



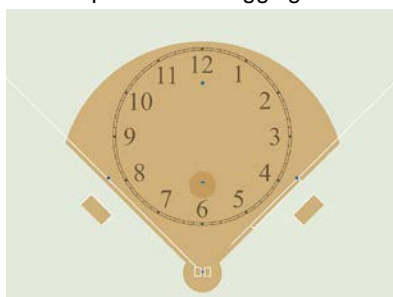
RLL Field Prep and Maintenance Guidelines

RLL CONTACT INFORMATION	
RLL Fields & Grounds Officer:	Mike Todd
Email:	mjtodd78@gmail.com
Cell number:	(609) 751-3887

PRE-GAME FIELD PREPARATION

Scarifying (or nail dragging) the Infield

- The purpose of scarifying the field is to remove cleat marks and other imperfections that can hamper the field's playability.
- The Toro should be used to scarify the fields at least once a week, more frequently is better. Board members shall share the responsibility of scarifying the fields since operation of the Toro is restricted to Board members only.
- When adjusting the rake on the back of the Toro, it should be turning over the top ½" of soil on the field
- When scarifying the field, you'll need to go over the infield twice. The second pattern cutting perpendicular to the first. This prevents infields from developing ripples, which enables a smooth service
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/7q78OQnM954>
- For T-3 and T-4, it is important to rotate the pattern for dragging. Think of the field as a clock for reference



- When scarifying the infield with the Toro or nail drag, stay 6" away from the edge of the grass and corner slowly. Dragging too close can push the infield material into the edge of the turf, which creates a lip.
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/s2F5iJP8l2o>
- Always use hand drags to groom along the edge of the infield. This will give you better maneuverability, which allows you to get closer to the grass. This can be achieved by using the X-drag along the edge of the infield and baselines
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/868wGd0LSXs>
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/UoakTdQBqE4>

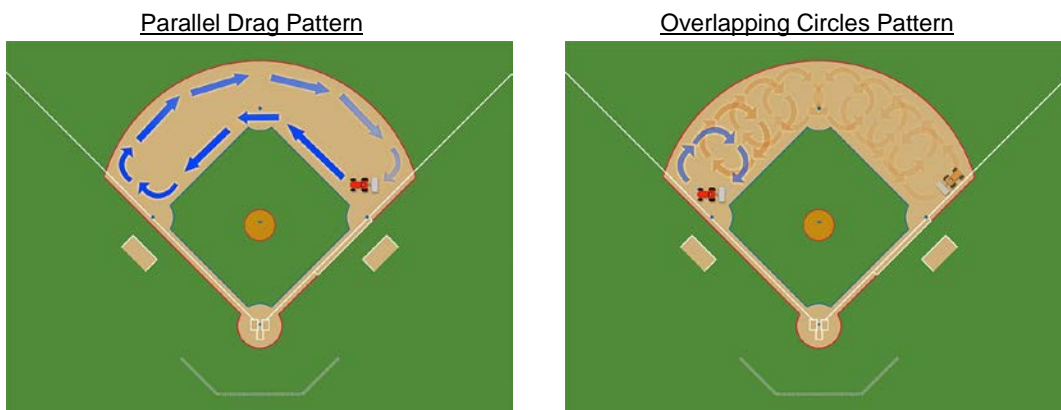
Float Dragging the Infield

- The 4' or 6' rigid steel hand mat drag is preferred to finish grooming the field. The 6' hand drag coco mat can also be used if necessary. None of these mats shall be pulled with the Gator or Toro.
 - Watch the following videos from Beacon Athletics for details:
 1. <https://youtu.be/rixUopdTJPI>
 2. <https://youtu.be/tzfc0ccXacs>
 3. <https://youtu.be/GuFPAX4UXbc>
 4. <https://youtu.be/elxB9aQ8e0A>

- o Refer to the following article for reference as well: https://ballfields.com/2018/11/05/float-dragging-protocol/?_ga=2.39791393.368603480.1550753821-1264223719.1540325468
- The steel mat drag with leveling bar can be pulled by a machine, but only under the supervision of a RLL Board Member.
- When float dragging with a steel mat drag, you must start and stop at the same location. The steel mat will transport some of the infield dirt as it is pulled so maintain the same starting and stopping point will ensure the soil is distributed evenly.
 - o Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/llojnZD5Kp8>
- Make sure to pull any excess material back from the edge of the infield for better drainage and to prevent lips from forming
 - o Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/woChWiDBxiY>
- After dragging is finished, use a rake or shovel to collect any waste materials that may have been left behind such as stones, garbage, etc.

