

Field Maintenance and Usage

Coaches – for those that have not coached with us previously, it is always a great point of pride when other leagues come to visit and compliment us on the quality of our fields compared to most in the county. In that spirit, some general procedures for you in your use of the fields to help us maintain that reputation! The below is not all-inclusive but should get you off to a good start. If materials are running short, or if there are ever any questions or you need assistance, please contact me at jason.goodale15@gmail.com or (910) 467-5138. If you can't get me in a pinch and need something, you can contact Chad Artz at (703) 969-0340.

Practice

- **Expectation:** It is the responsibility of the last user to leave the field in playable condition. That said, in the event that you are the first user since a weather event, it may require a quick drag to level the field for both playability and safety.
- **Weather:** Weather calls are made by the county or the league. If either cancels use of the fields, the decision is binding. We will strive to communicate cancellations no later than one hour prior to first usage. Please enforce those decisions.
- **Sheds:** You are free to use any of the training aids or field maintenance devices in your field's respective shed. It is fine to leave the shed unlocked during your practice time. But please return ALL borrowed items, including practice balls, to the shed at the end of practice and ensure the lock is secure and does NOT show the code.
- **Field materials:** Please do not line the field for practice. Turfis is generally not used for practice, but if there is a problem area that is impeding your ability to practice (i.e. first base is very muddy) a limited amount (couple handfuls) is fine. Rake Turfis in to expedite drying. Do not use Turfis for standing water or heavily saturated areas – it won't work!
- **Lights:** Use the field lights only if necessary for your practice time. If you will be using the lights, you should generally turn them on 30 minutes prior to need.
 - Carl Sandburg lights are not locked – the box is immediately behind the batting cage and on/off are clearly indicated.
 - Walt Whitman 1 lights (to the right of the shed if looking at it) require a key which can be found hanging on a lanyard to the right once you enter the shed. ENSURE the key is returned to its hook if you are the last user!
- **Pitching Distance:** If your practice involves pitching: check the pitching rubber distance (18U = 43', 12U = 40', 10U = 35'). Walt Whitman 2 is permanently configured for 35 feet, Whitman 1 and Sandburg for 43 feet. Sandburg and Whitman 1 both have measuring tapes and removable pitching rubbers with spikes/mallet in the shed to adjust your distance.
 - **NOTE** – Pitching distance is measured from the pointy tip of home plate (back of the plate) to the front of the pitching plate (rubber). Ensure the pitching plate is parallel to the front edge of home plate.
- **Batting Cages** - to use the batting cages at either location:
 - Unlock and open the cage. Remove cover(s), plug machine in to associated outlet, and plug in lights if necessary.
 - Ensure a net is placed in front of the machine, and position ball buckets behind the net. Choose desired speed (generally 30-50 mph depending on age), allow warmup of

- machine (1 minute), and test trajectory of the machine several times before accepting batters. The machine is adjustable in speed or position.
 - One player in the cage with a coach at a time. Note – the balls with printed stitches fly more predictably.
 - When complete, unplug machine and lights, put all balls back in buckets, tuck buckets next to machine, fold all electrical wires into a bucket, cover machine and buckets (especially wires), close and LOCK cage.
- **Post-practice:** Once complete drag the field (multiple drags located at each), rake each baseline, the periphery of the bases, the pitcher's mound, and the batters' boxes, to level dirt buildup. You are encouraged to use parents and/or players to increase "ownership" but ultimately the coach is responsible for preparing the field for next use. Also, please remove all trash from the dugouts and fields. If there is another practice or game immediately following your slot, the oncoming coach can choose to accept the field in any state. Closeout should take no more than 15 minutes.
- **Checkout:** Field dragged/raked? Lights off? League equipment/keys returned to the shed? Trash picked up? All player equipment accounted for? YOU'RE GOOD!

Games

- **Responsibilities:** The home team is responsible for preparing and lining the field, and post-game cleanup. In the event of an intraleague game, the "away" team coaches are encouraged to contribute. Ensure drag/rake if necessary.
- **Game balls:** The home team is responsible for providing the umpire with two game balls. Game balls are located in clearly marked plastic bins (12" and 11") in the Whitman 1 and Sandburg sheds (Whitman 2 will need to retrieve from Whitman 1). Please do NOT take more than two balls and only take them for games. The team may retain the game balls in their equipment bag for subsequent use after the game.
- **Pitching rubber:** same as practice - ensure proper distance (18U = 43', 12U = 40', 10U = 35'; see NOTE above) utilizing tape measures provided in WW1 and Sandburg sheds. If necessary, utilize removable pitching rubber, spikes, and mallet to ensure proper distance. If a removable rubber is inserted and not necessary, take it out prior to game time.
- **Bullpens:** All three fields have dedicated bullpens to warm up pitchers. Walt Whitman 1 has a double bullpen outside the right field fence line (43'). Walt Whitman 2 has a single bullpen outside the left field fence line (35'). Sandburg has single bullpens outside each fence (43'). Visiting teams shall be granted equal access to the bullpens for the purposes of warming up their pitchers, if desired.
- **Lining the fields:**
 - marking lime, lining machines, and guideline string provided for each field.
 - ONLY use the 2" setting on the lining machine, otherwise the lines will be too thick.
 - Batters' box templates are located at each field to create a template for lining the boxes. For base lines – use the guideline with stake to align from the point of Homeplate through the middle of First and outside of Third, in line with the foul pole. Mark over the string, then remove.
 - Return all unused lime immediately and neatly – it is extremely sensitive to moisture and spills easily.

- **Pitchers' circles:** 8' diameter from the front of the rubber. General practice is to determine distance (step off eight heel to toe steps) and have one person hold the string in the center of the rubber. The other person, keeping the 8' string taut, marks a circle using the stake or footprints. Then line over the mark using the machine.
- **Relining for subsequent games:** You typically do not need to completely reline a field. As needed, use the minimal amount of lime necessary to touch up the field markings between games.
- **Injuries:** First aid materials are located in each field's shed or gear box and include Band-Aids and icepacks. Any injury requiring materials above and beyond this should be transported to a medical facility immediately.
- **Checkout:** All other preparatory and closeout procedures are the same as practice – rake, drag, turn lights off, return equipment/keys, lock the shed and have a great day!

Equipment Shed Inventories – Each field has a minimum inventory of supplies. Whitman 1 and Sandburg have standalone sheds and Whitman 2 has two gear boxes (green box = rakes and drags; tan box in 3rd Base dugout has lime, Turfis, training equipment). The minimum inventory for each field is as follows though there may be more than what's listed at the field:

- Field Lining machine
- 5 bags lime (2 bags at WW2)
- 5 bags/buckets Turfis (1 bag at WW2)
- Batter's box template – for lining
- Tape measure (WW1/SBurg)
- Removable rubber/spikes (WW1/Sburg)
- String spool/spike/hammer
- 2-3 drags
- 2-3 hard rakes
- 1-2 buckets each of 11- and 12-inch balls (11 only at WW2)
- 1-2 buckets heavy sand balls
- Pop fly tennis racket
- 2 or more swing sticks
- 2-3 movable protective nets (along the fence lines)
- 1 or more popup hitting nets
- 2-3 heavy tees
- Medical supplies (chemical ice packs/bandages)

I will be checking the sheds on a weekly basis, especially as games kick off. But again, if you see a shed below this level, let me know and we'll get it fixed!

Thanks in advance for all your efforts to take care of our equipment and provide the best fields for our players. DEFEND THE FORT!