



Home Plate Maintenance

During a game, the batter's and catcher's box get very worn out. It is crucial to maintain these areas properly to help reduce the risk of injury.

The home plate area used by the catcher and batters get a ton of use over the course of games and practices.

These areas tend to be the most neglected areas on a ball field and are a major concern for injuries. In order to reduce these risks of, fix it, maintain it! Below is a step by step example of proper home plate maintenance.

1. Rake the loose material from the batter's box and catcher's box exposing the hard ground underneath.
2. Lightly water the exposed hard ground and the loose material that you have raked loose. This will allow the dirt to bond when packed back into the holes. Let it set for a few minutes so it can absorb the moisture.
3. Rake the loose, moistened, material back into the holes.
4. Tamp the loose dirt into the ground. You can use the back of a field rake to do this.
5. Rake the newly repaired areas as well as the rest of the home plate area.
6. Water the entire home plate area.
7. Once this is finished and game ready you can cover the area with a tarp to maintain a proper moisture level.

In many cases the home plate area has completely deteriorated over time and may need to be reconstructed in order to achieve an optimum playing surface.

In many cases clay bricks are used to establish a firm home plate area. These are moist clay bricks that have yet to be hardened by heat that are perfect for constructing, maintaining, or repairing high-stress areas. When watered down the bricks turn to firm clay to provide greater durability and reduce maintenance.

Bags of home plate clay can also be used by removing about 3" of dirt at the high stress areas of the batter's and catcher's box. Moisten the ground underneath. Fill with home plate clay and let it set a minute, tamp, water and repeat. Continue this process until the level is almost back to normal. Cover the home plate clay with the infield mix that was removed and tamp it in and water.

Once either one of these procedures is completed you can add a calcined clay product as a top dressing for the home plate area. This product helps prevent slipping in damp weather and gives the area a nice, clean, professional finishing touch.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Ignoring home plate maintenance completely. This is the biggest mistake that is made by fields that are commonly shared by many teams and leagues.
2. Not providing access to the proper tools, materials, and a hose for individuals to assist in taking care of the home plate area prior to, and after games and practices.
3. Just filling in foot holes with dry dirt. This does not help. Unless..... your sprinklers totally soak the dirt area at night for at least 20 minutes and then you have hot, sunny weather the next day to bake and harden the dirt. Otherwise, this is worthless as the material will never bind properly. Nobody likes standing in a batter's box that disintegrates after a couple batters and does not provide good footing.