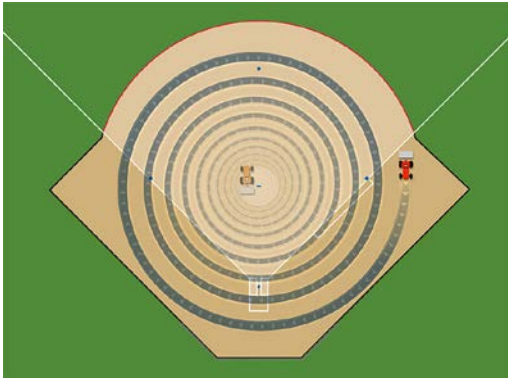
Dragging Patterns

- For T-1 and T-2, the parallel drag pattern along with the overlapping circles pattern should be used together for dragging the fields.
 - o Parallel Drag Pattern follows the turf edges of the infield working your way inward
 - o The Overlapping circles pattern is used in conjunction with the parallel pattern to cross drag the infield in order to achieve a smoother surface. It is very important to go slow to prevent the infield dirt from being pushed into the grass line. This will prevent lips from forming.



- o Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/v3frYH8qwNw>
- For T-3 & T-4, the Inward Swirl, Overlapping Ovals or Figure 8 dragging patterns should be used for finish grooming the fields.
 - o **NEVER USE THE OUTWARD SWIRL PATTERN.** This only pulls the infield soil away from the center of the infield and pushes it towards the turf creating a lip.
 - o The Inward Swirl Pattern uses the “clock face” reference as discussed previously. Start the drag on the edge of the infield and work your way inward using a different starting point every time.
 - o The Overlapping Ovals pattern is similar as the method discussed above for T-1 and T-2, using a different starting point every time.
 - o The Figure 8 Pattern is as it sounds. Rotate your starting points around the field like a clock face each time, always starting on the outside edge and finishing near the center of the infield.

Inward Swirl Drag Pattern



Overlapping Ovals Drag Pattern

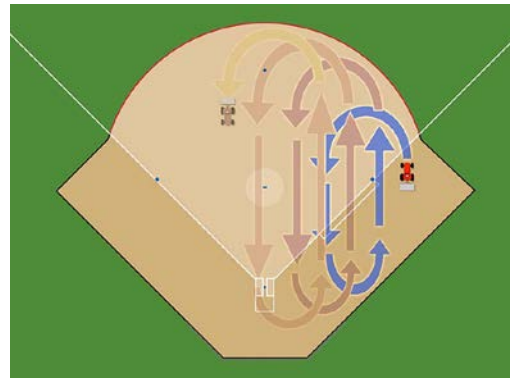
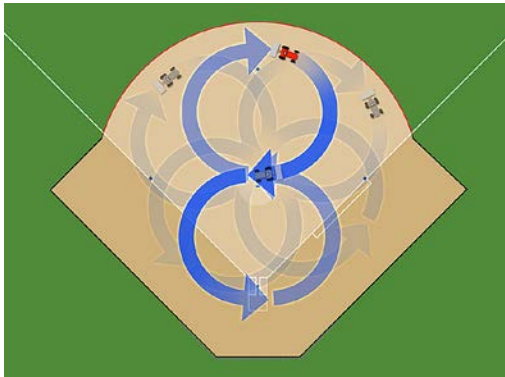


