes compacted and effectively



raises the base relative to the platform, preventing a snug fit. Remove enough dirt that the area immediately surrounding the base platform is flat. Rake this excess dirt into the infield to break up any clumps. The bottom of the base should be level with the base platform so that the stubs on the platform reach all the way up into the holes in the bottom of the base. This helps prevent the base from popping loose when a runner is rounding the base, returning to base, or on all but the most

aggressive slides and is a safety feature of the bases.

Step 8: Drag the infield, base paths, and home plate area with the carpet drag mats

Be very careful NOT to drag any dirt into the grass areas

Start on the infield grass edge of the infield dirt and drag the mat behind you “zamboni style”.



Just be careful not to drag the mat over the grass. Pay particular attention along the front of the infield to the area where the dirt was swept away from the lip. Two people with drag mats can overlap slightly and get a high quality playing surface in very little time. These mats are not ideal for repairing holes in the infield, so you will need to rake any significant divots or gouges before running the carpet drag mats over the infield.

PART THREE (cont'd)

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION DETAILS

A word about the paint trucks:

Painting the dirt can be difficult. If the field is very dry and dusty, the speed of the paint as it exits the can will sometimes blow the dirt away that is to be painted. This results in a poor line, or no line at all. In this case, there are several tricks to improve the “stickability” of the paint:

- 1) Make sure you shake the paint can very, very vigorously. If all propellant and no paint is being exhausted, you will just blow the dirt around under the paint truck.
- 2) Tamp down the dirt to be painted. While this is time-consuming for the baselines, it is very easy to accomplish for the batters boxes.
- 3) Lightly water the surface to be painted. Be VERY careful not to over-water, however, as the paint will not stick to a surface that is too wet. A light misting of the surface of the soil though will keep it from blowing away when the paint is applied.

The width of the line can be adjusted using the metal screws on the side of the paint tray to raise or lower the level of the paint tray. Lowering the paint tray will obviously produce a thinner, darker line. However, the height should be set to the correct level and you should not have to make any adjustments to this equipment.

Step 9: Line the batters boxes using the template in the shed, if applicable

Please do not paint the template; use a spike to draw the outline in the dirt/clay

The shed contains a metal tubing frame in the shape and size of a batters box (it will be obvious, if you've never seen one before). The center of the frame contains a cutout of home plate. Position the template on the ground such that the home plate in the template is directly over the exact home plate. Please do not paint directly over the template. Instead, use one of the spikes or your finger to trace the outline of the template into the dirt. Then remove the template and paint the outline with the paint truck.

When you have finished one batters box, simply flip the template over and repeat the process for the other batters box. The line demarcating the back of the batters box is the most important line; try to apply a second good coat of paint to this line.

PART THREE (cont'd)

FULL-FIELD PRE-GAME PREPARATION DETAILS

Step 10: Line the foul lines

If the lines are already clear and visible from the last game, you can simply run the paint truck over the existing line. If it is not clearly visible, you may need to set a straight line using the string and spikes (these should be kept in the paint truck, but should be in the equipment shed nonetheless). First and third base should be removed before painting the foul lines.

Push one spike in the ground immediately behind the rear point of home plate and tie the loose end of the string around this spike. Unspool the string as you walk out to the outfield grass behind first base. The outside (foul) edge of the paint stripe should align with the outside (foul) edge of first base. Pull the string tight and align it so that the string runs directly over the outside edge of the base platform.

When you paint the line, the string will represent the inside (fair) edge of the paint stripe. Therefore you should line the paint truck up so that the string is somewhat to the LEFT of center under the paint truck (for the third base line, the string should be somewhat to the RIGHT of center under the paint truck).

The paint truck will keep a fairly straight line, but keep an eye on the string to make sure it stays at the same place relative to the paint truck.

Step 11: Replace the bases

Step 12: Lightly water the field, if necessary

The spigot on shunpike 2 is located at the back of the pitchers mound. Remove the cover and insert the copper pipe from the hose truck into the spigot under the mound. There is a ball bearing in the copper pipe that lines up with a cut-out in the spigot. Insert the copper pipe and then twist to form a tight seal. The water is always “on” at the spigot, but you will have to turn the handle on the copper pipe to begin the flow of water.

Be careful not to *over* water. The surface of shunpike 2 can become very slick with just a little too much water. However, as the weather gets hot, watering is needed before each game.

Congratulations! You just prepped the field for a baseball game. You may wish to use a broom to sweep the areas around the batters boxes that were stepped on when painting the foul lines.