Figure 8 Drag Pattern

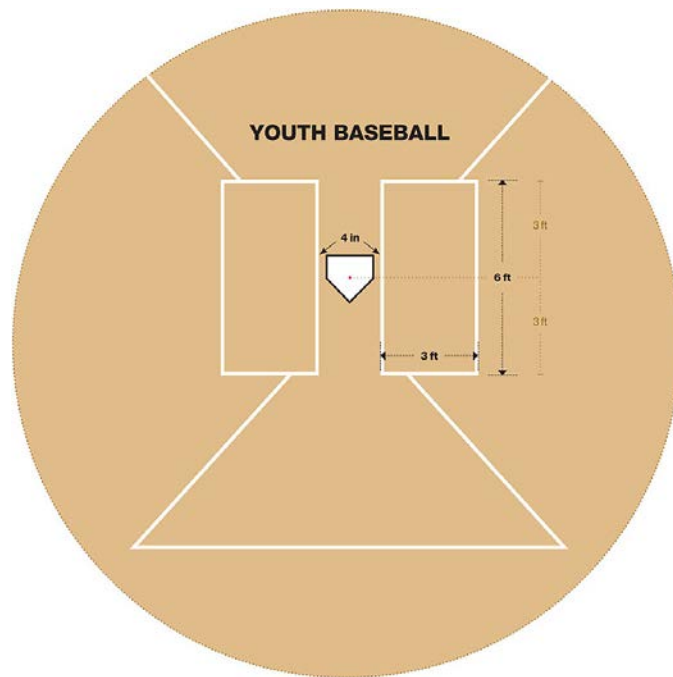


Creating the Foul Lines

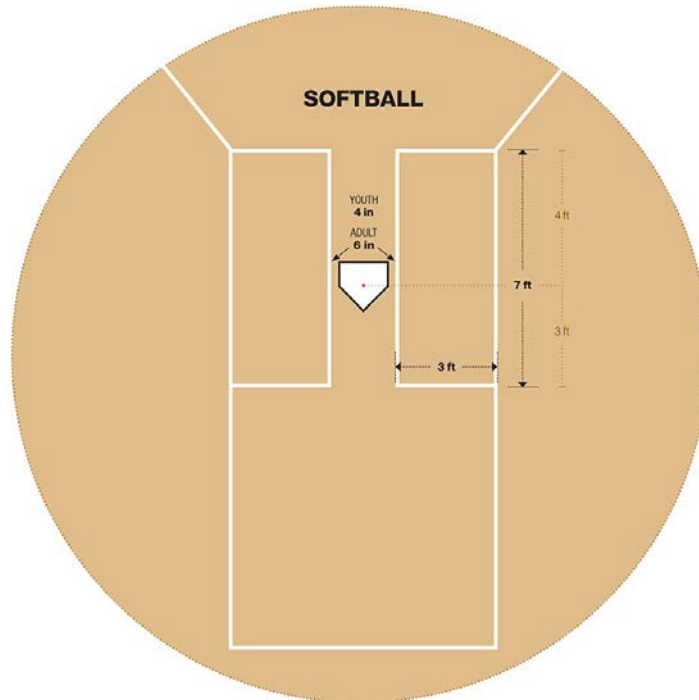
- Setup the anchor pins at home plate and the foul pole.
 - At home plate, the pin should be installed behind the “point” of the base and in line with the edge pointing towards the foul pole.
 - At the foul pole, the pin should be placed on the outside edge of the pole
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: https://youtu.be/snSenEGr_il
- Extend the string between the two pins and pull it tight to ensure a nice straight foul line
 - The string should pass the outer edge of 1st base
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/Y23jGt-Oh5o>
- Fill the chalker with chalk, but only as much as you’ll need to line the field you are working. Excess chalk may cause bridging inside the machine preventing the even flow of chalk along the foul lines. Transporting the chalker between fields may also cause bridging since the vibrations will cause the chalk to settle and bind together at the bottom of the hopper.
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/t1XJTNCsmwo>
- Remove 1st & 3 base and begin to apply the chalk foul line along the base lines from home plate to the end of the infield.
 - Remember, the foul line should be entirely in fair territory so make sure you follow the inside edge of the string line with the chalker
 - Re-install the bases once complete
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/BXHVNDKioU>
- Use the aerosol spray paint applicator to continue the foul line from the edge of the infield to the foul pole.
 - When using aerosol spray paint, make sure you shake the can thoroughly to ensure the paint is mixed up prior to use
- Once all chalking is done for the day, empty out the chalker to prevent bridging
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/l-87eAUHfIE>
- Once all spray painting is done for the day, clear the nozzles to prevent clogging by holding the can upwards and pressing the nozzle.
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: <https://youtu.be/jsChA5xJ-U8>

Marking the Batter's Box

- For T-1 & T-2, the batter's box size is 6' x 3', offset 4" from home plate. The back line of the batter's box will be 3' from the center of home plate.



- For T-3 & T-4, the batter's box size is 7' x 3', offset 4" from home plate. The back line of the batter's box will be 3' from the center of home plate.



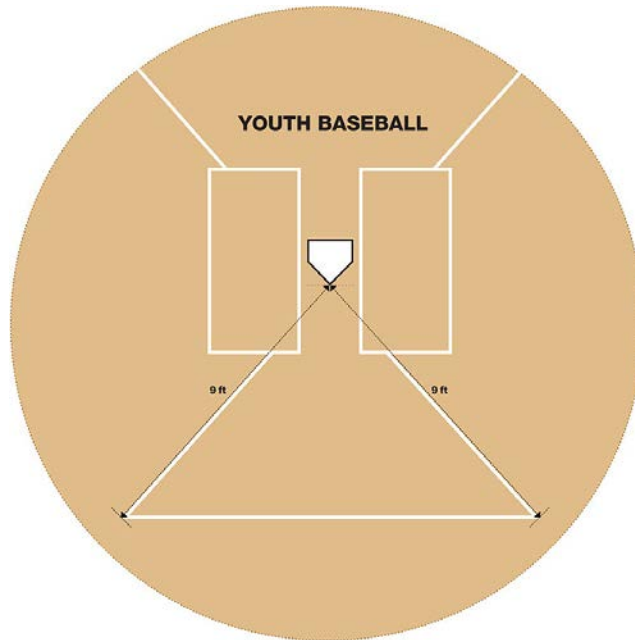
- Use the templates by each field to mark the lines and then apply chalk. Make sure you are using the correct template for the correct field.
- Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: [https://youtu.be/ Omj4UJkKKQ](https://youtu.be/Omj4UJkKKQ)

Marking the Softball Pitcher's Circle

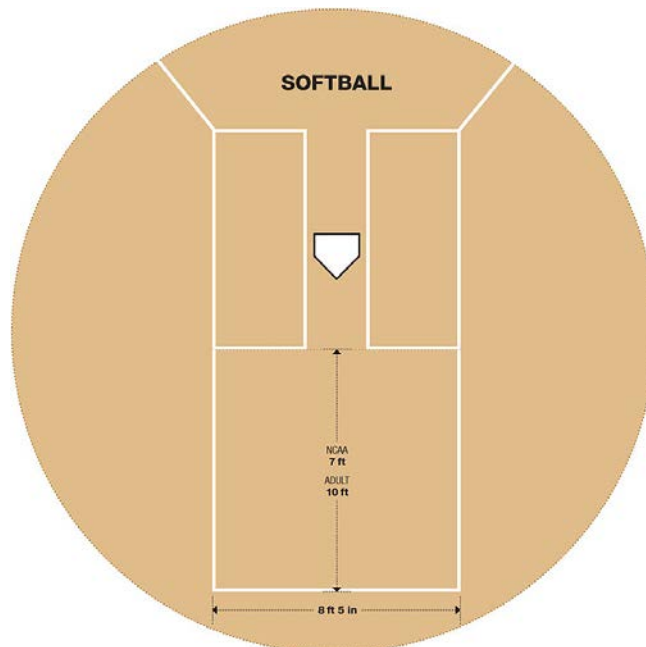
- Extend the tape measure from the front of the pitcher's mound 8' towards home plate then use a pin to mark an 8' circle around the mound
- Use the chalker to mark the pitcher's circle

Marking the Catcher's Box

- For T-1 & T-2, the catcher's box extends 9' from the back tip of home plate. Use the chalk to mark the lines on either side then connect them forming a triangular catcher's box.



- For T-3 & T-4, the catcher's extends 7' from the back of the batter's box. The outer lines extend down from the batter's box and then connect the two in the back of the catcher's box.



Marking the Softball Pitcher's Circle

- Extend the tape measure from the front of the pitcher's mound 8' towards home plate then use a pin to mark an 8' circle around the mound
- Use the chalker to mark the pitcher's circle

How to Prep A Wet Field

- Rule of Thumb: If your foot sinks in to the infield, the field is too wet to play! Do not try to work the field with drags or rakes until the field has time to dry by itself.
- Do **NOT** use a broom to push water off a field. This pushes soil off the infield and onto the grass creating future lips
- If a field has standing water after a rain event, use a puddle pump (if available) to move water from large puddles into the grass turf
- For smaller puddles, use a pillow sponge to help remove water with minimal disturbance of the infield soil
 - Lay the sponge in the puddle and apply pressure with your hands or feet. Release the pressure to allow the water to be soaked into the sponge. Repeat until all water is removed or the sponge is full
 - Empty the sponge in the outfield
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: https://youtu.be/ytNh_9XDNXE
- After all standing water is removed from the infield, drying agent can be applied to help dry the infield
- **DO NOT** apply drying agent directly to puddles of water!
- Spread some LESCO Turface Gamesaver (fine grade) drying agent evenly over wet areas then lightly rake it in to the wet areas to help absorb the remaining moisture. Let the area sit and begin drying as the agent absorbs the moisture. DO NOT over apply the drying agent!
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: https://youtu.be/5zE_lqydCg8
- Once the wet area begins to dry, mix in the LESCO Turface All Sport (coarse grade) drying agent as needed. DO NOT over apply the drying agent! Use a rake to mix it into the existing infield mix and spread out evenly.
 - **Reminder:** Too much drying agent will cause uneven and hard spots on the infield
- If the field is still somewhat wet use an iron rake to "back rake" the field, which helps speed up the drying process.
 - Instead of pulling the rake towards you, push the rake away from you with light downward pressure. This prevents wet soil from collecting and clumping up.
 - Watch this video from Beacon Athletics for details: https://youtu.be/1UnRuL2_i0I
- Use the LESCO Turface All Sport (coarse grade) drying agent on larger wet areas if needed.
- Once the infield is close to playing condition after applying the drying agent and back raking, float drag the infield using the 4' or 6' rigid steel hand mat drag.

POST-GAME FIELD PREPARATION

Float Dragging the Infield (again!)

- To help speed the recovery of an infield after rainfall, it is a best practice to float drag the field beforehand.
- At the end of the night, each field that was utilized should be float dragged once again. This helps maintain a quality-playing surface if rain moves in prior to the next game day. Leaving a field chewed up from play promotes puddling and a longer preparation time prior to the next game.
- Use the 4' or 6' rigid steel hand mat drag to finish grooming the field. The 6' hand drag coco mat can also be used if necessary. None of these mats shall be pulled with the Gator or Toro.

Tarping The Fields

- For T-1 & T-2, place the mound cover and home plate cover on the fields at the end of each night. This is crucial in maintaining the proper moisture levels, which reduces wear and tear.
 - If significant rain is forecasted, place the baseline tarps on T-1 and T-2 (if available)
 - Always place sandbags on and around the tarp so it stays in place.
- For T-3, the full field tarp should be placed on the field if a threat of rain is in the forecast before the next scheduled game. This tarp weighs around 800 lbs. and needs to be handled with multiple people. If the tarp cannot be placed on the field due to lack of volunteers, notify the Building & Grounds Officer before leaving at the end of the night.
 - Always place sandbags on and around the tarp so it stays in place.
 - Refer to the following article for reference: https://ballfields.com/2018/06/04/area-tarps-theyre-not-just-rain-protection/?_ga=2.64425901.368603480.1550753821-1264223719.1540325468

OTHER REFERENCE ARTICLES

Common Groundskeeping Mistakes:

- https://ballfields.com/2015/05/15/common-groundkeeping-mistakes/?_ga=2.241502336.368603480.1550753821-1264223719.1540325468